



PROSPERITY

Economic Resilience

Priority Delivery Plan

2013/14

Lead Officer:
Corporate Director



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Why is this a priority outcome?

Cannock Chase has seen widespread changes to the local economy and business environment over the three decades following the decline of coal mining and related industries in the late twentieth century. In subsequent years the District has seen substantial investment in the transformation of former coal use sites, in the local infrastructure and the development of a broad base of new employers in sectors such as high technology, heavy industry, distribution, services and retail.

Education and Skills

The importance of education, training and skills to a robust and successful economy are widely recognised. However, issues with educational attainment, adult skills levels and areas of high levels of unemployment and benefit claimants remain in the District. These problems, combined with the international economic recession that began in 2008 have continued to have profound consequences for the District and its communities. Despite gradual improvement over the past five years, GCSE attainment levels have remained consistently below county, regional and national averages, thus reducing the options for pupils both in terms of continuing in structured education (to “A level” standard and subsequently Degree level) and in terms of employability. The number of NEETs (16-18 year olds not in education employment or training) in Cannock Chase in November 2012 was 284, or 7.44% of the population of 16-18 year olds, and remained the highest within Staffordshire. National research published in May 2010 states that “spending time not in education, employment or training can have a lasting impact on wages, with evidence of a 10-15% wage penalty for young people”¹, thus emphasising the long-term potential consequences of disengagement from education and training. Additionally, school leavers with lower-level skills “are less likely to receive work-related training through their employer, are less likely to participate in informal training, and face greater barriers to learning”², thus further perpetuating the socio-economic consequences of low school attainment on individuals’ social mobility.

The long term effects of under attainment in education are seen in the skills levels amongst the adult population. Results from the Annual Population Survey indicate that for the working age population in Cannock Chase, the proportions of A level and Degree levels of qualification are below County, Regional and National comparators. The skills gap increases further up the qualification scale, with 69.3% qualified to Grade C and above at GCSE; 41.8% qualified to A level; and only 16.7% are qualified to degree.

¹ *State of the Nation Report: poverty, worklessness and welfare dependency in the UK*: HM Government, May 2010; page 29.

² *Ibid.* page 48.

The workforce structure and employment in the District.

The Annual Population Survey conducted by the Office for National Statistics indicates that occupation types in the District include above average employment rates in skilled trades, service and elementary occupations; whilst professional, management and administrative employment (known as Soc 2000 major group 1-3) is under represented in comparison to regional and national averages.

However, the number of 'white collar' jobs within the District is increasing with the construction of a number of office based developments over recent years, most recently for Aggreko and Veolia at Kingswood Lakeside. These investments form part of a general growth in employment (over 5,000 jobs) in the period since 2001. Other major investors during this period include DHL (on behalf of Unilever), 3663 First for Food Service, Ultra Electronics, Whitbread, Gestamp Tallent Automotive, Amazon, Veolia, Briggs Equipment, Rhenus Logistics, Electrium/Siemens, the Alternative Parcels Company (APC) and Sunflex. This has facilitated a 40%+ growth in VAT registered businesses between 1996 and 2009.

Unemployment and Benefit Dependency

At the height of the economic downturn from 2008 onwards the rate of Job Seekers' Allowance in Cannock Chase District saw one of the highest increases in the Country, reaching its peak of 5.5% of working age population in April 2009. Of the working age population in Cannock Chase in November 2012, 9,970 people (16.2%) claimed out of work benefits (i.e JSA, employment support, incapacity benefit, lone parent benefit etc) – compared to 11.6% in 2007. This was the largest increase in Staffordshire. The most prevalent forms of benefit claim in the District are Employment Support Allowance/ Incapacity Benefit and Job Seekers Allowance.

Since these peaks in the rate of unemployment, the District rate has gradually reduced to levels similar to the national average, although the Cannock Chase percentage (3.5%) continues to be higher than that for Staffordshire as a whole. However, alongside these average rates, "hotspots" for JSA Claimant rates continue to exist in the District, with 4 Wards seeing disproportionate levels in comparison to the County (2.5%), and Great Britain (3.8%) averages in November 2012.

