

**LOCUM**  
DESTINATION  
CONSULTING

**North Staffordshire  
Tourism Strategy**

**Strategy and  
Action Plan**

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## CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1	<i>Process</i>	4
1.2	<i>Other Consulting Projects</i>	4
<b>2</b>	<b>Vision: What it Will be Like in 2014</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1	<i>Stoke-on-Trent City Region</i>	6
2.2	<i>Rural North Staffordshire</i>	8
<b>3</b>	<b>A Brand Framework</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1	<i>Two Distinct Areas</i>	9
3.2	<i>Difficult Choices</i>	10
3.3	<i>Three Major Destination Brands; Two Destination Management Organisations</i>	11
<b>4</b>	<b>Market Trends</b>	<b>12</b>
4.1	<i>Changing Times</i>	12
4.2	<i>Implications for Tourism in North Staffordshire</i>	14
<b>5</b>	<b>Strategic Recommendations</b>	<b>16</b>
5.1	<i>Stoke-on-Trent City Region</i>	16
5.2	<i>Rural North Staffordshire</i>	19
<b>6</b>	<b>Promoting the City Region</b>	<b>21</b>
6.1	<i>Urban North Staffordshire = the Stoke-on-Trent City Region</i>	21
6.2	<i>Creating the Destination Effect</i>	21
6.3	<i>A Stronger Direction Needed</i>	22
6.4	<i>Big Idea 1: Making Stars of World Class Brands</i>	23
6.5	<i>Improving the Image</i>	25
6.6	<i>Big Idea 2: The City Centre</i>	26
6.7	<i>Making the City Legible</i>	29
6.8	<i>Branding: Stoke-on-Trent or The Potteries?</i>	31
6.9	<i>Connecting Urban and Rural</i>	32



## **ACTION PLAN**

<b>1</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Implementing the Strategy</b>	<b>35</b>
2.1	<i>Shared Priorities</i>	35
2.2	<i>Working with Southern Staffordshire</i>	35
2.3	<i>The Importance of Alton Towers</i>	36
2.4	<i>Hotel Development</i>	37
<b>3</b>	<b>Supporting Programmes</b>	<b>38</b>
3.1	<i>Business Support and Quality Assurance</i>	38
3.2	<i>Workforce Development</i>	39
3.3	<i>Visitor Information</i>	42
3.4	<i>Signage</i>	43
<b>4</b>	<b>Action Plan Programmes</b>	<b>44</b>
4.1	<i>Organisational Development</i>	44
4.2	<i>Showcasing Ceramics</i>	50
4.3	<i>Developing Market Towns</i>	55
4.4	<i>Stoke-on-Trent City Centre</i>	59
4.5	<i>Parks, Gardens and Waterways</i>	64
<b>5</b>	<b>Delivering the Action Plan</b>	<b>66</b>



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Process

Locum Destination Consulting has been commissioned to provide a five-year strategy and action plan for tourism in North Staffordshire. This report is issued as part of the final stage of our work programme.

### *Exhibit 1: Work Programme*

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Stage 1	Evaluation – a review of the current state of the destination and its tourism sector (Evaluation Report July 2003)
Stage 2	Consultation – seminars and interviews with a range of public and private sector stakeholders throughout the sub-region (consultations May–July; Seminar Report July 2003)
Stage 3	Vision and Strategic Framework (Draft August 2003)
Stage 4	SME Research (survey completed in July; Report September 2003)
Stage 5	Revised Vision and Action Plan Headlines (September 2003)
Stage 6	Strategic Action Plan (Draft December 2003)
Stage 7	<b>Final Report – all Locum outputs in finalised form</b>

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## 1.2 Other Consulting Projects

This report takes account of a number of projects undertaken by other consultants which overlapped with the North Staffordshire Tourism Strategy, in terms of both time-frame and remit. The most important are:

- The L&R Consulting sub-regional strategy for South Staffordshire
- The KPMG organisational work in North Staffordshire, which established a structure for 'Marketing and Selling the City' (one of the priorities they identified), which may in turn serve as a *city region* destination marketing organisation encompassing (and emphasising) tourism promotion for Stoke-on-Trent
- The Arup cluster study for North Staffordshire, which set the wider regeneration agenda in conjunction with the KPMG study.



