

# Cannock Chase

**Economic Prosperity Strategy**

2022 -2032





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## Foreword

Over the last decade, Cannock Chase has transformed itself into a prosperous economy becoming not only a thriving hub for Advanced Manufacturing, but a beacon for emerging sectors including retail, business services, construction and environmental technologies.



Despite COVID-19, the District continues to have an excellent track record of attracting new inward investment and developing new and existing businesses to reach their potential and driving forward exciting and transformational regeneration projects.

Having secured £20 million from the Government's Levelling Up Fund, the Council has exciting plans to redevelop Cannock Town Centre. The Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games has put Cannock Chase on the global stage with the successful hosting of the mountain biking events. The transformation of Rugeley Power Station continues at a pace, and the exciting plans which place the District at the forefront of the green revolution. The McArthurGlen Designer Outlet is going from strength to strength with phase 2 of the development set to come forward by 2025.

The Council intends on working with its strategic partners to deliver against the vision and priorities in this strategy and to ensure that the District can capitalise upon the wider Levelling Up opportunities. The District Council has just been awarded an allocation of £3 million from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and we will work with partners and our communities to ensure that the funding is well spent and delivers against our priorities to reinvigorate our local economy, empowering residents to lead healthy and independent lives, and creating a local environment that is protected, preserved and enhanced for future generations.

Cannock Chase District Council would like to thank those who were involved in the production of this strategy.

**Cllr Mike Sutherland**

**Portfolio Leader for District & High Street Development**



# Introduction

Cannock Chase is a place of heritage, strong local identities, and vibrant communities. It is a District that is going places and the area is re-defining its purpose and reputation as a place for growth and investment. The District is presented with a number of exciting opportunities over the next few years, including:



The Commonwealth Games 2022 mountain biking event hosted in Cannock Chase attracted a large domestic and international TV audience and is increasing interest in cycling locally

Phase 2 of the McArthurGlen Outlet with a further 50 new retail units expected to be developed and opened by 2025.



Delivery of the Council's £20 million Levelling Up regeneration scheme for Cannock town centre.



Capitalising upon the opportunities offered by the clean growth sector.



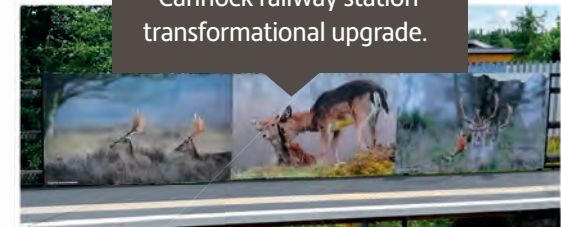
Adoption of a new Local Plan; providing land for new housing and employment sites to support growth and investment in the District.



The transformation of Rugeley Power Station as an exemplar zero carbon community.



Cannock railway station transformational upgrade.



The continued development and investment in the Cannock Campus of South Staffordshire College to expand the skills and learning opportunities on offer including HE level qualifications for the first time in the District.



£3 million of UK Shared Prosperity Fund to deliver economic growth projects that support our vision to create a thriving District.



Our new 10 year Economic Prosperity Strategy outlines the Council's vision and priorities for the District's economy.

The Council wants to work with its partners to support businesses to thrive and grow and to ensure local residents can take advantage of the many opportunities that are being created.

The strategy sets out the priorities that the Council will focus on over the next few years and the ambitions that we will strive to deliver against in the medium-long term.

The Economic Prosperity Strategy is aimed at any organisation that may be able to contribute to the economic growth of the District. This could include strategic bodies such as Local Enterprise Partnerships, West Midlands Combined Authority, Staffordshire County Council, as well as local businesses, further / higher education institutions, Town / Parish Councils, landowners and developers or potential investors.

**The Council is clear that success can only be achieved by effective partnership working and whilst the Council can affect positive change through its own resources, it cannot deliver the Strategy without the buy in of other public sector bodies and the business community.**



Photograph courtesy of Opus Land

## Fit with national, regional and local policies and strategies

The Economic Prosperity Strategy complements and connects with a number of key national, regional and local policies and strategies. Policies of other partners and bodies have a major influence on the Council's work and the allocation of funding to support economic growth is often linked to these policies.

### Levelling Up White Paper

The Government published its long awaited Levelling Up White Paper in February 2022 and has placed the Levelling Up of the UK as a central part of its policy agenda. The White paper presents 12 over-arching missions to level up the UK and boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in those places where they are lagging. To support its Levelling Up agenda, the Government has announced a new £2.6 billion UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) which will be invested by local authorities in three main areas: communities and place, support for local businesses and people and skills. Cannock Chase has been provisionally allocated £3.021 million from the UKSPF and is required to allocate and spend the money by March 2025. Furthermore, Cannock Chase Council has been awarded £20 million from the Government's Levelling Up Fund to support the regeneration of Cannock Town Centre. The Council will continue to strive to maximise the opportunities to level up the District and secure further Government funding.



