

PROSPERITY
Economic Resilience
Priority Delivery Plan
2014/15

Lead Officer:
Corporate Director

Contents

Why is this a priority outcome?

Portfolio Delivery Plans

- Economic Development and Planning : Introduction, Actions and Indicators
- Town Centre Regeneration: Introduction, Actions and Indicators

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 March 2013 was 213, or 6.2% of the population of 16-18 year olds, and remained one of 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

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

² *Ibid.* page 48.

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.

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 2013, 9,300 people (14.7%) claimed out of work benefits (i.e JSA, employment support, incapacity benefit, lone parent benefit etc) – compared to 11.6% in 2007. 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 (2.2%) 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 five Wards seeing disproportionate levels in comparison to the County (1.8%), and Great Britain (2.9%) averages in November 2013.

November 2013 data indicates that a total of 400 18–24 year olds within the District are claiming Jobseeker's Allowance, which equates to a rate of 4.9% for this age group. This measure of youth unemployment compares to 3.7% in Staffordshire, and 5.1% in Great Britain.

Government and Resources

The 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 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 an active traders association has emerged over recent years, while the investment impetus of much delayed Tesco store was finally achieved in September 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 was 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 is now anchored by new Tesco and Aldi stores at opposite ends of the town centre. The new developments also include a range of additional shop units for both national and local retailers as well as new leisure facilities. The local traders association will need to continue 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 carried out an extensive public consultation into proposals for the Beecroft Road site during summer 2013 which demonstrated that there was limited support for such investment at this time. Consequently, the Council has agreed not to pursue the potential redevelopment of the Beecroft Road site at the present, but will continue to work with key stakeholders to improve the retail offer of the town centre.

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, & 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 Economic Regeneration Strategies, Tourism Strategies and the Local Plan.

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 2014/15:

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 Area: Planning and Regeneration

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

How	When				Who	Indicator
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
<p>Work with the LSPs Employment & Skills Board, the LEPs and local stakeholders to support initiatives to reduce the number of local JSA claimants, in particular those aged 18 – 24 via the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with key stakeholders to secure over 500 apprenticeship starts in 2014-15 through the District's employers. • Delivery of local actions via the LEPs 				<p>✓</p>	<p>Head of Planning & regeneration, Planning & Economic Development Services Manager and Economic</p>	<p>Prosperity – Economic Development and Planning 1 & 2</p>

<p>Youth Employment Programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local delivery of Talent Match. • Working with the County Council to improve public transport linkages to employment areas within and beyond the District. 				<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>Development Manager</p>	
<p>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.</p>				<p>✓</p>	<p>Economic Development Manager</p>	<p>Prosperity – Economic Development and Planning 1 & 2</p>

Performance Measures				
Indicator reference code	Definition	Baseline 2013/14	Targets 2014/15	Frequency of Reporting
Prosperity – Economic Development and Planning 1	Reduce youth unemployment (18 – 24 year olds) to the County rate by 2017. (Based upon LSP Benchmark data established in July 2011: CCDC 9.7% (785), Staffs 6.7% (4,755)) SUBJECT TO REVIEW	Latest (Nov 2013) CCDC 4.9% (400), Staffs 3.7% (2,650)	Reduce by 50 pa (to close the gap with the County rate as at benchmark date)	Quarterly
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 2012 – June 2013) CCDC 69.8%, WM Region 69.0%, GB 71.1%.	To maintain the District’s Employment Rate above the rate for the WM Reg.	Quarterly

Service Area: Planning & Regeneration

Service Aim: Facilitate economic growth through job creation.

How	When				Who	Indicator
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
To play an active role in the ‘local’ LEPs with the aim of securing LEP endorsement for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment in transport infrastructure projects including the electrification of the Chase 				✓	Head of	

<p>Line, and upgrades to Eastern Way and Churchbridge junction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in key projects to support business growth in the A5/M6 Toll corridor. • Programmes (including EU funded schemes) to support at least 8 local businesses to grow/start-up. • Participate in at least 3 engagement events open to local businesses. 				<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>Planning & Regeneration, Planning & Economic Development Services Manager & Economic Development Manager</p>	<p>Prosperity – Economic Development & Planning 3</p>
<p>To support efforts to increase employment within the local tourism sector by participation within the Greater Birmingham Visitor Economy Strategy.</p>		<p>✓</p>			<p>Planning & Economic Development Services Manager</p>	<p>Prosperity – Economic Development & Planning 4 & 5.</p>

Performance Measures				
Indicator reference code	Definition	Baseline 2013/14	Targets 2014/15	Frequency of Reporting
Prosperity – Economic Development & Planning 3	To secure (through either completion or commencement of construction) at least 20,000sq m of new commercial floorspace within the District from April 2013 to March 2015.	At least 6,980sq m since April 2013 at the end of Q3 of 2013-14.	To secure a further 10,000sq m of new commercial floorspace from April 2014 to March 2015.	Quarterly
Prosperity – Economic Development & Planning 4	To secure at least an annual 5% increase in tourism expenditure within the local economy.	TBC	TBC	Annual
Prosperity – Economic Development & 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 commencing 2013-14.	1,260 hotel, B & B and self-catering spaces/units in 2011/2.	5% increase (63 bed spaces) over 2 years.	Annual

