

Our County, Our Vision

A Sustainable Community Strategy
for Staffordshire 2008 - 2023



www.staffordshirepartnership.org.uk

Produced by

Staffordshire
County Council



Foreword



'Our County; Our Vision' marks a new chapter for the people of Staffordshire and the Staffordshire Strategic Partnership. I am confident that it clearly sets out our vision and our priorities for the coming fifteen years.

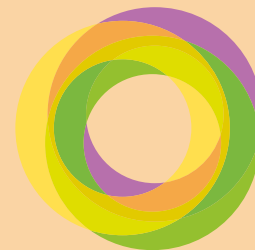
In developing this strategy we have listened to our communities and to our partners. The priorities take account of their needs and aspirations and are shared priorities. I believe they will, in time, secure real improvements for Staffordshire as a place.

'Our County; Our Vision' is a blueprint for partnership working in Staffordshire. The strategy will be delivered in genuine partnership – by organisations across the county as part of their day job; by the eight District Local Strategic Partnerships, focusing on the issues of real local importance; and finally through the new Local Area Agreement.

The Staffordshire Strategic Partnership will lead by example and will drive our commitment to achieve our vision - **to improve the quality of life for all Staffordshire's people by increasing economic prosperity, improving local services and developing partnership working.**

There are exciting and challenging times ahead. I look forward to working with you all to see what we can achieve for the people of Staffordshire.

Cllr John Taylor, Chair of the Staffordshire Strategic Partnership



Staffordshire Strategic Partnership

About Our Strategy

All local authorities have a statutory duty to produce a Sustainable Community Strategy. The strategy should set the long term, strategic vision for an area. The Department for Communities and Local Government defines a sustainable community as ‘a place where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They [sustainable communities] meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to the environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned and built and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all’.

Partners across Staffordshire have come together under the umbrella of the Staffordshire Strategic Partnership (SSP) to develop our Sustainable Community Strategy for Staffordshire.

Our Sustainable Community Strategy sets out our fifteen year, strategic vision for Staffordshire; it tells the story of where we have come from; where we are; and where we want to be. It expresses our priorities for Staffordshire and identifies the issues which we will need to address in order to improve the quality of life of our people and to contribute to the sustainable development of our County.

We recognise that to deliver improved quality of life and better local services, we must embrace the challenge of partnership working. We shall adopt an approach which does not look at issues in isolation,

but together, acknowledging the impact addressing one issue has on another, and tackling those issues which are both challenging and cross-cutting.

How does our strategy relate to other plans and strategies?

Our Sustainable Community Strategy is the overarching plan for promoting and improving the economic, social and environmental well being of Staffordshire. The new Local Area Agreement (LAA) for Staffordshire has developed with regard to the development of the Sustainable Community Strategy. In simple terms, the LAA is envisaged as the delivery agreement for the Sustainable Community Strategy. The LAA is based on the priorities set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy and translates them into targets which will in turn secure the improvements that the people of Staffordshire want to see.

There is also a close relationship between the Sustainable Community Strategies and the relevant Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) at County and District level. LDFs are essentially a suite of documents which outline how development will be managed in an area. They help to realise some of the spatial elements of the relevant Sustainable Community Strategies. While Staffordshire County Council has responsibility for the preparation of the Minerals and Waste LDFs, the District Councils



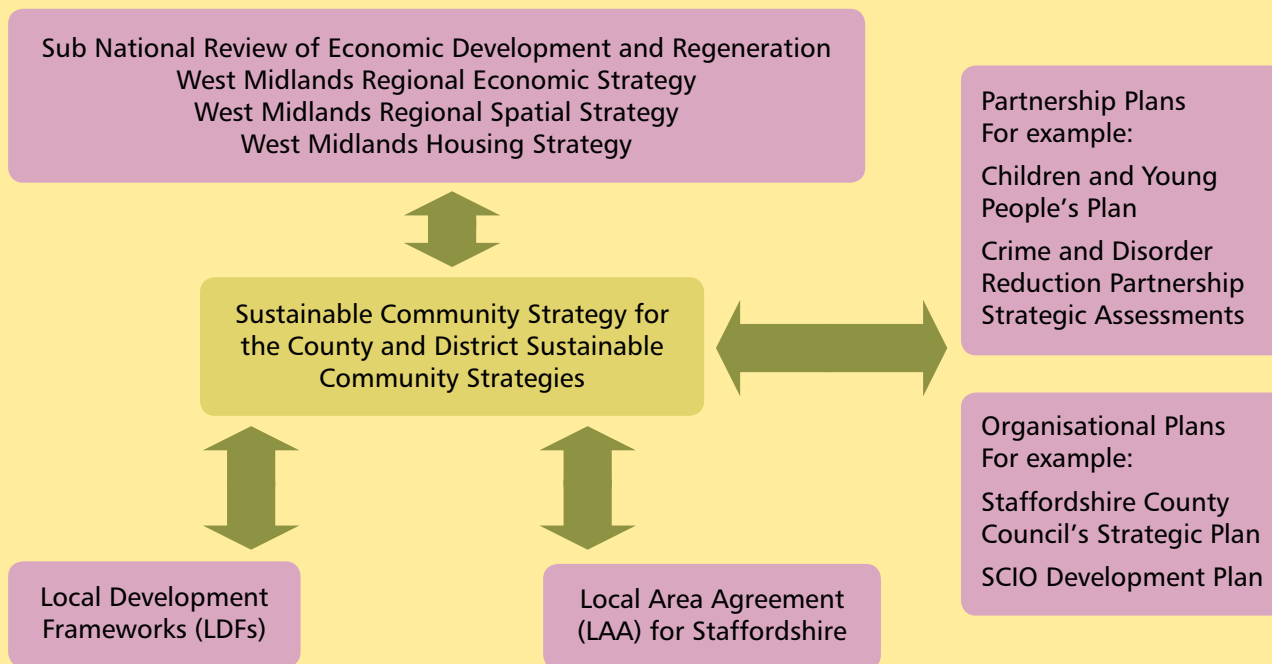
prepare their own LDFs. All LDF work must be aligned with the relevant Sustainable Community Strategy, either at county or district level.