There were also several concurrent consulting projects at regional level which are reflected in this final draft of the North Staffordshire Tourism Strategy, including the following:

- Locum Destination Consulting, *West Midlands Visitor Economy Strategy*
- TEAM, *Tourism Destination E-Business Strategy for the Heart of England*
- Impact Research, *Tourism & Leisure Workforce Development Strategy for the West Midlands.*



## **2 Vision: What it Will be Like in 2014**

### **2.1 Stoke-on-Trent City Region**

Back in 2004, no-one wanted to use the 'place brand' of Stoke-on-Trent. It was seen as downmarket, downtrodden, incomprehensible to outsiders and uninspiring to insiders.

Ten years later, both reality and perception have changed. Like Birmingham, Newcastle/Gateshead and Glasgow before it, Stoke-on-Trent has begun to transform on the basis of very significant public and private sector investment. This is a city region where people want to live, work, invest, visit and return. Transformation has been led by a visionary champion (or more accurately a small team) who have brought about sustainable, effective urban regeneration.

The city region encompasses the urban area of Newcastle-under-Lyme, with its strong accommodation, food and drink and entertainment offer, along with the six towns of Stoke-on-Trent.

Championed by the City Council, tourism has increased its profile as a business sector, a career path and a regeneration tool. There is a strong marketing and management organisation for the city region, and private sector operators feel they can 'buy into' an organisation with vision and value.

Visitors enjoy the experience of navigating the city. The Cultural Quarter has a day-to-night buzz. Other night-time hotspots include Newcastle's bars and restaurants. Public art heralds the creative nature of the city region.

Tourism is understood as a tool and an agent of regeneration. A lively visitor economy attracts business location decision-makers, lucrative business tourism visits, and generally breeds success. At the same time, a high standard of local 'amenities', such as public parks and leisure facilities, directly attracts visitors who have friends and relatives in the city, as well as contributing to an improved 'quality of life' for residents.

Civic pride is the most crucial beneficiary of the upsurge in tourism. And in turn it creates tourism as residents invite friends and relatives to come see the 'new' Stoke-on-Trent.

The city region's star brands are ceramics, although the proportion of visitors to the city coming for factory shopping is no longer as high as 65%. Whilst the



dependence of the tourism sector on this product has been reduced, ceramics brands have been integrated into and are a vital part of the 'new Stoke-on-Trent'.

Public art, sense of place, signage, gateways, legibility, connections – these issues were seen as crucial to the agenda of 'Marketing Stoke-on-Trent', and given early priority and investment.

Other visible changes include the revitalisation of Burslem, where factory shops, Ceramica, the ceramic and craft market, walking trails, cafés and an active events programme draw visitors.

In the City Centre, the museum and archive redevelopment has yielded an iconic building, the retail offer has been enhanced, a new bus station and TIC are functioning, development partnerships have been formed to take advantage of hotel and residential investment opportunities, and the arts and culture offer has never been stronger. It now feels like a high quality, vibrant city centre.

Within the urban core, several world-known ceramic brands and their visitor facilities continue to draw and disperse visitors to other attractions in the area. Trentham is playing a role as a destination attraction. These brands contribute to the strength of the Stoke-on-Trent *city region* brand in the marketplace.

The design and innovation theme has emerged as a key driver across North Staffordshire. Tourism-related projects have featured heavily and will continue to do so: a Design Centre, festivals / events, corporate showcase developments, etc. Although there is some geographic spread, these are primarily urban activities and messages, and therefore have contributed to the gradual strengthening of the Stoke-on-Trent *city region* brand.

Importantly, the regeneration of the city has had beneficial spin offs for the surrounding rural area, in providing first class facilities – theatre, entertainment, restaurants, shopping etc – for residents as well as visitors, and creating pride in the city beyond its boundaries.

Stoke-on-Trent is also becoming a green city, connected with the countryside and waterways – not only in design and provision of public spaces but also in the development of a sustainable non-car public transport system within and connecting to the city.



## 2.2 Rural North Staffordshire

The 'Shire' proposition – meaning North Staffordshire's rural areas and market towns – is thriving. Product development and enhancement has focused around the themes of family fun, outdoor activities, heritage and local food and drink. A number of 'hidden gems' have been uncovered and promoted within each of these themes. The emphasis is on quality and higher-value offers and on encouraging overnight stays. The Staffordshire Short Breaks campaign continues to yield benefits across the county and particularly encourage the capture of further benefit from Alton Towers visitors.

Leek has emerged as gateway to the *Peak District* and has benefited from enhancements within the Market Towns Initiative. It is known as a shopping centre for antiques with a modern design twist. Visitors seek out All Saints Church and other architectural gems, particularly with Arts & Crafts associations. They eat and drink in local restaurants and tea shops, and stay in hotels, of the highest quality.

