

city of
stoke
on trent



Building a Brilliant Future



‘We need to act today to secure the future of our city, which lies in independence and economic prosperity.’



Cllr Mohammed Pervez

The City delivers its mandate for change

If you think you know Stoke-on-Trent then think again. The city is undergoing a renaissance. Just 90 minutes by train from London, the UK's 13th largest city region has embarked on its 'mandate for change' with job creation at its core and ambitions to grow the local economy by 50% by 2043, moving from key city to core city status and swelling the North Staffordshire city region's population to almost three quarters of a million. Stoke-on-Trent City Council leader Mohammed Pervez and chief executive John van de Laarschot are driving the new winds of change. Cllr Pervez, who works for a pharmaceutical company and became a councillor in 2006 and leader in 2010, says: 'Our mandate for change is to encourage investment, support business and support the vulnerable.' John van de Laarschot comes from a private sector background and after cutting his teeth on a district council in Devon became Stoke-on-Trent's chief executive in 2010. As he recalls on his arrival: 'The city was pretty challenged and I was very honest about what I could bring with my private sector experience. There's been a lot of work since then changing the mentality of the organisation from "can't do" to "can do" and to "the answer is yes, the question is how."

Cllr Pervez is frank about the council's previous weaknesses and its failed experiment with an elected mayor/city manager model which ended in 2009 when the public voted out the system. As he says: 'The need for political as well as organisational stability in Stoke-on-Trent is paramount.' The council's inward-looking focus during the period culminating in the rejection of the elected mayoral governance model created negative perceptions of the city and the local authority, which had a damaging impact on jobs and growth. Cllr Pervez is clear that this perception is changing now and that the city council's growing organisational confidence is being recognised by government, business and local and regional partners. As Cllr Pervez emphasises: 'The local authority is there to create the conditions for private sector jobs and to articulate a vision.' John van de Laarschot adds: 'We need to create the right conditions for the private sector to flourish. Our pitch to ministers is that we will transform Stoke-on-Trent from being a net recipient to a net contributor. That is our number one priority, but to do so we need a quantum step change.'

The focus in particular is on job creation. Stoke-on-Trent's success is supported by the Centre for Cities, whose Cities Outlook 2014 report ranked it fourth out of 64 UK



Chief Executive John van de Laarschot

cities for job creation in the previous year and 10th in terms of private sector job creation. Stoke-on-Trent is the centre of the pottery industry through its six towns, Tunstall, Burslem, Hanley, Stoke, Fenton and Longton, collectively known as The Potteries, which became the City of Stoke-on-Trent when the towns were federated in 1910.

While the coal and steel industries shed huge numbers of jobs in the 1970s and 1980s, the pottery industry still has a sizeable presence, bolstered by the increasing cachet of English-made products and is an important global centre for ceramics. Indeed thriving manufacturers such as the renowned Emma Bridgewater pottery organise tours of their factories, while artistic ceramics producer Moorcroft enjoys a global reach, and the wider industry is also using its ceramic expertise to expand into related medical innovations and advanced materials. The legacy of the pottery industry which made Stoke-on-Trent world-famous is incorporated into the vision for the next wave of technology. Powerhouse Central, the city deal negotiated jointly by the city council and Staffordshire County Council in April, draws on the unique characteristics of the area, such as its natural resources, to unlock sites for industrial development and provide energy solutions. The city deal aims to create thousands of new jobs over the next decade, building on recent successes which saw the city council help over 240 business start-ups in the past two years and set up the Stoke-on-Trent Loans Fund offering loans of up to £50,000 to local enterprises.

Major projects are already transforming Stoke-on-Trent. The £15m state of the art city centre bus station opened last year. Work has already started on the site of the Smithfield central business district to include offices, shopping, hotels and leisure. City Waterside is an

example of a multi-agency approach to a pioneering urban neighbourhood development including 67 hectares of former brownfield land. Over £100m of investment has seen the removal of over 800 empty and unfit houses, which have been replaced with 500 modern, high quality homes to date, with plans for hundreds more. Stoke-on-Trent continues to benefit from a £1.5bn investment in the area, resulting in a range of expanded new facilities, including a new central business district, Smithfield, and £270m spent on new schools and academies under the Building Schools for the Future programme.