In putting economic prosperity at the heart of our ambitions for Staffordshire, we have taken into consideration the Sub National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration, the West Midlands Regional Economic Strategy, the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy and the West Midlands Regional Housing Strategy in developing our Sustainable Community Strategy. Our strategy

has also been informed by local partnership plans, for example the Children and Young People's Plan and organisational plans, for example Staffordshire County Council's Strategic Plan.

The following diagram captures some of the interrelationships between the Sustainable Community Strategy and other related plans at local, regional and national level.

A shared evidence base to support both our Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA is continuously developing. This evidence base draws on both 'hard' and 'soft' evidence, including the plans identified above, performance information, assessment and inspection findings as well as findings from consultation, surveys and people's panels. More information about the evidence base is available from www.staffordshirepartnership.org.uk/observatory



How our Strategy has been developed

Our Strategy has been developed with regard to the national, regional and local policy influences, but is also firmly based on consultation with local people about the sort of place they want Staffordshire to be. In the 2006/7 BVPI General Survey, our residents highlighted three main factors for making Staffordshire a good place to live: the level of crime, health services and clean streets. The survey also identified the areas where our communities would like to see the most improvement: activities for teenagers, the level of crime and the level of traffic congestion.

The Staffordshire People's Panel survey found that the top three things people liked about living in Staffordshire were community spirit, the general peace and quiet and the rural countryside. The top three dislikes were traffic congestion, litter/street cleanliness and gangs of youths congregating in areas. The survey also found that Staffordshire's people considered facilities for young people, roads and traffic congestion, the level of crime and future building development as the most important issues affecting their area.

Many children and young people have also been consulted across the County, through the work of the Children's Commissioner.

District Sustainable Community Strategies also have at their core the results of consultation with their local communities about the sort of place



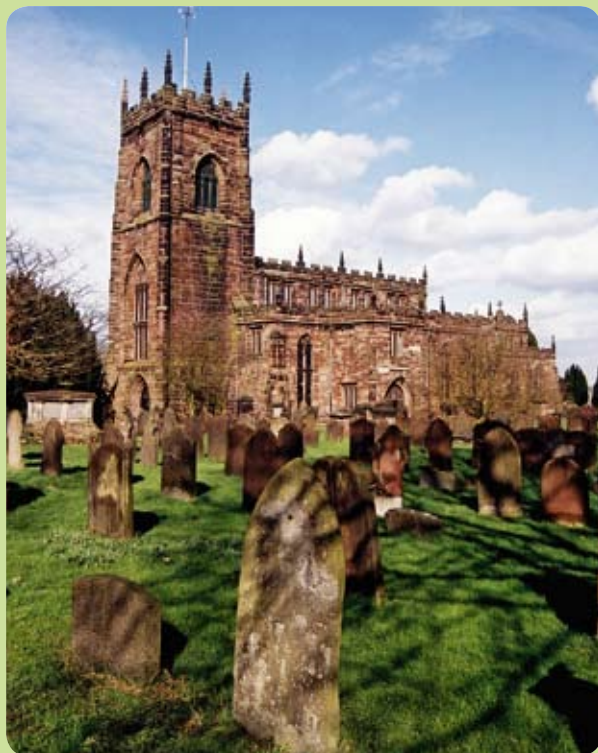
The Roebuck Centre, Newcastle

they want their District, and so their County, to be. In developing our Strategy we have taken the District Sustainable Community Strategies and looked where we can add value, through partnership working, to deliver genuine, long term improvements for our communities. Together, all this work has helped to inform our priorities, so that we know that our priorities are our communities' priorities.

Our Strategy is also firmly rooted in the evidence base and factual analysis of the issues facing our County as captured in our **Story of Staffordshire** and supported by the State of Staffordshire report and the emerging shared evidence base.

Our Story of Staffordshire

The Story of Staffordshire provides the context for our vision and so for our priorities. What follows is a snapshot of our story, which is presented in details in our Local Area Agreement for Staffordshire for 2008/11. This is available from www.staffordshirepartnership.org.uk.



St. Michaels, Penkridge

Where we have come from: Our History and Heritage

Staffordshire has both a long and a rich history, dating back to Anglo Saxon times when it was part of the Saxon kingdom of Mercia. Each of our eight Districts has their own particular heritage, for example the cathedral city of Lichfield, the unique environment of Cannock Chase, and Burton on Trent being renowned nationally for its brewing industry.

Our County is predominantly rural, with 75% of land being classified as such; however three quarters of our population live in the urban centres. Despite the many centres, there is no one single dominant town, which acts as the County's overall focal point. From the predominantly rural area of South Staffordshire to the urban core of Newcastle-under-Lyme in the north: it is this diverse range of towns, each with their own character, people and heritage, which makes Staffordshire truly unique.

Put simply, Staffordshire is a collection of places and spaces. This is reflected in the way the County is governed, with a complex pattern of governance arrangements in place; these include 184 Town and Parish councils, eight District and Borough Authorities, the County Council and nine parliamentary constituencies. Though complicated, there is strength in the governance of Staffordshire;



it allows organisations to better understand the needs of their local communities and to deliver improvements where they are needed most.

We have always had, and continue to maintain strong and important links with neighbouring authorities, especially in the north of the County with Stoke-on-Trent City Council. Stoke-on-Trent's population of 238,300 people provides a significant influence to the rest of the County, particularly in the surrounding districts of Newcastle and Staffordshire Moorlands in the north. This combined area may be regarded as a sub region in its own right, and is an area across which many local services operate.

Further a field we have important links to Cheshire and the North West, while to the east of the County we have strong links with Derbyshire and the East

Midlands. In the west of the County there are ties to Shropshire and Telford, while the south has close links with the West Midlands conurbation, particularly between South Staffordshire and Wolverhampton, Cannock and Walsall, and Lichfield and Tamworth with Birmingham.