Other market towns including Biddulph and Cheadle are also benefiting from improvements. Cheadle is emerging as a service centre for Alton Towers – providing accommodation, eating/drinking places, information, etc.

Other 'gems' attracting a similar market are Biddulph Grange, Rudyard Lake (recently refurbished and offering a 'step back in time' day out) and of course the attractions of the *Peak District*.

The heritage, culture and food and drink offers of Stafford and surrounding areas have developed in conjunction with Lichfield and other destinations in the south of the county, particularly through the Creative Staffordshire and Taste of Staffordshire initiatives.

For the family market, Alton Towers and surrounding tourism businesses have re-invested in their product and strengthened their joint offers. Compared to ten years ago, a higher proportion of Alton Towers visitors stay overnight in Staffordshire and visit other attractions within the county relating to wildlife and outdoor activities.



### 3 A Brand Framework

#### 3.1 Two Distinct Areas

North Staffordshire divides into two distinct areas – the Stoke-on-Trent *city region* (with the ceramics offer) and the *rural areas*, including key attractions Alton Towers and the Peak District. Although they complement each other and are linked in many ways, the nature of the visitor offer and the markets they appeal to are quite different.

The core *city region* includes the six towns of Stoke-on-Trent as well as Newcastle-under-Lyme. An extended city region with fuzzy boundaries might include the market towns of Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle. Other businesses or destinations outside of the Unitary Authority boundaries might feel more closely affiliated with the *city region* (e.g. Trentham).

A large part of the rural area is within or on the borders of the *Peak District*, and its North Staffordshire sub brand, the Staffordshire Moorlands. Operators in those areas are likely to feel the most empathy with those brands.

Organisation, branding and marketing solutions need to reflect these two distinct areas, neither amalgamating the two nor ignoring one of them. Co-operation and complementarity are key principles.

The strategy concentrates on what are considered to be the key destinations in North Staffordshire – the *city region* and the *rural county* – but also considers their place within the wider Staffordshire brand.

#### **Exhibit 2: Characteristics of Two Areas**

<i>City Region</i>	<i>Rural County</i>
Urban	Rural
Regeneration	Renewal
Innovation	Heritage
Arts and Culture	Landscape
Adult	Family
Night Economy	Outdoor Activities
Ethnic Cuisine	Local Produce
Ceramics	Alton Towers
Parks and Gardens	Peak District
Waterfront	Canals and Steam Railway



## 3.2 Difficult Choices

The foundation for a tourism strategy should be a destination brand framework. It should be the driver of investment priorities, product development, and organisation.

Unfortunately, it is not at all easy to decide what brand framework North Staffordshire should follow.

The strongest destination brand in the area is, without much question, the Peak District. The Peak District National Park is the oldest and most visited of National Parks in the country. It is a national iconic destination brand.

The Staffordshire Moorlands include some of the most attractive areas of the Peak and is an inherent part of it. There has been considerable progress in the Peak District in improving partnership arrangements between the key stakeholders, including the National Park and the district councils.

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council has been a full participant in these arrangements and the district is now fully integrated, as a sub brand, within the Peak District for marketing purposes. That appears to be an eminently sensible approach. The East Midlands region, which incorporates the bulk of the Peak District, is moving to a system of organisation that will focus even more on sub regions and it would make sense for the Staffordshire Moorlands to cement their role within that.

There is a different situation within the Stoke-on-Trent city region. The city has a significant tourism industry, mainly in the form of visits to the ceramics factory shops. Its primary need, however, is for holistic regeneration. It can look to the successful regeneration programmes of other cities. It needs to embark on the same road that they have, and to embark on it quickly.

There is a clear need for Stoke-on-Trent to have a focused branding strategy, in support and well integrated with its overall regeneration initiatives.

So far, so straight forward.

A more complicated set of issues covers the rest of the county, including Stafford. For them, promotion of a Staffordshire brand seems the most logical approach. Unlike the Stoke-on-Trent City Region (arguably) and the Staffordshire Moorlands, they do not fit into a clear destination brand and are not substantial enough in their own right to sustain extensive marketing.



Within North Staffordshire there is also a strong sentiment from operators in favour of emphasis on the county brand. Many of the people who took part in the consultation would prefer, for example, to see resource invested in marketing under a Staffordshire brand than under a Stoke-on-Trent and its Potteries brand.