November 2012 data indicates that a total of 665 18–24 year olds within the District are claiming Jobseeker's Allowance, which equates to a rate of 8.2% for this age group. This measure of youth unemployment compares to 5.5% in Staffordshire, and 7.0% in Great Britain.

Government and Resources

The Coalition Government formed in May 2010 has started to implement its proposals for economic recovery set out in the "Local Growth" White Paper, published in November 2010. The Government's approach is based on giving business a greater say in sub-regional economic growth policy through the formation of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs); and on ensuring that the planning system is reformed to support the drive for housing and business growth. To this end, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Localism Act 2011 have a major influence on the Council's approach outlined in this document. Emerging national policy sees the role of Local Authorities as one of supporting growth through the ability of Councils to ensure the supply of land for housing and business growth, and the significance of the Planning system's place in influencing business confidence and decision making. Alongside Government action to reform Welfare and Employment Law, re-localise business rates, implementing the new Work Programme, the investment in transport, and planned reforms to Education and Skills provision, the changing environment of Local Government interventions in the field of Economic prosperity and resilience will bring fundamental changes of approach and implementation.

The achievement of these tasks must be set in the context of a period of financial restraint as the Government attempts to reduce the public expenditure deficit. As a consequence the resources available to achieve the Service Targets set out in this Plan will also be limited. Therefore, the successful achievement of the actions will also be highly dependent on the active and timely involvement of the Council's Local Strategic Partners (LSP) and the Council's LEP partners in both the Greater Birmingham and Solihull and the Stoke and Staffs LEPs. In certain areas, for example the delivery of town centre regeneration schemes, the Council has a much more significant role in leading on implementation. However, in the majority of economic development interventions the Council's role is more one of co-ordinating and influencing the delivery priorities of other partners.

Town Centre Regeneration

In town centre regeneration, the recent experience across the District's three town centres has been mixed. In general the Council is pursuing a policy of trying to implement physical redevelopment schemes in a very difficult market, alongside carrying out more local initiatives to support existing and new local traders and improve the town centre experience for visitors and shoppers.

In Rugeley a very active traders association has emerged over recent years, while the investment impetus of a new Tesco store has been delayed, it appears to 2013. With the exception of the Tesco scheme, other regeneration sites in the town centre await improved market conditions. Nevertheless, the vitality of the centre is being supported by the promotions of the traders association and other stakeholders, and by investment into conservation area buildings, bringing vacant properties back into use through a business rate discount scheme, and public art.

Despite the recession, Hednesford's strategy for regeneration investment should be completed in 2013. It is a successful example of how determined Council action can work with private sector developers to transform the shopping function of even small centres. The remodelled centre will be anchored by new Tesco and Aldi stores, will have additional shop units for both national and local retailers and will benefit from new leisure facilities. The local traders association is growing in strength and looks well placed to work with District and Town Councils to make the most of the benefits of the new investment.

Cannock town centre's ambition for multi-million pound redevelopment schemes at the Avon Plaza and Market Hall Street/Church Street/Beecroft Road sites have been affected by difficult economic conditions. These have seen radical change to the fortunes of local landowners and developers and retrenchment and a more cautious attitude to small towns by national retailers. The council is pressing ahead with it's investigation of the potential for new development on the Beecroft Road car park site and will consider the future of this site in 2013/14.

While the opportunity for new developments adjust to the new market conditions, the Council is investing in supporting the existing town centre through an environmental improvement programme to spruce up the town centre, and through incentivising the occupation of vacant shops with the business rate discount scheme.

Portfolios

- **Economic Development and Planning**
- **Town Centre Regeneration**

Each of these Portfolios and the contribution they make to the Priority Outcome of Prosperity: Economic Resilience is set out in the following Portfolio Delivery Plan sections.

Economic Development and Planning

Portfolio Delivery Plan

The portfolio responsibilities for Economic Development and Planning include:

- Promotion of the economic well-being of the District including measures to alleviate unemployment and create new employment opportunities
- Liaison with various bodies and agencies to further the economic well-being of the District including the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) Southern Staffordshire Partnership, Staffordshire Destination Management Partnership, Make it Stoke & Staffordshire, & Cannock Chase Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
- Services and facilities to assist tourism, other regeneration schemes (excluding town centres), derelict land, and other economic initiatives, industrial estate management and relevant externally funded projects.
- Town and country planning and transportation services and facilities including planning policy development at regional, county and local plan levels, street lighting including Christmas lighting, public transportation policies including hackney carriages and private hire vehicles .
- All statutory and non statutory plans and policy documents prepared by the Council relating to the above services including the Economic Regeneration Strategy, Local Plan and the Tourism Strategy.