Our county's strategic location at the heart of the country has been a catalyst in the way the County has developed and been shaped over the past. Staffordshire is a natural cross roads for a number of key communication routes including the M6, M54 and M42 motorways and A38 trunk road, as well as the more recently constructed M6 Toll Road in the south and the upgrade of the A50 (linking the M6 at Stoke to the M1 at Nottingham) in the north. Staffordshire's communication links are



completed by the Birmingham to East Midlands and West Coast Mainline rail routes, the improvements to which have provided access to London in only 90 minutes from most parts of the County.

Historically, Staffordshire's economy has been rooted in manufacturing and production. In common with many other areas across the UK, Staffordshire has seen the local economy change dramatically over the past decade, with an ongoing shift away from our industrial heritage to a more service led economy, which given the County's strategic location has seen it become a popular location for logistics and distribution companies.

Similarly, the coalfields of Staffordshire were central to the wealth and development of the County through the South Staffordshire, North Staffordshire and North Warwickshire coalfields. In the mid 1980s Staffordshire was the fifth largest mining community in the Country, with over 10,000 people directly employed in the industry. The collapse of the industry led to a number of challenges for Staffordshire, including a legacy of low levels of aspiration in the coalfield communities. This has been reflected in lower than average staying on rates at school, poor education attainment at GCSE level, high proportions of people with no qualifications and low proportions of people with higher level qualifications. Tackling these low aspirations will be important in improving

the skills base and competitiveness of Staffordshire's workforce and future economy.

Our different districts have been affected by the changes in our economy; Newcastle, for example, has been affected in recent years by the decline of the traditional 'Staffordshire' industries which have all but disappeared, along with the ceramics sector, which has undergone significant structural change.



Despite this shift, employment in the service sector has developed, and there has been recent growth in the field of medicine and technology, particularly around Keele University. A variety of regeneration activities, across the county have also been undertaken to deal with some of the problems faced by coalfield communities: land reclamation of former collieries at Lea Hall, Lymedale and

Silverdale have all been successful in providing new employment opportunities in these areas.

Over the last ten years, more than 20,000 new jobs have been attracted to the County involving nearly 500 businesses. Many of these are international and national companies such as Bombardier, New Look, and Screwfix. Without doubt, these businesses have been encouraged to locate in Staffordshire by the improving communications and the wide range of commercial development sites. These include key sites such as Lymedale Business Park, in Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire Technology Park in Stafford and Centrum 100 in Burton upon Trent.

Staffordshire has historically been a relatively low paid area, and this tradition continues today. Across the County we see significant variation between the wages earned in the workplace in Staffordshire and its districts, with full time workers in Staffordshire, earning on average £47 per week less than Great Britain. Cannock Chase and Newcastle-under-Lyme, with average earnings of £372 per week, have particularly low wage levels.



Gladmans building Staffordshire Technology Park

Where we are: Our People, Places and Environment

Our People

With an estimated population of 823,000 people, Staffordshire has the 8th largest population of the shire counties in England and the largest of the shire counties in the West Midlands. Some 2.4% of the County's population is from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities, which is a relatively low figure compared to the England average of 9.1%. Alongside the more established settlers from BME communities, Staffordshire, and particularly East Staffordshire, has also recently experienced a marked increase in migrants, particularly from Eastern Europe. Our population has increased by around 15,400 people over the last five years (to 2006), as a result of migration.



In terms of population growth, predictions indicate that our population will have risen to approximately 840,000 people by 2021. In common with the emerging national pattern, the changes to our population will be most extreme in the projected decreases in the younger age groups, and significant increases in the older age groups. The changing population dynamics will mean all Staffordshire partners will need to consider how they will deliver services in the future to meet these changes.

Currently, the under 19 age group makes up 24% of our population. Therefore to make our vision of sustainable economic growth, a reality, we need to develop children and young people's outcomes for later life starting from an early age, and ensuring that they are engaged and sufficiently skilled and qualified into the future.

In developing the local skills base, we will need to put greater emphasis on retaining local graduates from our universities, particularly linking research and development opportunities from the universities and spinning these out into the wider local economies.

By improving our skills base we will be able to address a significant challenge facing Staffordshire; that is the competitiveness of our economy. Compared to other areas regionally, we have the lowest rate of Gross Value Added (GVA) per



head of all the counties and unitary authorities in the West Midlands Region, at 75% of the UK average. This gap in competitiveness puts our local economy at a relative disadvantage to other areas. Local competitiveness can be enhanced through diversifying the economy to encourage inward investment and the development of higher value added sectors for example the high technology cluster around Keele University.

In terms of business growth, we have a rate of 35.6 new VAT business registrations 10,000 population, which is above that of the West Midlands Region

but below the UK average. In addition the VAT registration rates vary between our districts with the north of the County displaying significantly lower enterprise rates than other parts of the County. However, business survival rates stand at 73% for the County, which compares favourably with the UK average of 71.3%.

For the period October 2005 to September 2006, Staffordshire had an employment rate of the working age population of 78.2% compared to the Great Britain rate of 74.2%. Although our employment rate is above that of Great Britain as a whole, it is important that an above average employment rate is at least maintained, or ideally increased, to foster the economic prosperity of the County.

Reducing inequalities, whether in terms of health, access, employment, environment or achievement is crucial to achieving our aims and ambitions. Some of the most extreme inequalities in Staffordshire exist in terms of health, particularly life expectancy. Although nationally, life expectancy is increasing, some areas do have significantly lower life expectancy than the national average, for example men and women in Cannock Chase have significantly lower life expectancy 75.5 years and 80.2 years respectively.

Mortality rates are falling for both men and women, but overall our rates remain significantly higher compared with the national average. In total, across



Staffordshire, 30 out of 174 wards have significantly higher all cause mortality rates, than nationally. Health inequalities are related to deprivation and there is a strong correlation at a ward level between premature mortality and the Index of Multiple Deprivation. However, life expectancy is increasing and with it the numbers of those with limiting, long term illnesses due to the combined effect of increasing numbers of older people and increases in the prevalence of conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and mental health.