A key consideration underpinning all of this is sustainability. In a world of unlimited funds, it would be possible to have a variety of destination management organisations and a variety of substantial marketing campaigns. The reality is different. Funds are limited, and there are other priorities. Spending those funds in a way that is as cost effective as possible is a key requirement.

### 3.3 Three Major Destination Brands; Two Destination Management Organisations

There needs to be dedicated marketing of Stoke-on-Trent, closely aligned with the promotion of the *city region* for the purposes of inward investment and regeneration. The 'Marketing and Selling the City' group is developing a City Marketing Strategy and proposals for a Stoke-on-Trent Destination Management Organisation are being considered.

There needs to be a destination management partnership at county level that is taking a leading role in the promotion of the county of *Staffordshire* as a visitor destination, focusing on its unique 'Shire' proposition (and on key attractions such as Alton Towers, Shugborough, etc).

Staffordshire Moorlands needs to continue and enhance its role as a sub brand within the *Peak District*, whilst participating fully in the Staffordshire Destination Management Partnership.

There will inevitably have to be flexibility and some overlap. Partnership working will be crucial. The objective is to ensure that there is a minimum amount of duplication and waste, and a maximum amount of partnership and efficiency.

As the Stoke-on-Trent regeneration programme begins to pay off, the *city region* will become a branded proposition which has stronger partnership appeal for the rural hinterland and for nearby market towns. Rather than clamouring to get out, others will be trying to get *in* on projects and initiatives based in Stoke-on-Trent.

In the interim or transition period, the opposite may be true. The starting balance of power with respect to tourism is held by the county, rather than the city.



## 4 Market Trends

### 4.1 Changing Times

Tourism markets have been changing rapidly and will continue to do so.

Some of the key trends that are likely to continue for the medium- to long-term and therefore, must shape the strategy, are:

- For many operators, there will continue to be a reliance on day visits, although day visitors spend much less on average than staying visitors and, because the main focus of the strategy is on maximising value rather than volume, it places a greater emphasis on staying visitors.
- Discretionary income will increase and, therefore, people will have more money to spend on leisure.
- Discretionary income will increase faster than leisure time (which may decrease) so people will be increasingly demanding when it comes to deciding how to spend it. Value for time will be as important as value for money.
- People will be better educated and want a broader range of experiences. Breaks that offer activities of various sorts will be in increasing demand.
- People will be increasingly concerned about leading a healthy lifestyle, and there will be increasing demand for activities and sports related breaks.
- “Out of the ordinary” experiences associated with venues will continue to grow in popularity – examples include civil ceremonies and business events in sporting venues, corporate days, functions and conferences with a tour, visit or talk.
- The ABC1 socio economic group will represent an increasing share of the population.
- There will be more households without children.
- There will be more single person households.
- City living will continue to grow in popularity, fuelling the increasing vitality of urban areas and, in turn, their attractiveness as destinations.



- The Licensing Act will change the nature of the night economy in towns and cities, leading to a more mature and welcoming ambience.
- People will take more holidays, albeit short breaks.
- It will be easier to get abroad and to other parts of the UK, especially by air. This will create both challenges (domestic customers will find it easier to go elsewhere) and opportunities (people will find it easier to get here, especially from overseas).
- Long holidays taken in the UK will decrease.
- Visits to friends and relatives, especially by young people, will increase.
- Business tourism will increase, although the trend towards smaller and shorter conferences will probably continue and growth is more likely to come from the public sector and associations than from the corporate sector. It is possible that the improving quality and accessibility of video conferencing may put a brake on the meetings and conferences market.
- There will be increasing demand for high quality self-catering for 3 night and 7 night breaks. Self-catering operators will need to be able to offer short breaks.
- Congestion will increase, as will the desire to escape it. There will be an increasing premium placed on space, time to reflect, relax, and recharge batteries.
- The Internet will become increasingly important for accessing information and for making bookings.
- The Internet will also have other impacts on tourism. It will make it easier, for example, for people to trace their ancestors and will, therefore, stimulate genealogical tourism.
- There will be increasing demand for the reliable and consistent standards offered by branded products.
- There will also be increasing demand for the individuality of high quality independent product. There will, however, be less tolerance for independent product that does not match the quality of equivalent branded product. Individuality will not be an acceptable excuse for poor quality.



- The unexpected can be expected – there will continue to be regular crises that will impact on the tourism.

These trends will create opportunities, but also pose challenges. Change will continue to be rapid.