### Devolution

The Government sets out its plans for further devolution of powers and funding to local areas in the Levelling Up White Paper. Mayoral led Combined Authorities have hitherto benefitted from devolution, however, the Government has set out a commitment to look at further devolution at county level and Staffordshire leader's have expressed an interest in negotiating a county deal that could help to deliver more jobs and investment for the District.



### Climate Change

Climate Change is one of the biggest global challenges and the Government has set out a target for the UK to become net zero by 2050. The Government has published various strategies to meet the UK's climate change targets, most recently publishing a Net Zero Strategy in October 2021. Cannock Chase Council has declared a climate emergency and committed to the District becoming carbon neutral by 2030.



### West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)

The Council is a non-constituent member of the WMCA and has benefitted from investment to support housing delivery and employment & skills interventions. The Council will continue to work pro-actively with the WMCA particularly on housing delivery; skills and town centre regeneration and upgrades to infrastructure, including Cannock Railway Station.



### **Cannock Chase Council Corporate Plan 2022-26**

This document sets out the Council priorities and objectives for the next four years. The Corporate Plan focuses on four key priorities Supporting Economic Prosperity, Health and Wellbeing, Community and being a Responsible Council. The Economic Prosperity Strategy contributes to all priority areas and will set out in detail how the Council will aim to attract investment to develop the District's economy, encourage entrepreneurship, promote apprenticeships, support businesses, rejuvenate our town centres and support the development of the visitor economy.



### **Cannock Chase Local Plan**

The Council's Local Plan (Part 1) 2014 was adopted in June 2014 and is a development plan document that shapes the physical, economic, social and environmental characteristics of the District between 2006 and 2028. The Council is currently developing a new Local Plan which will ensure that sufficient land is allocated to meet needs for housing and employment land as well as creating the right policies for other uses such as retail and leisure.



### **Cannock Chase Health in All Approach**

Cannock Chase Council has agreed to implement a 'Health in All Policies' approach to help the Council identify how best to tackle health inequalities within the District. By adopting the Health in All Policies approach, the Council has agreed to ensure that it takes into account the health implications of the decisions it makes, targets the key social determinants of health, and most importantly focuses policy and services on improving the health of our local residents.



The Economic Prosperity Strategy plays a key role in creating economic opportunities for local residents and communities and the proposed interventions should positively impact upon health outcomes.

### **Staffordshire County Council - Economic Strategy**

Staffordshire County Council is a key strategic partner and plays a key role in supporting economic growth, skills development, tourism and investment in infrastructure. The County Council has recently published an updated Economic Strategy for the county and has identified as a priority, a need to continue to engage positively with District Councils and support their economic strategies and town centre regeneration plans.



### **Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)**

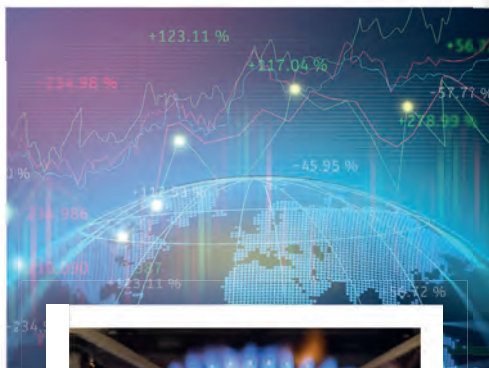
The Council remains a member of both the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire and Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEPs. The Levelling Up White Paper sets out proposals to reform LEPs and refocus their remit to business support, enterprise and innovation - LEPs will also in effect act as a voice for business to shape plans for levelling up and regenerating local communities. The Council will continue to engage pro-actively with both LEPs and ensure that there is a smooth transition to new governance and delivery arrangements.



## Economic context

### Covid-19 and the Economy

Like all local authority districts across the UK, Cannock Chase's economy and labour market has experienced unprecedented disruption due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. The pandemic had a detrimental impact on trade, workforce and turnover for businesses which were forced to close, particularly in sectors such as retail, hospitality, and arts entertainment. In response, a package of Government grants and employment support was announced in an attempt to mitigate the economic impact of COVID-19 and to assist with running costs of closed businesses which remained without income, and the Council has played a key role in distributing grants to eligible businesses.