Obesity is a major health concern at national, regional and Staffordshire levels, with nationally nearly a quarter of adults and 10% of children classified as obese. Current trends indicate that obesity will soon surpass smoking as the greatest cause of premature loss of life.

Substance misuse is a central part of local community safety strategies in Staffordshire. In most cases, priorities for the partnerships include tackling alcohol and drug-related crime and the fear of this, tackling binge drinking amongst young people, improving access to treatment and improving education about substance misuse and tackling social exclusion as a consequence of substance misuse.

Currently, there are around 3,500 problematic drug users in Staffordshire, with 1,929 drug users in effective treatment (2005/06). Meanwhile estimates

have calculated that there are approximately 131,000 hazardous drinkers, 32,000 harmful drinkers and 21,000 alcohol dependence drinkers in Staffordshire. Alcoholic specific mortality has increased significantly over the last 15 years from an average of 30 deaths per year in 1994 to 90 per year in 2002 to 2006 an increase of 119% compared with 71% for England.

In terms of our children and young people, 30% of children aged 11-15 reported drinking alcohol in the week in Staffordshire compared with 21% nationally, while our under 18 hospital admissions for alcohol specific conditions are higher than the regional and national figures, particularly for females. The Standardised Mortality Rate for chronic liver disease is also relatively worse compared to the regional and national figures for females in Staffordshire

The impact of alcohol abuse is not confined solely to the physical health of our citizens, but also harms our communities. To take anti-social behaviour as an example, incidents, whereby the offender was caught drinking in the street, have increased considerably over the last 2 years from 637 incidents in 2005-06 to 1486 incidents in 2006-07. Furthermore in 2005/06 just over 5,000 offences were committed by people under the influence of alcohol, with around two-thirds of these taking place at the weekend and around three-quarters of

these being for violent crime. Similarly, although not the only factor, alcohol plays a significant part of domestic abuse across the County.



Domestic violence is consistently identified across our eight districts as a priority that affects all our communities. Within East Staffordshire, Lichfield and Tamworth, a total of 29% of all violent offences are recorded as being a 'Domestic Incident'. Domestic violence is currently showing an increase in the Newcastle Borough area with a significant increase in offences over the last 6 months, while in Stafford Borough, inequalities in domestic violence are marked, with certain wards experiencing particularly high levels of domestic

violence compared to the rest of the area. Repeat victimisation is also a particular problem, with some of the highest rates in the County recorded in Stafford Borough, where 38.7% of domestic violence offences were repeat incidents.

Finally, despite progress in recent years, around 350 people are still killed or seriously injured each year on our roads. In 2006, there were 4,512 recorded road accident casualties in Staffordshire with the total cost of road accidents in 2006 being £290 million.



Our Places

Staffordshire is a county of enormous potential, yet it is also a hugely complex and diverse one. Each of the eight Districts has its own unique character, its own strengths and its own challenges.

Cannock Chase, like the County as a whole, is a district of contrasts comprising industrial heartlands and urban centres alongside Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In the past the district was reliant on coal mining and manufacturing industries, but has been hit by the decline of these sectors and needs to restructure the economy around new employment opportunities.



St. Austin's Roman Catholic Church, Stafford

East Staffordshire incorporates a large rural hinterland, as well as the town of Burton upon Trent, which is a significant service hub and renowned national centre for the brewing industry. Burton upon Trent is also home to the most significant community of people from Black and Minority Ethnic groups in the County.

Newcastle under Lyme is also a district of contrasts; with the east of borough dominated by an urban core whilst in the west is a predominantly rural

area. The district is heavily influenced by Stoke-on-Trent, with which it shares a considerable border, and suffers from being a relatively deprived in the context of Staffordshire.

Lichfield District has strong links to the West Midlands conurbation, and witnesses significant levels of out commuting. A relatively affluent area, it is famous for its history, architecture and culture, and has a relatively strong local economy.



Moseley Old Hall, Fordhouses Nr Wolverhampton

South Staffordshire has a strong links with the West Midlands conurbation, particularly with Wolverhampton, but also lies within the West Midlands Green Belt. In South Staffordshire there is no single dominant settlement and its uniqueness is its claim to be a “community of communities”.

Staffordshire Moorlands is also a predominantly rural district with a third of the District falling inside the Peak Park and about 80 per cent designated as Green Belt. The district also has close links to parts of Cheshire, as well as to the city of Stoke-on-Trent.

Stafford Borough is located in the heart of Staffordshire and benefits from being at the centre of a number of communications networks. Although it is influenced by these networks the natural environment within the district is highly valued, with two National Nature Reserves and numerous Sites of Biological Importance, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and a series of new local nature reserves.

Meanwhile, Tamworth is Staffordshire’s truly urban borough, with strong links to Birmingham from which it has absorbed a large amount of the population. It is estimated that around 50% of the adult population out-commute each day, which has impacted on the notion of “community” in the borough.



Tamworth Castle

The diversity of Staffordshire provides partners with real challenges in terms of service delivery. The education system in particular has to match the varied geographical nature of our County. While parts of the county are urban, there are large areas of Staffordshire, notably in the Moorlands, that are very sparsely populated and where primary schools are generally very small. Travel to school patterns and transport provision are major issues in these areas and the rural nature of much of our county impacts on school organisation, relative costs per pupil and the planning for the extension of school activities beyond the school day. The general trend across most areas of the county is a decline in pupil numbers. However, the pattern is very varied and while some areas will experience growth, in others there will be a dramatic decline in pupil numbers. This is a considerable challenge, particularly for small rural schools.

Similarly, the health experience of a population of the size and diversity of Staffordshire is bound to be complex, with different areas experiencing local health challenges. Many parts of Staffordshire are also rural and there is a need to ensure that health services are accessible and equitable. There is some evidence to suggest that poor access and availability of good transport, both private and public, can mean that some people living in rural areas may not make use of the health services that they need.