The city now has a clear educational focus on computing, engineering and life sciences and the investment in the University Quarter will create an internationally recognised centre for education in North Staffordshire, building on the existing Staffordshire University, Stoke on Trent College and the City of Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form College. Staffordshire University has made Stoke-on-Trent its main campus with 3000 students relocating there from their current base in Stafford by 2017, comprising 1000 engineering students who are already in the process of moving and 2000 computing and technology students. The university expects almost 13000 students will ultimately be in Stoke, contributing to the city's economic uplift.

The new Stoke on Trent College's £11m lifestyle building was opened to 600 health and social care students in 2009 while the £33m Sixth Form College opened in 2010 and Staffordshire University's £30m Science Centre opened in 2012. The new Centre of Refurbishment Excellence in Longton is at the cutting edge of applying advanced materials and low carbon construction techniques to transform the energy efficiency of the UK's built environment. The city council is leading a compelling bid for an HS2 station for the city. Stoke-on-Trent has been widely acknowledged as a serious contender. Stoke-on-Trent is the biggest urban conurbation between Birmingham and Manchester with a population of 470,000 and the development ready brownfield capacity to supercharge the economy.

To bypass the city would be lost opportunity for UK Plc. Councillor Pervez said the Stoke Route would deliver everything the Government wants from HS2. "We can do it for less taxpayers' cash, with benefits for Manchester seven years early, less impact on the countryside and more economic growth for nation. What's not to like about that?" he said.

Rolling out the red carpet to investors



Director of Place John Betty

The city council's relentless focus is on helping business to drive economic growth and create jobs and a key role in delivering this agenda is played by its Director of Place, John Betty. His wide brief covers the council's responsibility for the city's physical environment which ranges from street scene, highways, parks and waste to planning, economic development and inward investment.

With a background in the construction industry he understands the private sector and one of his prime tasks is taking the city council's 'renaissance' programme to partners, from the Chamber of Commerce to retailers and developers. His message is clear: to raise the council's external profile whether with business, developers, the LEP, house builders, or transport providers.

As he explains: 'We're outward-looking and engaging with business but it's important to have an economic story which is owned by the city and its people not by us. The city is the hero. The local authority is here to supply democracy and management.'

The council recently commissioned research to ascertain what made up Stoke-on-Trent's 'DNA' which was seen as:

- celebrating ceramics
- innovation and enterprise in manufacturing
- connectivity by road and rail (only 90 minutes from London by train)
- lifestyle (Staffordshire countryside and the Peak District are both on its doorstep).

Ceramics remains a major part of Stoke-on-Trent's renaissance, employing 7% of all employees in the city.

Although it is more traditionally associated in the public mind with brick kilns and smokestacks, the new ceramics sector is hi-tech, supplying medical industries with products such as knee joints that have helped make Stoke-on-Trent host city of the British Ceramics Biennial.

Pottery remains an important local business, buoyed by the continuing presence of famous names like Wedgwood, Dudson, Churchill, Moorcroft, Burleigh, Portmeirion and Emma Bridgewater, while Stoke-on-Trent-based Steelite is now one of the largest international producers and exporters of commercial tableware. Connectivity is another major asset for Stoke-on-Trent with the creation of a growth

corridor along the M6, a bid to secure an HS2 station in Stoke-on-Trent and an airport hub linking Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool and East Midlands airports. This is in addition to a regular fast rail service to both London and Manchester.

The city last year saw a record number of business startups and had the fourth highest job creation rate of any UK city. More than 2000 jobs have been created in the North Staffordshire conurbation in the past two years and Stoke-on-Trent is keen to roll out the red carpet to businesses that want to relocate or expand. It can offer a single point of contact for investors, streamlined planning, help on funding and access to supply chains, labour markets and networks. The council has also created six enterprise centres which are council-run spaces for new business startups including 13-week rent free periods.

But as well as infrastructure development the council is also developing human resources. More advanced skills will help reduce deprivation and shape a more prosperous future as a centre of learning and advanced manufacturing.

'Stoke-on-Trent is a city with big plans for its future and it's already beginning to deliver.'