The Council provides those portfolio services above which are relevant to this PDP through the Economic Development and Planning Services sections of the Planning and Regeneration Department.

Economic Development Services

The Economic Development Section is responsible for the delivery of the Council's economic regeneration activities, in particular:-

- Strategic economic regeneration activities primarily through the Council's involvement with the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)
- Business support, information, advice and guidance.
- Liaison with inward investors.
- The co-ordination and delivery of major regeneration projects.
- Efforts to improve the viability and vitality of the District's three town centres.
- Tourism promotion and the visitor economy.

- Liaison with local employers.
- Efforts to reduce local unemployment, particularly amongst 18 – 24 year olds.
- Initiatives to improve skills, including the promotion of apprenticeships.

Planning Services

The Council's statutory responsibilities for land use planning and the control of development is the responsibility of the Planning Services Section.

Planning Policy

- The production of the Cannock Chase Local Plan which will help to shape the way in which the physical, economic, social and environmental characteristics of the District will change between 2006 and 2028.
- Representing the Council's interests in the production of other forms of planning policy documentation by other organisations, for instance those relating to Minerals, and Waste Disposal produced by Staffordshire County Council; other Local Plans produced by neighbour Councils.
- Dealing with emerging Neighbourhood Plans.

Development Management

- Processing and determination of planning applications in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, other Government guidance and local policies.
- Ensuring that subsequent development takes place according to approved plans or within the limits of permitted development, including taking enforcement action in cases of unlawful development.
- Providing advice on development proposals prior to submission of a planning application and promoting sustainable, well designed schemes which will enhance the District wherever possible.

Specific Service Aims for 2013/14:

Economic Development and Planning Services:

- **Increase the employability of the District's workforce.**
- **Facilitate economic growth through job creation.**
- **Increase the economic, social and environmental prosperity of the District through the delivery of sustainable development.**

How will we achieve our service aims and the priority outcome?

Service Aim: Increase the employability of the District's workforce.

How	When				Who	Indicator	Resource
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4			
Work with the LSPs Employment & Skills Board, the LEPs and the Routes to Work Action Group to support initiatives to reduce the number of local JSA claimants, in particular those aged 18 – 24.				✓	Head of Planning & Regeneration Planning & Economic Development Services Manager & Economic Development Manager	Prosperity Economic Development and Planning 1 & 2	Within Existing Employee Resources
Seek to maximise local employment within those businesses creating 50+ jobs within the District with the aim that 50% of new employees will be residents of the District.				✓	Economic Development Manager	Prosperity Economic Development and Planning 1 & 2	Within Existing Employee Resources
Increase the access of local people to employment opportunities by securing a commitment from Staffordshire CC to improve public transport to key				✓	Head of Planning & Regeneration Planning & Economic Development Services Manager	Prosperity Economic Development and Planning 1 & 2	Within Existing Employee Resources

employment areas including the Kingswood Lakeside and Towers Business Parks.							
Work with key stakeholders to secure 630 apprenticeship starts in 2013-14 through the District's employers.				✓	Economic Development Manager	Prosperity Economic Development and Planning 1 & 2	Existing Employee Resources plus LSP resources

Service Aim: Facilitate economic growth through job creation.