Staffordshire is, on the whole a relatively affluent area; but it is not without areas of real deprivation. Some 8.6% of our population (69,034 people and 28,561 households) live in Super Output Areas (SOAs) which fall within the 20% most deprived SOAs nationally. Although the highest levels of deprivation are most evident in the larger urban areas, a challenge for Staffordshire is the often hidden, multiple deprivation in the rural areas, which exists in isolated pockets.

A strong overall measure of cohesion is picking up on whether people feel their community is one where diversity is valued, people from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities and where there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all. In Staffordshire 45.1% of respondents agreed that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. Responses are a little mixed across



our districts with the highest level of agreement in Stafford Borough and the highest level of disagreement in East Staffordshire.

Staffordshire has badged itself as 'the Creative County'; this celebrates our present cultural activity and our unique heritage. We recognise that within our County there is a rich and diverse history to celebrate and promote. There is the provision of a strong cultural offer which is recognised as enriching the quality of life as well as strengthening and defining the image and identity of communities. We also recognise the valuable contribution culture makes to the local economy

through the established sports and leisure economy, the newer creative industries and cultural and sports tourism, as well as the opportunity to promote sustainable or 'green' tourism .

Our visitor economy embodies the County's diversity, and includes built, natural and industrial heritage. With examples including, Shugborough, Baggeridge Country Park and the Uttoxeter Racecourse. Additionally, Staffordshire is also home to the newly opened National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas, as well as to Alton Towers, which is one of the biggest visitor attractions in the UK as a whole, and Drayton Manor Park, Trentham Gardens and Monkey Forest.

Cultural services are a real strength in Staffordshire, and are recognised as high performing and making a difference to the lives of people in the county. Within Staffordshire we aspire to ensure that cultural activity will foster imagination, community spirit, community identity and mutual support. We recognise that cultural services must add value to services which are being developed to support vulnerable adults, children and young people. We also understand that participation in sport and active leisure promotes healthy lifestyles and brings people from different cultures together; and engagement with the arts breaks down barriers and fosters greater understanding of different ways of life. Finally, we also acknowledge that participation

within cultural activity does raise aspirations, and foster the imagination of children, young people and communities and is effective in reducing inequality.

The delivery of affordable housing is a high priority and the provision of more affordable homes is essential to address imbalances in the housing markets as set out in the Regional Housing Strategy. At present the number of affordable housing units being delivered regionally falls well below the targets set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy revision, which proposes that we will need to provide around 54,900 houses (net) in the 2006 to 2026 period.

The affordability of market housing continues to be a significant barrier, especially among people trying to enter the housing market, with ratios locally mirroring increases regionally and nationally. Staffordshire County is generally less affordable than the West Midlands Region as a whole, but slightly more affordable than England. Tackling homelessness is also a priority with analysis showing that there are in excess of 2000 homeless applications in Staffordshire per annum. Ensuring that there is an adequate supply of affordable housing is essential to reduce the numbers of homeless households that are housed in temporary accommodation.



Sheltered housing, Stafford

Our Environment

Our County is land bound, and is set within a varied rural landscape, which includes Cannock Chase, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Peak District National Park. One of our County's assets is its natural environment, particularly because it forms an important link between the different habitats of the north and south of the country, containing ideal habitats for a range of protected species. But this great resource is a vulnerable one, and in common with the rest of the UK, has suffered losses of habitat and species. The protection and enhancement of existing habitats, alongside re-creation of lost habitats will help to positively transform and enhance our county so that Staffordshire becomes even more environmentally rich and for the well being of both people and wildlife.

In Staffordshire we currently have 65 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), which cover around 3.8% of the County land area. The protection and management of SSSIs is important so that they may be enjoyed by future generations. They also represent the country's very best wildlife and geographical sites.

Our natural environment is one of our greatest assets and we recognise the impact that climate change can have and is already having on it. We have developed a Climate Change Action Plan,



which sets out our overall approach to addressing climate change.

In 2004 Staffordshire produced approximately 8,800kt of carbon dioxide, equivalent to 10.9 tonnes of CO₂ per person. These estimated levels are well above the West Midlands average of 9.1 tonnes and the national average of 9.3 tonnes. 42% of our emissions are estimated to be produced by the industrial, commercial and public sector, with road transport accounting for 32% and domestic users 26%.

Across the County there are high levels of car ownership and a high reliance on the car, with only 19% of households in the County not having access to a car. Despite this, access to key services remains a major problem for a significant proportion of the population.

Traffic congestion, despite public perception is not currently as significant a problem in Staffordshire as it is in many of the country's main urban areas. However, there are issues regarding the high volumes of vehicles on certain sections of Staffordshire's road network during peak travel times. Furthermore the high volumes of traffic, especially heavy commercial vehicles, in sensitive areas of the County, present a significant environmental challenge.

Where we want to be: Our Future

The changes to the economy in Staffordshire mean that we now have a chance to build on our economic strengths, whilst recognising some of our weaknesses, to develop a sustainable, vibrant and dynamic future for the local economy which will ultimately lead to a better quality of life for all in Staffordshire.



Promoting sustainable economic growth in Staffordshire is at the heart of our ambitions and, as nationally and regionally, is top of our local agenda. Therefore, attracting investment into the County will be a key aim. While all investment is welcome, one of our challenges is to encourage the investment of the higher value and truly sustainable sectors. To be able to attract these sectors we need to ensure that

we have the land and buildings to accommodate the developments and the appropriate local skills base. A multi agency approach to addressing this skills gap from the Education Authority, through Connexions, The Learning and Skills Council, Further and Higher Education providers and local employers will be needed to develop the skills base, and assist in developing the overall competitiveness of the Staffordshire economy. By improving competitiveness and narrowing the skills gap, we will be able to foster the conditions for growth and prosperity in Staffordshire. This boost to prosperity will have an impact on the quality of life of all our communities and will be instrumental in addressing the inequalities which exist in Staffordshire.

To ensure we take full advantage of increased levels of enterprise and that we gain the most significant benefit from this enterprise activity there will be a need to ensure that business start ups are in the higher value added sectors identified as the primary targets for business growth. These include Specialised Business Services, Building Technologies, Medical Technologies, High Value Added Consumer Products, ICT and Multi Media, Environmental Technologies, Culture and Media.