Sara Williams, Chief Executive of the Staffordshire Chambers

It manages the government's Jobs, Education and Training programme which has helped 2,700 long-term unemployed in Stoke-on-Trent prepare for work, with 80% of those who find jobs keeping them. The city's NEET figure is down to below 5%. John explains: 'What we're saying to our young people is we can see ahead into the future for you, with a place that is strong and proud and ideally situated between two prosperous cities, Birmingham and Manchester.'

Staffordshire University, which already works closely with the city's further education colleges at the University Quarter in the heart of the city, recently decided to transfer its estate from Stafford to Stoke. As a result the city is developing a reputation as a UK centre for new materials technology and an international centre of research and development for applied materials. As John says: 'Stoke-on-Trent is outward-looking. It made its past fortune exporting across the world and that has also to be its future.'

We want to move from dependency to independence. We are determined to become an economy that contributes far more to UK Plc than it gets back from government, rather than the other way round.'

Investing in the skilled workforce of tomorrow



Goodwin Plc is one of the UK's longest established manufacturing firms – and one of the most innovative. The Stoke-on-Trent-based supplier of precision engineered castings is leading the way in the drive for quality and technical excellence.

The company already enjoys an annual turnover in excess of £100m, supplying components to an expanding global client list. But Chairman John Goodwin understands that future success will depend on the availability of skilled engineers.

Goodwin's has benefited from the city council's help to secure more than £2m of Regional Growth Fund money in the last two years. The grant has enabled the firm to develop a dedicated apprenticeship programme and create a purpose-built school on its factory premises. The scheme will create more than 200 jobs by 2022 and ensure the firm has the technical expertise it needs to remain in front. In addition, the city's strong communications links enable Goodwin's to reach key customers throughout the UK with ease.

The apprenticeship programme offers trainees the invaluable opportunity to put their classroom and workshop-based learning into practice alongside experienced professionals on the factory floor. This dual approach to skills ensures that trainees benefit from both the tuition and the on-the-job experience to equip them for the engineering challenges of tomorrow.

Mr Goodwin said: "While new techniques and technology are essential in remaining competitive, so also is the handing down of experience from a well-established workforce to new, motivated young men and women who, following a year of in-house schooling, train alongside skilled operatives for three years in the workplace. 'Over the last two years, our workforce has gone from 693 to 801 and will rise to 826 this September, by which time we will have 133 out of our 150 target.'

Raising the bar for educational excellence

Ormiston Sir Stanley Matthews Academy is blazing a trail in terms of setting new standards for secondary educational attainment in Stoke-on-Trent. The academy, which opened in 2010, is rapidly earning a reputation as a champion of social mobility.

Last year, as well as relocating to a new state-of-the-art, purpose-built site, the academy achieved a GCSE pass rate of 98 per cent, with 72 per cent of pupils achieving five passes or more including both maths and English.

The academy's innovative design and layout ensures that it has the flexibility and the state-of-the-art facilities to offer a high quality education to all of its 1,050 pupils.

Academy principal Mark Stanyer says: "We have just been named as the best school in the region for



transforming the life chances of young people from less affluent backgrounds. Our academy is spearheading the drive to raise educational standards across Stoke-on-Trent by going the extra mile to ensure that every student can realise their full potential."

The city council's cabinet member for education, Shaun Pender, said: "Our £270m investment through the Building Schools for the Future project has transformed the physical landscape of education in the city, but it has also raised the bar for aspiration, educational attainment and teaching and learning excellence.

The Ormiston Sir Stanley Matthews Academy's impressive accolade as a champion of social mobility has shown what Stoke-on-Trent can achieve and demonstrated that our relentless focus on education, skills and employment is really paying dividends."



‘Stoke-on-Trent’s goals of securing greater connectivity and transforming from a key city to a powerful core city will be powerful factors in the city’s unfolding economic success story.’

David Frost, Chairman, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP



Improving lives through partnership and innovation

Stoke-on-Trent has embraced public service reform and is pioneering a socially responsible, locality-based approach to supporting vulnerable citizens as it rises to the dual challenges of austerity and increasing demand for services.