How	When				Who	Indicator	Resource
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4			
<p>To play an active role in the 'local' LEPs with the aim of securing LEP endorsement for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investment in transport infrastructure and priority development sites including the Churchbridge jctn. and the A5/M6 Toll employment areas. - Programmes (including EU funded schemes) to support at least 15 local businesses to grow/start-up. - Participate in at least 6 engagement events open to local businesses. 				<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>Head of Planning & Regeneration Planning & Economic Development Services Manager & Economic Development Manager Economic Development Manager</p>	<p>Prosperity Economic Development and Planning 3</p>	<p>Existing Employee Resources plus ERDF and LSP funds</p>

How	When				Who	Indicator	Resource
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4			
Marketing and promotion of the District to inward investors with the aim of securing 6 relocations and/or expansions in the District			✓				
Engage & develop the local visitor economy Stakeholders Panel to maximise the benefits of the visitor economy for Cannock Chase District including quarterly monitoring of the visit Cannock Chase website and two Tourism Network meetings				✓	Economic Development Officer (Visitor Economy) & Economic Development Support Officer (Visitor Economy) & Local Stakeholder Panel]	Prosperity Economic Development and Planning 4 & 5	Existing Council resources plus ERDF

Service Aim: Increase the economic, social and environmental prosperity of the District through sustainable development.

How	When				Who	Indicator	Resource
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4			
Maintain a 5 year reservoir of 28 ha of ready to develop employment land.				✓	Planning Policy Manager	Prosperity Economic Development and Planning 3	Within Existing Employee Resources
Secure the publication of Part 1 of the Cannock Chase local Plan and agree a timetable with the Inspectorate for the convening of an Examination-in-Public	✓				Head of Planning & Regeneration Planning Policy Manager	N/A	Within Existing Council Resources
Publish a draft Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule to support the delivery of infrastructure needed for the identified levels of growth in the Local Plan		✓			Planning & Economic Development Services Manager	Prosperity Economic Development and Planning 3	Within Existing Council Resources
Grant sufficient planning permissions to evidence a 5 year supply of deliverable housing sites to deliver a net increase of 225 units per year.		✓		✓	Planning and Economic Development Services Manager and Development Control Manager	N/A	Within Existing Employee Resources

Provide a responsive Development Management service which meets the national targets for speed and quality of planning application decision making				✓	Planning and Economic Development Services Manager and Development Control Manager	Prosperity Economic Development and Planning 3	Within Existing Council Resources
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Key performance measures

Service Aim: Increase the employability of the District's workforce.			
Indicator reference code	Definition	Baseline 2012/13	Targets 2013/14
Prosperity Economic Development and Planning 1	Reduce youth unemployment (18 – 24 age group) to the County rate by 2017. (Based upon LSP Benchmark data established in July 2011: CCDC 9.7% (785), Staffs 6.7% (4,755))	Latest (Nov 2012) CCDC 8.2% (665) and Staffs 5.5% (3,885)	Reduce by 50 pa [to close gap with County rate as at benchmark date]
Prosperity Economic Development and Planning 2	Increase in the Employment Rate of the District's residents (with the aim of closing the gap with the regional and GB rates by 2017)	Latest (July 2011 – June 2012) CCDC 63.7%, WM Region 67.6%, GB 70.3%.	Achieve a 1% increase in the District's employment rate
Service Aim: Facilitate economic growth through job creation.			
Prosperity Economic Development and Planning 3	To secure (through either completion or commencement of construction) at least 20,000 sqm of new commercial floorspace within the District from April 2012 to March 2014	At least 26,288 sq m since April 2012 at the end of Q3 of 2012 -13.	To secure a further 10,000 sqm of new commercial floorspace from April 2013 to March 2014.
Prosperity Economic Development and Planning 4	To secure at least an annual 5% increase in tourist expenditure within the local economy	£11.76m	Annual increase of 5% to £12.3m
Prosperity Economic Development and Planning 5	To increase the number of visitor economy bed spaces within the area covered by the Cannock Chase tourism network over a 4 year period	1,260 hotel, B & B, self catering spaces/units in 2012	5% increase over 2 years

Service Aim: To increase the economic, social and environmental prosperity of the District through the delivery of sustainable development.

Prosperity Economic Development and Planning 6	To exceed national targets for the speed of determining major planning applications (Subject to confirmation of national target)	Latest data 2011-12 including to Q3 2012 – 13 76%	To ensure that at least 70% of major planning applications are determined in 13 weeks or less.
Prosperity Economic Development and Planning 7	To exceed national targets for the quality of decision making on major planning applications (Subject to confirmation of national target)	Latest data 2011 -12 and including Q3 2012 – 13 73%	To ensure that at least 50% of planning appeals uphold the Council's refusal.