Service Area: Planning & Regeneration

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

How	When				Who	Indicator
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Maintain a 5 year reservoir of 28ha of ready to develop employment land.				✓	Planning Policy Manager	Prosperity – Economic Development and Planning 3
Offer Full Council the opportunity to adopt the Cannock Chase Local Plan – Part 1 following receipt of the Inspector’s Report.		✓			Head of Planning & Regeneration, Planning Policy Manager	Prosperity- Economic Development and Planning 6 & 7
Formally adopt a Community Infrastructure Levy and Charging Schedule.				✓	Planning Projects Officer	N/A
Grant sufficient planning permissions to evidence a 5 year supply of deliverable housing land sufficient to secure a net increase of 225 units per year.		✓		✓	Planning & Economic Development Services Manager, and Development Control Manager	Prosperity- Economic Development and Planning 6 & 7
Provide a responsive Development Management service which meets national targets for				✓	Planning & Economic Development Services	Prosperity – Economic Development

the speed and quality of decision making in dealing with planning applications.					Manager, and Development Control Manager	nt & Planning 6 & 7
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Performance Measures				
Indicator reference code	Definition	Baseline 2013/14	Targets 2014/15	Frequency of Reporting
Prosperity – Economic Development & Planning 6	More than 60% of major planning applications Should be determined within 13 weeks measured over a 2 year period. (National threshold is 30%)	For the year ending June 2013 the CCDC figure was 83%.	To ensure that at least 70% of major planning applications are determined within 13 weeks.	Quarterly
Prosperity – Economic Development & Planning 7	To ensure that over a 2 year period no more than 20% of planning refusals on all decisions on major applications are both refused and lost at appeal. (National threshold for designation is 20%)	Currently 0%.	To ensure that at least 50% of planning appeals on major applications uphold the Council's refusal	Quarterly

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, through the Housing and Waste Management Department and the Commissioning 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
- Management of town centre markets

Housing and Waste Management:

- Cleaning of town centres, removing litter and rubbish on a daily basis.

Commissioning:

- Parks and Open Spaces
- Creation of new planting schemes in disused flowerbeds.

Service Aim 2014-15:

- Improve town centres through regeneration and management.

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

Service Area: Planning and Regeneration

Service Aim: Improve town centres through regeneration and management

How	When				Who	Indicator
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
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.	✓	✓	✓	✓	Planning & Economic Development Services Manager	Prosperity – Economic Development & Planning 1 & 2.
To continue delivery of the Town Centre Business Rates Discount Scheme. To include:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistance to a further 5 businesses via existing resources. Securing additional resources during 2014-15 to enable the Scheme 				✓ ✓	Planning & Economic Development Services Manager	Prosperity – Economic Development & Planning 1 & 2.

to continue.						
To work with the County Council to commission research to inform future investment needs of Cannock Town Centre.		✓			Head of Planning & Regeneration	Prosperity – Economic Development & Planning 1 & 2
To undertake a detailed analysis of the use of the Rugeley Road car park to inform a review of management arrangements.	✓				Planning & Economic Development Services Manager	Prosperity – Economic Development & Planning 1 & 2.
To work with Staffordshire County Council to secure improved pedestrian connectivity between Rugeley Town Centre and the new Tesco store.				✓	Head of Planning & Regeneration.	Prosperity – Economic Development & Planning 1 & 2.
To undertake a detailed Retail Study of all three town centres within the District to assist the development of appropriate future policy.			✓		Head of Planning & Regeneration and Planning Policy Manager	Prosperity – Economic Development & Planning 1 & 2.
To complete the delivery of outstanding town centre improvements from 2013-14.			✓		Parks & Open Spaces Manager	Prosperity – Economic Development & Planning 1 & 2

Performance Measures				
Indicator reference code	Definition	Baseline 2013/14	Targets 2014/15	Frequency of Reporting
Prosperity – Town Centre Regeneration 1	To achieve a reduction in the number of vacant ground-floor retail units in the District's principal town centre shopping streets.	33 (9.62%) vacant out of 343 in June 2013, (benchmark date) 31 (9.01%) vacant out of 344 in October 2013. England average 14.0% as at Sept 2013.	To maintain a net reduction in the number of vacant units at March 2015 compared to the benchmark date, June 2013.	Quarterly
Prosperity – Town Centre regeneration 2	To facilitate the reoccupation of vacant town centre floorspace through the Town Centre Business Rates Discount Scheme (TCBRDS). SUBJECT TO REVIEW	At the end of December 2013 a total of 17 schemes had been approved through the TCBRDS.	To secure a further 5 approvals during 2014-15, subject to funding restrictions.	Quarterly