The pandemic has had a global economic impact and whilst the UK economy recovered well during 2021 and early part of 2022, there are now further economic headwinds due to recent global events. The Russian invasion of Ukraine, whilst principally a human tragedy, is likely to create further economic uncertainty for the UK economy, and in turn is exacerbating the existing pressures on cost of living, with energy bills and inflation



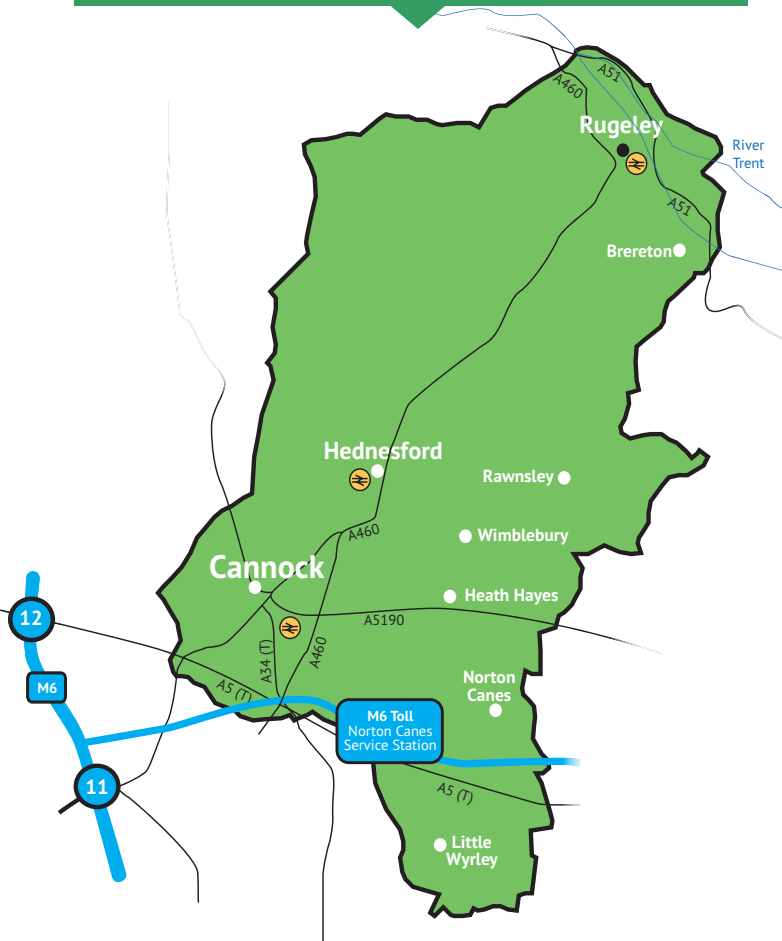
The Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) predicted in its March economic outlook, that higher global energy prices will feed through to higher domestic prices over the course of 2022, with CPI inflation now forecast to peak at close to 9 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2022, and possibly could reach 10%, before reducing to 4% in 2023.

The OBR forecasts that the UK economy (as measured by real Gross Domestic Product) will increase by 3.8% in 2022, 1.8% in 2023 and 2.1% in 2024. It is evident that it will be some considerable time before output and employment returns to pre-pandemic levels. However, with the economic situation highly uncertain, there is the possibility that the UK could fall into recession towards the end of 2022 or early 2023.



# Local context

Cannock Chase District lies in the central part of Staffordshire and can be characterised as having three distinct economic sub areas; Cannock, Hednesford and Heath Hayes; Rugeley in the north of the District; and Norton Canes in the south - east. Situated just north of the West Midlands conurbation, the District extends from the A5 in the south, to the River Trent in Rugeley in the north covering approximately 7,800 hectares.



The District's population was estimated at 100,762 residents in Mid-2019, with projections indicating that over 101,500 people lived in Cannock Chase in 2020. The population is projected to see continued growth with an estimated 112,313 residents by the late 2030s, creating demand for around 50,696 households in Cannock Chase by 2038. In 2019 63,400 - around 62.9% of residents were working age with approximately 84.6% of economically active people in employment between July 2019 and June 2020. This rate of employment was above the West Midlands average of 74.7% and the England average of 76.2%. (Source: Office for National Statistics).

The District is highly accessible, and this is a strength that has helped to stimulate considerable economic growth in recent years. One of the District's major advantages is its connectivity to the strategic road network including the M6 Toll. Consequently, logistics and distribution features strongly in the local economy. Furthermore, the District benefits from a network of bus routes and railway stations at Rugeley, Hednesford and Cannock providing connections to Stafford in the north and Birmingham to the south.