The needs of our changing communities will present us with new and different challenges. As our County continues to diversify and grow, all our communities will need to develop confidence



Keele Medic, Keele

and trust, and become stronger in that people feel listened to and empowered; get along with one and another; and feel safe and supported. We will adopt a preventative approach, which is both proactive and supportive to help our communities, families and citizens develop in this way. We also recognise the importance of developing a strong cultural offer which will provide cultural and sporting opportunities and engage communities in positive, enjoyable and creative activity.

Changing population dynamics, whether in terms of age or ethnicity, will also mean that we, as Staffordshire partners will need to consider carefully the changing needs of our changing communities and the impact this will have on how we will deliver our services over the coming years to address these changing demographic patterns.



The voluntary and community sector will be key in both shaping our direction and in delivering outcomes which are important to our communities. We will take the opportunity to move commissioning further forwards in a way which supports the contribution of the sector to achieving our vision.



Lyndale Business Park

As our communities grow, the physical, social and environmental infrastructure to support our communities will also need to develop. In the future, Staffordshire will be the focus of a significant amount of housing development and the appropriate provision of retail and commercial development to strengthen the towns of Cannock, Lichfield, Newcastle under Lyme, Stafford and Tamworth.

To support this growth, we will need to ensure that the necessary, complementary infrastructure is provided. In Stafford and Burton, in particular, this will hinge on appropriate provision of transport to improve capacity on key transport links to ease congestion and promote public transport, as well as on green infrastructure, which provides access to natural greenspace for our people. It will be important to plan for all this development in such a manner that it delivers genuinely sustainable Staffordshire communities. It will be equally important to respect the environmental capacity of the County and ensure it grows within its environmental limits, safeguarding its natural resources and ensuring that they remain unimpaired for both current and future generations.

We want our County to continue to be renowned for its quality environment. For this to be the case, we will need to work to minimise the threats to the natural environment, with a particular focus on climate change. By building on the work we have done in this area, we all, as individuals, organisations and as a County, will have the opportunity to be forerunners in the adaptation and mitigation of measures to tackle climate change, and in ensuring Staffordshire continues to be a place enjoyed by all who live, work and study in it.

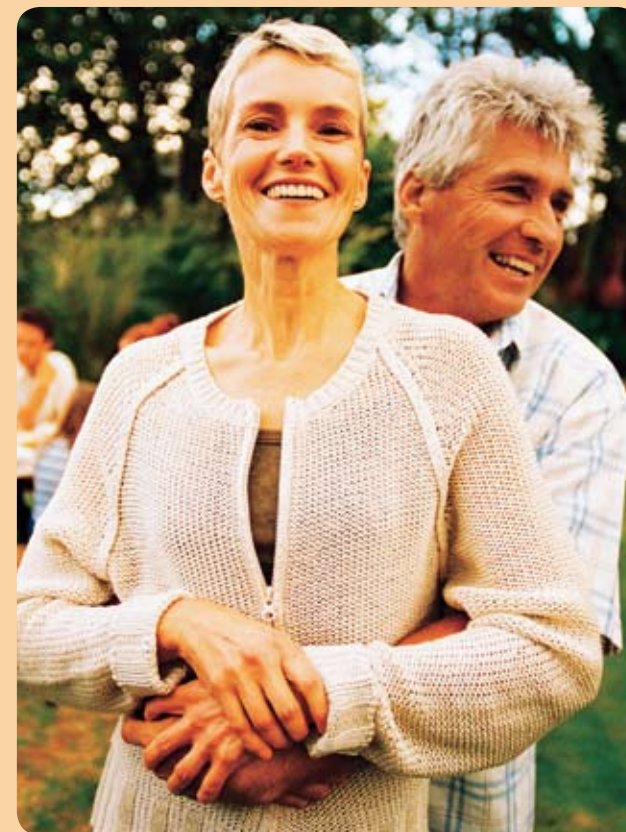
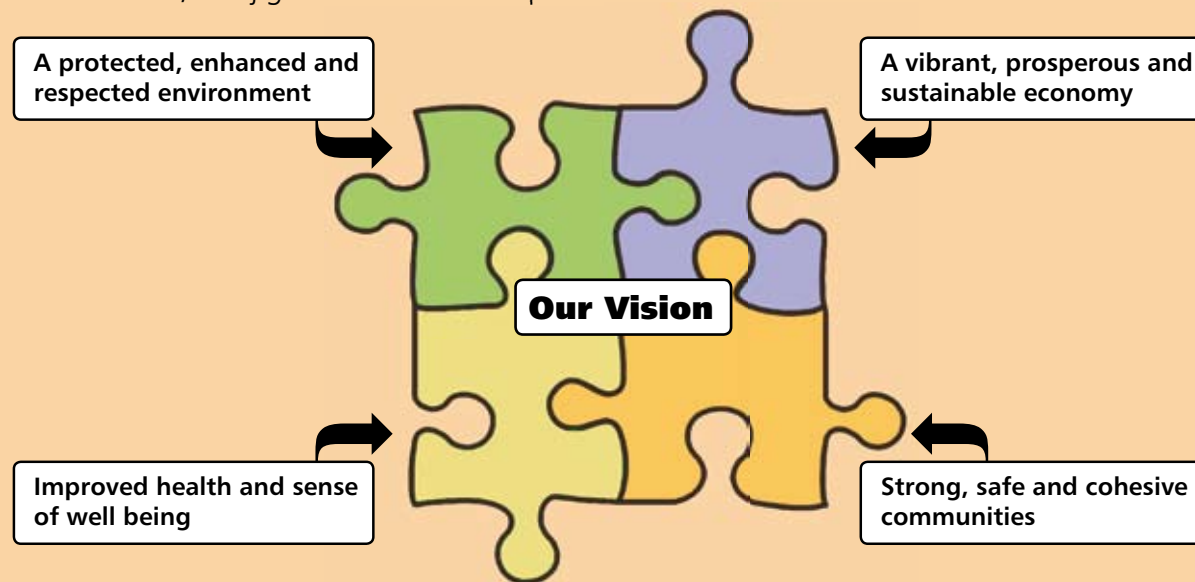


Our Vision

It is our fifteen year vision to **improve the quality of life for all our people, by increasing economic prosperity, improving local services, and developing partnership working.**

Our Priorities

Our vision will only become a reality by working together to achieve four overarching priorities; **a vibrant, prosperous and sustainable economy; strong, safe and cohesive communities; improved health and sense of well-being and a protected, enhanced and respected environment.** We will not realise our vision if we only achieve three of the four priorities – they are all pieces of the same jigsaw, without one, the jigsaw will be incomplete.