Town Centre Regeneration

Portfolio Delivery Plan

The portfolio responsibilities for Town Centre Regeneration include:

- Town centres regeneration schemes and town centres management.
- Liaison with various bodies and agencies involved with the economic wellbeing and management of town centres.

The Council provides those portfolio services above which are relevant to this PDP through the Economic Development, Planning and Property Services sections of the Planning and Regeneration Department, and through the Environmental Services department

Economic Development, Planning and Property Services:

- Co-ordination and delivery of major regeneration projects.
- Actions to improve the viability and vitality of the District's three town centres
- Liaison with town centre stakeholder groups
- Improvement of the town centre conservation areas
- Implementation of planning policy designed to support town centres
- Estate management of Council occupied and let buildings in the town centres

Environmental Services:

- Cleaning of town centres, removing litter and rubbish on a daily basis.
- Creation of new planting schemes in disused flowerbeds.
- Installation of new green features in Cannock town centre.

Service Aims:

- **Improve town centres through regeneration and management.**

How will we achieve our service aims and the priority outcome?

Service Aim: Improve town centres through regeneration and management

How	When				Who	Indicator	Resource
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4			
<p>Work with retailers and development partners to secure commitments to enable investment to be secured in all three of the District's town centres. In particular:-</p> <p>Hednesford Town Centre:-</p> <p>To secure the completion of both phases of the town centre regeneration programme through the occupation of the discount foodstore on Rugeley Road by Aldi.</p> <p>NB Note that this is subject to a decision of the retailer.</p>		✓			<p>Planning & Economic Development Services Manager</p>		<p>Within Existing Council Resources plus those of the Council's development partner, St Modwen & Aldi.</p>

<p>Cannock Town Centre:-</p> <p>To implement the decisions of Cabinet following consideration of the completed market testing work on the Beecroft Road site.</p> <p>Rugeley Town Centre:-</p> <p>To secure a commitment from Tesco to build a new store at the Leathermill Lane site with an opening date prior to the end of 2013.</p> <p>NB Note that this is subject to a decision of the retailer</p>				✓	<p>Head of Planning & Regeneration & Economic Development Manager</p> <p>Planning & Economic Development Services Manager</p>		<p>Within Council resources</p> <p>Existing Council Resources Plus those of Tesco</p>
<p>To maintain a dialogue with the stakeholders in the District's three Town Centres, including the Traders Associations, as a means of supporting specific initiatives in each centre.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	<p>Planning & Economic Development Services Manager</p>	<p>Contributes to TCR1</p>	<p>Within Existing Council Resources</p>
<p>To continue to implement town centre improvement initiatives including the Town Centres Improvement Fund, the Business Rates</p>				✓	<p>Planning & Economic Development Services Manager</p>	<p>Contributes to TCR1</p>	<p>Council Resources plus English Heritage and County Council resources</p>

Discount Scheme and the Rugeley Conservation Area Partnership Scheme.							
To adapt the Council's website to provide new pages and links on town centre improvement initiatives.		✓			PR & Marketing Officer	Contributes to TCR1	Council resources
Replace and enhance highway landscape on A34 Cannock (Beecroft to Church Street Island)				✓	Parks and Open Spaces Manager		Existing Council resources and Town Centre improvement funding
Clear and replant all shrub beds in Cannock town centre				✓	Parks and Open Spaces Manager		Existing Council resources and Town Centre improvement funding
Replace and enhance highway barrier planters on A34 and Cannock bus station		✓			Parks and Open Spaces Manager		Existing Council resources and Town Centre improvement funding
Replant small trees in Cannock town centre				✓	Parks and Open Spaces Manager		Existing Council resources and Town Centre improvement funding
Provide new hanging baskets in Cannock town centre		✓			Parks and Open Spaces Manager		Existing Council resources and Town Centre improvement funding

Key performance measures

Service Aim: Improved town centres through regeneration and management.			
Indicator reference code	Definition	Baseline 2012/13	Targets 2013/14
TCR 1	To achieve a reduction in the number of vacant ground-floor retail units in the District's principal town centre shopping streets.(TBC)	TBC	TBC
Service Aim:			
Indicator reference code	Definition	Baseline 2012/13	Targets 2013/14