Population estimates show that internal migration - residential moves into Cannock Chase from other local authorities such as Lichfield and South Staffordshire has been the biggest contributor to population growth in the District in recent years. The Government's Standard Methodology provides a minimum annual figure of new housing to be built. The District's housing requirement is currently (as at April 2019) set at 277 dwellings per annum, whereas the current adopted plan has an annual requirement to deliver 241 per annum. This increase in housing would create further increases in population.



For many years, Cannock Chase was closely associated with the coal mining industry. In recent times, the District's economy has diversified and is now seen as a modern mixed economy and is home to many significant local, regional, national and international companies which represent a number of key sectors including logistics/distribution, automotive and construction. Examples include; APC, Veolia, HellermannTyton, First Choice and Amazon. Whilst the District is home to a number of recognised brands and large businesses; the District's economy is dominated by the small and medium-sized enterprises.



The change in the District's economic base has been reflected in improved performance on productivity over the last few years. The industry sectors Wholesale and Retail Trade, Construction, Transportation and Storage, and Manufacturing provided the largest proportions of Total GVA in the District in 2018. However, the District still has productivity challenges to address with data indicating that GVA per head in Cannock Chase was below the regional and national averages in recent years. Supporting high value industries and businesses will play an important role in strengthening the District's economy and creating better paid and higher skilled roles.

At a local level, the Council has monitored the economic impact of the pandemic and despite initial concerns over the potential for large scale redundancies and business closures, the District's economy has proved to be resilient and has recovered well. It will be important to continue to monitor local economic conditions due to the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and cost of living crisis.

The pandemic and lockdown caused an increase in the rate of claims for out of work benefits in Cannock Chase, particularly among young people. Since the end of the restrictions and withdrawal of Government support schemes such as the Job Retention Scheme (Furlough), unemployment rates have steadily reduced from a peak in May 2020, when 6.2% of the working age population were claiming out of work benefits.

As at April 2022, 3.3% of the District's residents aged 16-64 were claiming out of work benefits. Whilst this was below regional and national averages, the rate of claims among young people was considerably higher with 5.7% of residents aged 18-24 claiming out-of-work benefits. Economic research indicates that young people have been particularly affected by the pandemic due to the disproportionate impact of lockdown on sectors such as hospitality, retail, and leisure which typically employ higher proportions of people aged under 25.

Skills levels are a challenge for the District. The Indices of Deprivation 2019 ranks Cannock Chase just outside the 10% most deprived local authority district nationally for education, skills and training. Educational attainment at GCSE level is typically below comparator averages, with around 55.6% of the working-age population estimated to be qualified to NVQ Level 3+ in 2019 - below the Great Britain average of 58.5%. The gap between local and national qualification levels is more evident at NVQ Level 4+, with 34.3% of the District's 16-64 population estimated to hold this level of qualification in 2019, compared to 40.3% nationally. Initiatives are being put in place to try to address this issue, for example: the Engineering Academy based at the Cannock College, part of South Staffordshire College. Educational attainments rates for the District are also below the Staffordshire and national average.





Due to the District's location and strong accessibility, there is considerable flow of labour between the District and surrounding areas/economies; these principally include South Staffordshire, Lichfield, Walsall, Stafford and the Greater Birmingham and the Black Country areas. However, the shift in working patterns and behaviours post pandemic, is meaning that there are now greater levels of remote or hybrid working, which will mean that office based sectors will continue to review their property requirements and high speed digital connectivity will become even more critical going forward. The shift to home working also means that local residents can access employment opportunities further afield with a reduced need for commuting.



The District's primary towns of Cannock, Hednesford and Rugeley remain the main areas of economic activity and where most of our residents and businesses are located. In recent years, the town centres have experienced challenging conditions, with the move to online shopping and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions which forced many retailers and traders to close. There has been a sharp increase in the number of empty units in our town centres, and whilst this is unfortunate, it does present an important opportunity to rejuvenate and repurpose our town centres.



## Cannock Chase Key Economic Statistics

**41.4%**  
5 year survival  
rate for business  
enterprises  
**2020**



**21.4%**  
Business enterprises  
in construction  
industry  
**2021**



**3.3%**  
working-age people  
16-64 claiming work-  
related benefits\*  
**April 2022**



**23.1%**  
employee jobs in wholesale and  
retail trade; Repair of motor  
vehicles and motorcycles  
**2020**



**35,701**  
Private sector jobs  
in Cannock Chase  
**2020**



**55.9%**  
working-age people  
(16-64) qualified  
to NVQ3+  
**January 2021 -  
December 2021**



**-0.5%**  
Annual growth  
in GVA  
(current prices)  
**2019**



**75.9%**  
working-age people  
(16-64) economically  
active in employment  
**January 2021 -  
December 2021**



**46.7%**  
working-age people (16-64)  
employed in managerial,  
professional and technical roles  
**January 2021 - December 2021**