Our Priorities in Detail

A vibrant, prosperous and sustainable economy



What will this mean for Staffordshire?

Staffordshire will be known regionally and nationally as a high knowledge, high value added, high skilled, inclusive economy. Our County will be recognised as a place of innovation, enterprise and entrepreneurship, where new businesses thrive and survive, are profitable and contribute to the prosperity of our communities. Staffordshire will contribute significantly more to the West Midlands' Gross Value Added and enjoy greater competitiveness, than it currently does. There will be greater amounts of knowledge based employment and levels of research and development. Our workforce will be better skilled with everyone

having the opportunity to develop and improve their skills and achieve their full potential.

This will be achieved by:

- ◆ Improving basic skills, particularly at entry level for numeracy and literacy;
- ◆ Reducing the number of young people who are Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET)
- ◆ Raising the high level skills base and retaining a highly skilled workforce, and so contributing to increasing Staffordshire's GVA;
- ◆ Employers recognising the need for and benefit of a highly skilled workforce;
- ◆ Encouraging graduate retention and the return of those graduating from outside our County;
- ◆ Maximising the opportunities presented by Staffordshire and Keele universities, and the associated networks;
- ◆ Increasing the levels of enterprise and ensuring that business start ups are in the higher value added sectors;
- ◆ Raising the aspirations of all our children and young people allowing every Staffordshire child to achieve their potential;
- ◆ Reducing worklessness and increasing the employment rate and improving accessibility to employment opportunities;

- ◆ Embracing and investing in new environmental technologies, such as the Renewables Sector, and developing our County's renewable energy sector;
- ◆ Attracting sustainable, quality public and private investment into the County that supports our towns and villages;
- ◆ Developing housing which is decent, affordable and sustainable and developed to meet local and regional requirements of the different communities across the County, as they grow and develop.

The desire to create a vibrant, prosperous and sustainable economy is aligned with a number of themes in District Sustainable Community Strategies. The activities set out above will add value to many District priorities, for example:

- ◆ Increased levels of new business formation and the fostering of an enterprise culture (Chase LSP)
- ◆ Increased affordable housing (Lichfield LSP)
- ◆ Availability of a highly skilled workforce, business space and business support (Staffordshire Moorlands LSP)



Strong, safe and cohesive communities

What will this mean for Staffordshire?

Staffordshire's communities and citizens will feel safe and be safe, and the fear of crime and actual crime, particularly violent crime will be reduced. Our communities will benefit from accessible, integrated and responsive services, which meet their needs and which they have had a voice in shaping. We will be known for our enterprising and thriving third sector, which is rooted in our communities. Across the County, a social enterprise culture will exist, which will play an important part in raising skills and aspirations and in the delivery of key services such as recycling, caring and domestic services. Our communities will continue to benefit from our strong cultural provision, which enriches everyone's quality of life.

This will be achieved by:

- ◆ Tackling the anti social behaviour and crime that matter most to our local communities;
- ◆ Addressing the causes of crime, and reducing the impact of crime on the vulnerable;
- ◆ Preventing domestic violence and reducing its impact on individuals and families;
- ◆ Building trust and confidence within and between our communities;

- ◆ Promoting participation in cultural activities and raising the aspirations of children, young people and communities;
- ◆ Creating a strong, effective and influential third sector in Staffordshire, which is fully engaged in planning and delivering services;
- ◆ Putting sustainable development principles at the core of education and lifelong learning, with schools, colleges and universities being examples of sustainable development among the communities they serve, delivering the skills of sustainable living and helping to create sustainable communities.

All District LSPs have themes in their respective Sustainable Community Strategies which align with the priorities in this section. The activities set out above will add value to those District LSP priorities, specific examples being:

- ◆ To build stronger neighbourhoods enabling communities to actively participate and influence service delivery (Newcastle under Lyme LSP)
- ◆ Reductions in anti-social behaviour, violence and criminal damage (Tamworth LSP)
- ◆ Enhancing community safety (Stafford LSP)

Improved health and sense of well-being

What will this mean for Staffordshire?

All Staffordshire's people will benefit from equality of opportunity and access to the resources they need to improve their health, well being and quality of life. Our citizens will be encouraged to lead healthier, more active lives and make healthier choices. The emotional health and well being of the most vulnerable members of our communities, especially our vulnerable children and older people will be improved. Our County's older people will be empowered to live independently and have greater choice of and access to the services they need and want, as well as being provided with opportunities for employment and education.

This will be achieved by:

- ◆ Reducing health inequalities and promoting healthier living;
- ◆ Improving the quality of and access to services for those in excluded communities in Staffordshire;
- ◆ Reducing obesity across the population;
- ◆ Tackling the causes and consequences of neglect of children;

- ◆ Supporting and protecting vulnerable people, particularly children, those with learning disabilities and older people;
- ◆ Empowering and supporting carers;
- ◆ Reducing the harm caused by drugs and alcohol both within our communities and on an individual's mental and physical well being;
- ◆ Promoting and supporting healthier choices within the home, schools and workplace.

Priorities in this section are aligned with themes in District Sustainable Community Strategies and the identified activities will add value to those priorities identified at the District level, including:

- ◆ Reduced mortality rates from coronary heart disease (East Staffordshire LSP)
- ◆ To improve the quality of life of older people (Newcastle under Lyme LSP)
- ◆ Improving health and well-being (Stafford LSP)



A protected, enhanced and respected environment

What will this mean for Staffordshire?