The area is making great strides in transforming its economy and securing future growth and prosperity, but the city, like others across the UK, is facing increasing demands for services at the same time as funding is being reduced. The city council is meeting this challenge with an innovative new way of working which promises to unlock major benefits for the whole public sector.

The local authority has spent two years developing a pilot locality working scheme which will radically improve the way that the council and its local partners support residents with multiple complex needs. Director of People Tony Oakman believes the Co-operative Working strategy will not only help to solve the problem of dwindling budgets and rising demand for services, but do so in a way which dramatically improves individual and organisational outcomes.

“This is about helping people to live their lives well by

offering a more holistic approach to understanding and solving their problems. This is not just about what we do as a local authority, it involves partner agencies like the police, fire service, NHS and the voluntary sector too. Service provision is intelligence-led; contemporary data is used to identify vulnerabilities within each of the locality areas and services are targeted where most needed.”

The multi-agency approach has already been piloted in the north of the city, and is set to be rolled out citywide. It works by placing demand for services in context and looking beyond the presenting problems to identify and deal with the root causes of people’s issues.

“Alongside measures which look at how individuals benefit, we’re also gaining insight into how demand is changing and in particular, where the demand hits. We can then see whether the amount of activity and cost reduces as a result of our intervention and which agency benefits from this reduced demand.”

The city council is working with Keele University and public health leaders to ensure its data and methodology stand up to academic scrutiny and to ensure it captures all the intended benefits. Initial results are compelling,



Director of People Tony Oakman

with the pilot area witnessing falls in a range of problem indicators, from rent arrears and evictions to anti-social behaviour and crime.

As Tony says: ‘In the world of ever decreasing resources the need to find innovative ways of supporting families and the most vulnerable is paramount.’

Innovating to solve the UK’s housing challenges



Stoke-on-Trent is home to one of the leading centres for innovation in housing design and refurbishment. The multi-million pound Centre of Refurbishment Excellence (CoRE) provides a national focal point for the future of the retrofit industry.

Core, which was created with support from Stoke-on-Trent City Council, specialises in teaching the advanced skills needed to bring the nation’s housing stock in line with 21st century environmental imperatives.

CoRE’s mission is to reduce resource consumption and greenhouse gas emissions while promoting more effective

waste management. Its objective lies in training today’s construction workforce in the skills required to deliver sustainable, environmentally friendly and cost-effective housing on a large scale.

As well as being a national centre of excellence for retrofit training, CoRE also showcases the very latest sustainable building solutions, incorporating both the advanced technology and the skilled techniques needed to bring the UK’s low-carbon vision to fruition.

CoRE chief executive David Pierpoint says: “Environmental pressures are contributing to a huge problem facing our built environment. We have to deal with the fact that thousands of older properties are lying empty while there is also a shortage of affordable homes and a simultaneous need to tackle energy price instability.

“With its increasing emphasis on attracting major players in the advanced manufacturing and renewables industry, there can be no more fitting location to showcase the latest sustainable building solutions than Stoke-on-Trent.

“Our environmentally friendly headquarters in the city is on the way to becoming a national hub for the skills, expertise and training required to help the UK meet the biggest challenges facing our housing sector for a generation.”

Building a Brilliant Future

It is clear that the city council is making strides with its transformation programme to build a brighter future for Stoke-on-Trent. Such a major renaissance is also bringing changes to the council’s leadership team. “Our achievements mean that we are now in a great springboard position” says John van de Laarschot.

“We need to strengthen our commercial ability in balance with our social responsibilities. To do this we have to invest in people who show a ‘can do’ attitude that will bring about positive change in our city. As a result, we are looking to find a number of director and senior level posts across both our Place and People directorates.”

Victoria Marshall, Head of Public Sector Search at Badenoch & Clark who’s leading the recruitment said, “This is a great opportunity for candidates who want to create a personal legacy and impact. Stoke-on-Trent has transformed considerably over the last couple of years, and the council’s vision means that there is a real opportunity for individuals seeking to significantly enhance both the city and their career.”

For further information on the upcoming Director & Associate Director roles, please contact: victoria.marshall@badenochandclark.com or watch for more details in the MJ.