**14,879**  
people commute  
into Cannock  
Chase for work  
**2011**



**23,534**  
people commute  
out of Cannock  
Chase for work  
**2011**

\* not all out-of-work due to change in Government criteria to allow people who lost hours and pay during the pandemic to also claim work-related Universal Credit

## SWOT analysis

### STRENGTHS



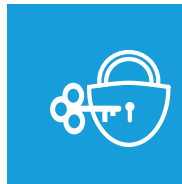
- Strong recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- High workforce productivity in some sectors.
- Relative housing affordability and pipeline for further housing investment in the District (Housing Investment Fund).
- Attractive physical environment and leisure offer (e.g., Cannock Chase AONB).
- Good transport connectivity and proximity to the West Midlands Conurbation.
- Proven track record of partnership working and securing Government Funding.

### WEAKNESSES



- Ageing working-age population.
- Low overall productivity, lagging behind other areas.
- Limited Higher Education Offer.
- Lack of incubation space/small unit space to meet demand.
- Insufficient NVQ level 3 / 4 achievers in District to sustain growth of high value sectors.
- Anecdotal evidence of poor digital connectivity that compromises business performance.

### OPPORTUNITIES



- Local Plan Review - need to plan for more housing and economic growth.
- Maximising benefits of investment at the McArthurGlen Outlet.
- Potential to exploit the visitor economy offer.
- Build on £20m Levelling Up fund investment in Cannock Town Centre.
- Transformation of former Rugeley Power Station into exemplar zero carbon community and new All Through School.
- Capitalising on the Commonwealth Games 2022 Mountain Biking Events based on Cannock Chase.
- Post pandemic opportunities i.e., reshaping town centres and move to Agile Working.

### THREATS



- Ongoing adverse economic conditions and uncertainty caused by Ukraine conflict and increase in cost of living.
- Future local labour supply is uncertain.
- Lack of immediately available employment land and pressure to release more land for housing.
- Higher skilled workforce currently out commuting.
- Challenging local government financial environment.
- Increase in Tourism on Cannock Chase may affect or harm the AONB and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) wildlife.
- Town centres are struggling and there has been a rapid increase in empty units and lack of footfall.

## Cannock Chase Economic Vision to 2032

The Council's overarching ambitions are set out in our Corporate Plan. Economic Prosperity is a key priority within our Corporate Plan and we have made a commitment to 'reinvigorate our economy and create a District that thrives'. This mission is critical for the Council over the next four years.

By 2032 Cannock Chase will capitalise upon clean growth opportunities to drive a highly productive, prosperous and resilient economy. The District's unique environmental assets, locational advantages, and entrepreneurial spirit will define Cannock Chase as a vibrant place to live, work and visit.

The Economic Prosperity Strategy focuses on a longer 10 year time period, recognising that there is a need to have in place a clear and aspirational economic vision that will act as a beacon for our economic growth agenda going forward. The vision responds to the growing momentum around an area that is transforming and re-defining its economic purpose, galvanised by the opening of the McArthurGlen Designer Outlet, transformation of the former Rugeley Power Station and £20 million of Levelling Up Fund investment in Cannock Town Centre. The vision builds upon existing strengths and unique assets (most notably Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the infrastructure that supports this, and the District's excellent strategic connectivity) where the District already has competitive advantage but also where there is significant scope to use these assets to drive prosperity amongst the District's residents and businesses in the future.

We hope that our strategic partners will also buy into this vision and enable us to realise the full potential of our District.

### To realise this vision, the Council will aim to:



1. Attract investment to develop the District's economy.
2. Encourage entrepreneurship, promote apprenticeships, and support business.
3. Attract modern, green, and skilled industries and create jobs.
4. Rejuvenate our town centres.
5. Support the development of our visitor economy.



# Key priorities & ambitions

The Economic Prosperity Strategy identifies a series of key priorities and ambitions that have been developed and tested with elected members, leadership team and local stakeholders through the strategy engagement process to guide activity in support of implementing the Economic Prosperity Strategy over the coming years.

The priorities and ambitions align with the Council's Corporate Plan 2022-2026 priorities and aims.