Shugborough Hall, Stafford

Staffordshire will be known for its rich biodiversity, which is protected, restored and enhanced both for its own right and because of the benefits it contributes to our own well-being. The County will also be renowned for its diverse and unique built and historic environment. Staffordshire will continue to be a high quality visitor destination based on a range of tourist attractions, pleasant countryside and natural environment. Tourism in the County will lead the way in 'green tourism', demonstrating good environmental practice to its visitors and the

industry. Every community, whether rural or urban will be able to make use of an effective, accessible and affordable transport network, developed in a sustainable manner, with increased use of public transport, cycling and walking as a proportion of total transport. Together as individuals, businesses and communities, we will have greatly increased our ability to adapt and cope with environmental challenges, in particular climate change and extreme weather events. We will manage our waste effectively and there will be zero waste to landfill.

This will be achieved by:

- ◆ Using our natural resources, particularly the County's mineral assets, to support the development of the economy, but managing them in a sustainable way, so that all Staffordshire has to offer can continue to be enjoyed by generations to come;
- ◆ Creating and maintaining green spaces within our communities;
- ◆ Encouraging more sustainable construction, securing high levels of resource and energy efficiency and a reduction in carbon emissions, contributing to sustainable transport, enhancing biodiversity and helping to tackle climate change
- ◆ Improving access to everyday facilities for all our communities but particularly for those without access to a car;

- ◆ Responding to the threat of climate change and environmental deterioration, reducing our carbon emissions and making a commitment to live more sustainable lives;
- ◆ Managing waste in ways which reduce environmental impact and support the economy and local communities and producing less waste, ensuring waste is being re-used, recycled, composted and used to produce energy.

This priority is aligned with a number of identified themes in the District Sustainable Community Strategies and the activities above will add value to specific District priorities such as:

- ◆ Protect and enhance South Staffordshire's natural and built environments and distinctive landscape (South Staffordshire LSP)
- ◆ Reduce carbon emissions by individuals, communities and businesses (East Staffordshire and Staffordshire Moorlands LSPs)
- ◆ Support for local businesses to develop sustainable waste management strategies (Tamworth LSP)
- ◆ Reduce the reliance on the car by encouraging the use of public transport (Lichfield LSP)

Working in Partnership

The Staffordshire Strategic Partnership (SSP) is the countywide Local Strategic Partnership. It is made up of representatives from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors who work collectively to promote the economic, social and environmental well being of Staffordshire.

Advantage West Midlands

Areva T+D UK Ltd

Aspire Housing

Be Together Ltd

Burton Hospitals NHS Trust

Burton on Trent Technical College

Burton upon Trent Constituency

Business Link West Midlands

Cannock Chase District Council

Chase Community Partnership

Chase Council for Voluntary Service

Churches Linked Across Staffordshire & Potteries

CLA West Midlands

Community Action and Support - East Staffordshire

Community Council of Staffordshire

Connexions Staffordshire

Coors Brewers Ltd

County Association of Trades Councils

Drug Action Team

East Staffordshire Borough Council

East Staffordshire LSP

East Staffordshire Racial Equality Council

English Heritage

Environment Agency

Federation of Small Businesses

Government Office for the West Midlands

Heart of Burton NMP

InStaffs UK Ltd

JC Bamford Excavators Ltd

Jobcentre Plus

Keele University

Knutton Cross Heath NMP

Leek College of Further Education & School of Art

Lichfield and District Council for Voluntary Service

Lichfield District Council

Lichfield LSP

Mid Staffs Hospitals NHS Trust

National Forest Company

Natural England

Newcastle under Lyme CVS

Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council

Newcastle-under-Lyme College

Newcastle-under-Lyme LSP

NFU (West Midlands Region)

North Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce

North Staffordshire PCT

North Staffordshire Racial Equality Council

North Staffs Combined Healthcare

NHS Foundation Trust

Peak District National Park Authority

Rodbaston College

SCIO

South Staffordshire Chamber of
Commerce & Industry

South Staffordshire Council for Voluntary Service

South Staffordshire District Council

South Staffordshire LSP

South Staffordshire PCT

South Staffs and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Trust



Stafford Borough Council
Stafford College
Stafford District Voluntary Services
Stafford LSP
Staffordshire Building Society
Staffordshire County Council
Staffordshire Learning and Skills Council
Staffordshire Moorlands CVS
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
Staffordshire Moorlands LSP
Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association
Staffordshire Police
Staffordshire Police Authority
Staffordshire Probation Service
Staffordshire Rural Forum
Staffordshire Youth Offending Service
Staffordshire Lifelong Learning Network
Staffordshire Fire and Rescue
Sustainable Staffordshire
Tamworth & Lichfield College

Tamworth Borough Council
Tamworth CVS
Tamworth LSP
The Heart of England Tourist Board
West Midlands Ambulance Service
West Midlands North Division - Local Service
Pensions Agency

The eight District Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and local authorities have also been actively engaged with the SSP and with the production of this strategy. Each of the eight District LSPs also has their own Sustainable Community Strategies. These strategies are unique to each District, and focus on issues which are locally important. The SSP will work closely with the eight District LSPs as well as with other partnerships to make sure we are all pulling in the same direction and not duplicating effort and resources.

Reviewing and Refreshing our Strategy

It is our intention, that prior to the annual review of the Local Area Agreement, we will review both the evidence, the Story of Staffordshire and the priorities contained within our Sustainable Community Strategy to ensure that the strategy is an accurate reflection of the needs and ambitions of Staffordshire.

For More Information

If you would like more information about the Sustainable Community Strategy, please visit the Staffordshire Strategic Partnership website: www.staffordshirepartnership.org.uk

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Notes



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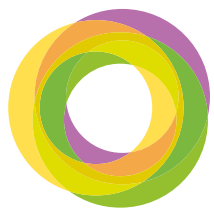




Notes

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Staffordshire Strategic Partnership

If you need this information in large print, Braille, other language or on audio cassette please ask

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