Priorities	Rationale	Ambitions
<p><b>1</b> Attract investment to develop the District's economy.</p> 	<p>The District has had success in attracting private investment in recent years; most notably £160 million of investment from McArthurGlen.</p> <p>The Council has secured £20 million from the Levelling Up Fund and has a £3 million allocation from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund which will support a range of projects to drive economic growth.</p> <p>Cannock Chase continues to be a desirable location for inward investors; with sites such as Kingswood Lakeside ever in demand.</p> <p>There is a lack of readily available employment sites, but new sites should start to come forward once the new Local Plan is adopted.</p> <p>There is a need to invest in infrastructure to unlock further economic and housing growth.</p>	<p>Ensure the District has a good supply of quality employment sites.</p> <p>Position the District as an ideal location for inward investment, particularly in high value sectors.</p> <p>Attract more domestic and overseas inward investors to create new jobs and investment to grow our economy.</p> <p>Punch above our weight in terms of securing Government funding to level up all parts of our District and transition our economy to net zero, building on the success of the Levelling Up Fund bid.</p> <p>Upgrade to infrastructure including sustainable transport, roll out of electric vehicle charging points, utilities, broadband and green infrastructure unlocking investment in new development.</p>
<p><b>2</b> Encourage entrepreneurship, promote apprenticeships, and support business.</p> 	<p>Existing businesses need to be supported to recover and grow post pandemic.</p> <p>Business start up rates are comparable with other parts of the West Midlands region.</p> <p>However, 5 year survival rates are amongst the poorest.</p> <p>The District lacks modern and affordable managed workspace and premises for small businesses.</p> <p>The Council has worked with Staffordshire County Council to invest in Apprenticeships; with 38 apprentices recruited via the Staffordshire Means Back to Business scheme.</p>	<p>Create a dynamic business environment that supports and encourages existing businesses to grow and peoples ambition to set up and run their own business.</p> <p>Provide high quality and streamlined business start-up support and advice, that supports those businesses that most need it.</p> <p>Ensure that there is sufficient availability of land and premises to support new / early stage businesses.</p> <p>Ensure that Cannock Chase's residents benefit from investment in Apprenticeships opening up career pathways in a range of sectors.</p>

**Priorities**

**Rationale**

**Ambitions**

**3 Attract modern, green, and skilled industries and create jobs.**



The District's economy is currently over-reliant on lower value added sectors such as wholesale, retail, and logistics/distribution.

A high proportion of higher skilled and higher paid workers are commuting out of the District to find employment.

Low level of skills are prevalent across the District, particularly in a number of deprived areas.

Educational attainment is below the county average.

South Staffordshire College is re-establishing itself locally and has invested in a new Engineering and Digital Skills Academy.

There is a need to attract in higher value sectors to diversify the economy.

The need to transition to net zero to address climate change presents a massive opportunity to develop new industries and skilled jobs in our District; it also presents a challenge to existing businesses to become more energy efficient.

The District declared a Climate Change Emergency and signed a motion to become Carbon Neutral by 2030.

The District is well positioned to attract in new sectors that are focused on clean growth sectors.

The District is home to a growing number of environmentally sustainable and responsible businesses.

Cannock Chase's residents benefit from a strong skills base which matches the West Midlands average and fuels the District's highly productive clean growth economy.

The Cannock Campus of South Staffordshire College continues to be successful and develop its offer to support sector based skills and training opportunities.

Average wages within the District are at least equal to the national average and ideally above this level.

Cannock Chase is a place where communities and families have high aspirations, and these can be realised by living in the District.

**4 Rejuvenate our town centres.**



Cannock Town Centre has high vacancy rates in comparison to other town centres in the District and the West Midlands/UK averages.

The way town centres are used by residents/visitors both nationally and locally had significantly changed prior to COVID-19 and have declined further since. This has resulted in the main town centres being left behind.

However, town centres remain important places and hubs for people to live, work and visit and the Council wants to reshape our high streets to create places that people have pride in.

Reduce levels of vacant units across our three town centres and increase footfall across all three town centres.

Deliver the £20 million Levelling Up Fund scheme for Cannock Town Centre to create an exciting new culture and leisure hub and improve public realm.

Secure future investment for Hednesford and Rugeley town centres to improve public realm and create new opportunities for residents and businesses.

Ensure that our town centres are future proof and resilient.



## Priorities

### 5 Support the development of our visitor economy.



## Rationale

The District is now home to a major tourism destination; with McArthurGlen Designer Outlet attracting c. 3 million visitors per year.

The 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games mountain biking events have provided a major showcase of the District.

The Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a prized asset, which is enjoyed by local residents but also people from further afield.

The District historically has not sufficiently promoted itself on a national / regional scale as an attractive place to visit, live and work.

The District lacks quality accommodation and is not exploiting the short stay market or opportunity for 'staycations'

## Ambitions

The District has a distinctive and attractive identity and is fully capitalising upon its environmental assets.

Cannock Chase is viewed internally and externally as a quality visitor destination providing first class recreation opportunities and experiences.

Local communities and areas are working to offer exciting local events and make their areas more attractive and welcoming.

Cannock Chase has grown its visitor economy to become a key sector within the local economy - fully exploiting the Designer Outlet and Commonwealth Games opportunities.

## Actions

This Strategy identifies a series of actions and projects that provide a great starting point and momentum upon which to build over the coming years. The Council has a key role to play in the delivery of these actions; but many actions will be through collaboration with strategic partners or by acting as facilitators or influencers. The Council has an excellent track record of working in partnership and is committed to continuing this approach to maximise the collective talent and resources at our disposal and ultimately to deliver economic prosperity for our District.

Concerted effort will be required by the Council and its partners in order to realise the economic vision and accompanying ambitions over the lifetime of the strategy to kick start the next phase in Cannock Chase's economic evolution.



## Immediate Opportunities and Short-Term Projects

A range of projects and investments are already underway across the District or are in the pipeline to boost economic development and productivity. Some of these form part of wider regeneration and investment programmes, while others form standalone interventions.



These cover a variety of themes and project types, including transport investment to improve and upgrade connectivity and accessibility, skills development projects to boost resident skills and respond to employer skills shortages and interventions to regenerate and revitalise the District's town centres.



### Levelling Up Fund project for Cannock Town Centre

£20 million of investment from the Levelling Up Fund to kick start the transformation of Cannock Town Centre by creating an exciting new cultural and leisure hub and delivering public realm enhancements.



### UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Cannock Chase Council has received an allocation of £3.021 million from the Government's new £2.6 billion UK Shared Prosperity Fund and this money will be invested over the next three years to fund projects that support economic growth, skills development, and local communities.



### Rugeley Power Station re-development & Zero Carbon Rugeley

Ambitious regeneration of the former Power Station site, encompassing new housing, All Through School, employment opportunities, riverside park and the development of an exemplar Zero Carbon community.



### Cannock Railway Station

Transformational upgrade creating an attractive gateway into the District and modern station environment that significantly improves passenger facilities and experience.



### McArthurGlen Designer Outlet West Midlands - Phase 2

Phase 2 of the successful Designer Outlet, with a further 50 retail units expected and completion of multi-storey car park, taking total car parking spaces up to 2,500. Will create further jobs and investment for the District. Phase 2 expected to be complete by 2025.



### 2022 Commonwealth Games

Cannock Chase hosted the mountain biking events in August 2022 and this showcased the Cannock Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and put the District on the global stage. The Council is working to secure a lasting legacy from the Games.



### South Staffordshire College Skills & Innovation Hub

South Staffordshire College play a major role in driving up skills levels in our District and have invested significantly in the Cannock Campus, with a brand new Engineering Academy and Digital Skills Academy opening over the last couple of years. The College continues to evolve its offer and is looking to further invest in facilities to support the development of key sectors.



### New Local Plan for the District




The current Local Plan was adopted in 2014 and is currently being reviewed to set out future housing, employment, and infrastructure growth requirements for the next 20 years. The new Local Plan will allocate further sites to support the economic growth of the District.

# Wider Projects and Opportunities

Alongside these more immediate projects and interventions, this Economic Prosperity Strategy identifies a series of wider opportunities that deliver against the economic vision and ambitions, some of which will be subject to further development over the coming months and years.

**Timescale:**  
**S: up to 3 years,**  
**M: 4 to 6 years,**  
**L 7: 10 years**

Priority	Potential action	Timescale
<b>1</b> Attract investment to develop the District's economy. 	Work with key partners to develop a pipeline of projects / investment plan to support future economic growth opportunities.	M-L
	Identify and bid for Government funding opportunities where the funding supports our vision and priorities.	On-going
	Support investment in key infrastructure to unlock economic and housing growth; specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade to Cannock Railway Station</li> <li>• Cycling and walking infrastructure</li> <li>• Five Ways Interchange</li> <li>• 5G / gigabit capable broadband</li> <li>• Net zero interventions i.e., Electric Vehicle Charging points, renewable energies.</li> </ul>	M-L
	Allocate and promote quality employment sites to attract new inward investment and support local business growth.	M-L
<b>2</b> Encourage entrepreneurship, promote apprenticeships, and support business. 	Work with Growth & Skills Hubs to streamline and simplify access to business support services, access to training and apprenticeships.	S
	Continue to ensure that local development projects identify opportunities for local skills development and training via apprenticeships and local labour initiatives.	M-L
	Continue to work with partners to develop and deliver programmes to support business start-ups and potential entrepreneurs.	S-M
	Identify potential locations for new managed workspace / enterprise hubs and seek funding to develop schemes.	M-L

Priority	Potential action	Timescale
<p><b>3</b> Attract modern, green, and skilled industries and create jobs.</p> 	Work with local Colleges, to support residents into skilled roles; promoting available training provision, services and programmes.	On-going
	Secure funding for initiatives to support local businesses to transition to low / zero carbon.	S-M
	Work with partners to identify and promote opportunities to create green jobs in our District.	M-L
<p><b>4</b> Rejuvenate our town centres.</p> 	Deliver the £20 million Levelling Up Fund project for Cannock Town Centre to transform the site of the former Multi-Storey car park into an exciting leisure and culture hub.	S
	Work with Town Councils and local businesses/traders to support the development of initiatives to increase the vibrancy of our town centres and increase footfall.	On-going
	Develop town centre prospectuses for both Hednesford and Rugeley to identify visions for the town centres, opportunities and potential projects that could secure funding/investment.	M-L
<p><b>5</b> Support the development of our visitor economy.</p> 	Work with Destination Staffordshire to promote our key attractions, accommodation providers and events.	S
	Work to develop a coherent tourism brand and identity that capitalises upon the flagship attractions in our area and outstanding environmental assets.	M-L
	Work with local tourism providers to create opportunities for linked trips and encourage day visitors to stay longer.	M-L
	Work pro-actively with our flagship attractions to support their long-term vision and plans.	L
	Identify opportunities to diversify and strengthen the District's accommodation offer to capitalise upon the growth of the domestic tourism market	L



## Review and evaluation


The Economic Prosperity Strategy will be reviewed on a regular basis.

The Council will seek to review and refresh the evidence gathered during the development of the Strategy and consider:

- If the Vision statement and priorities remain relevant or consider whether adjustments are necessary
- Progress on the delivery of the short term and wider projects and opportunities is being made or if adjustment to the projects (including the addition of new opportunities) is required
- Status reports on all expected outcomes and carry out any necessary remedial actions
- New joint working opportunities with partners
- Any lessons learnt / best practice

A number of key performance indicators have been identified which relate directly to the key priorities within the Economic Prosperity Strategy. The table below presents these and sets out how the District is faring in comparison to regional and national performance (where data is available). These indicators will be kept under regular review.

Priority	Indicator	Monitoring period	Cannock Chase	West Midlands	Great Britain (* or UK, ** England)
<b>1</b> Attract investment to develop the District's economy. 	Employment Land Supply	Not until 2028	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Annual GVA growth	2014-2019	25.1%	20.7%	19.0% (UK)
	GVA per head figure	2019	£21,389	£24,343	£29,599 (UK)
<b>2</b> Encourage entrepreneurship, promote apprenticeships, and support business. 	Employment rate	January -December 2021	75.9%	73.6%	74.8%
	Unemployment figures - Out of work benefits Claimant Count	May 2022	3.2%	5.0%	3.9%
	Total number of jobs	2020	40,000	2,645,000	30.5m
	Number of Business Births	2020	350	29,660	351,350
	Business Survival Rates	2015 births. 5 Year survival (2020)	180 of 435 41.4%	11,305 of 29,350 38.5%	149,120 of 377,315 39.5%
	Apprenticeships starts	Q2 2021/22 (August 2021 to January 2022)	510	22,200	201,700 **

Priority	Indicator	Monitoring period	Cannock Chase	West Midlands	Great Britain (* or UK, ** England)
<b>3</b> Attract modern, green, and skilled industries and create jobs. 	Businesses supported to transition to Net Zero	Not until 2023/24 (UKSPF funded project)	N/A	N/A	N/A
	NVQ Level 3+ data	January - December 2021	55.9%	57.2%	61.5%
	NVQ Level 4+ data	January - December 2021	33.4%	38.8%	43.5%
<b>4</b> Rejuvenate our town centres. 	Vacancy Rates - Cannock	2022	25% as at July 2022	15.8% as at June 2022	14.1% as at June 2022
	Vacancy Rates - Hednesford	2022	5.6% as at July 2022	15.8% as at June 2022	14.1% as at June 2022
	Vacancy Rates - Rugeley	2022	5.4% as at July 2022	15.8% as at June 2022	14.1% as at June 2022
<b>5</b> Support the development of our visitor economy. 	Day trips	2019 or 2020	794,000 2020	124 million 2019	1.7 billion 2019
	Over night trips	2019 or 2020	47,200 2020	8.9 million 2019	122.8 million 2019
	Life satisfaction levels	2020/2021 (out of 10, 0 = poor)	7.1	7.4	7.4*



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