## 4.2 Implications for Tourism in North Staffordshire

- There is likely to be continued sustained growth in leisure and tourism spend. This provides an opportunity for North Staffordshire to use visitors to generate economic growth, but the product must be right for modern market conditions.
- A strategy based on long stay, or even short stay leisure tourism, is not likely to be a success. Instead, the strategy should be built on maximising the strong existing day visits market, developing business tourism, and promoting short breaks and longer stays in the Moorlands and rural Staffordshire. It is perhaps better to think of it as a ‘visitor’ strategy rather than a ‘tourism’ strategy. The strategy is to maintain the existing level of promotional investment and support it with investment in destination management and infrastructure, e.g. in visitor management plans and information provision.
- The key to attracting business tourism is high quality facilities in accessible locations.
- The key to attracting leisure tourism is a wide variety of attractive, populist, leisure opportunities – walking, shopping, eating, culture, events etc.
- The Visiting Friends and Relatives market is likely to continue to boom. Although the primary motivation of these visitors will normally be to see their family or friends, an attractive and desirable leisure offer will also be an important stimulant and will help to prevent “spillage” of spend into surrounding areas. The Night Economy is a particularly important dimension for the VFR market.
- With the population ageing, product that appeals to the “empty nester” market will become increasingly successful – this market still represents a small minority of overall tourism spend, although in ceramics tourism this segment dominates.



- The increasing dominance of the ABC1 socio economic groups, and the increasingly stringent expectation of quality, puts an onus on delivering outstanding quality in all aspects of the visitor product.
- In terms of product to attract and satisfy staying visitors, leisure and business, the provision of high quality, modern hotel accommodation in good locations is a top priority.
- Caution is needed with the development of traditional, ticketed attractions. They can have an important role in creating an attractive visitor destination, but sustainability is a key issue for many.

The strategy responds to these implications.

It seeks to encourage recreational opportunities that will have a broad appeal.

It does not focus on the creation of traditional visitor attractions as a means of attracting visitors.

Instead, it seeks to create exceptionally pleasant places to walk, cycle, eat, drink, shop and so on.

It focuses on improvements that will substantially improve the quality of life of local people, in addition to providing them with employment opportunities.



## 5 Strategic Recommendations

### 5.1 Stoke-on-Trent City Region

#### Key Principles

- Design, innovation and marketing are core values; 'made in Stoke-on-Trent' is a quality hallmark
- Celebrate the world class brands that the city is home to and build on their brand values
- Focus on creating a high quality city centre
- Aim high – don't accept second best

#### Marketing and Branding

- Destination marketing aimed at visitors should not be separated from that aimed at residents or inward investors
- The highest priority in the short-term is to enhance local pride in the *city region* and its products
- The ceramics industry gives the *city region* many star brands whose existing value should be harnessed, particularly for visitors from further afield. The city has 310 ceramic companies, many of whom have visitor facilities
- However it is essential that a contemporary take on the ceramics industry is featured, connecting with the overarching design theme

#### Attractors and Key Projects

- The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery / Library and Archive redevelopment will help build a critical mass of attractions in the city centre, and enhance the 'destination' created by the Cultural Quarter
- Wedgwood is developing proposals for a museum on its site
- The North Staffordshire Design Initiative (in partnership with Staffordshire University) has proposed an International Centre of Design housed in an iconic building, an idea strongly supported by the county



- A festival of design and creativity has also been proposed and could be developed in conjunction with the International Centre of Design
- Greening for Growth will significantly improve the image and experience of the *city region* and create a series of new experiences
- Public art – closely connected with the ceramic industry or other local products – will enhance the cityscape, establish gateways and routes, and help create a ‘sense of place’ (cf. Gaudi Park in Barcelona)
- An indoor market in Burslem will showcase the continuing creativity of the ceramics industry and the applied arts
- Trentham will create a major leisure destination with thematic links into the urban core and outwards to the gardens and landscapes of the *county*
- The canal system merits enhancement and attention as a attractor for visitors and residents, particularly in the context of Festival Park
- Newcastle is developing its already popular town centre market
- Events programming (in Newcastle and Stoke-on-Trent) is a significant area of development for the *city region* – encompassing sports, cultural, business and other events – and should be a key plank of the image-building work undertaken by the ‘Marketing and Selling the City’ group

### Infrastructure

- Making the city legible to visitors is very high priority
- Additional quality parking is needed in the city centre and other key locations
- Public transport provision and information for tourists needs significant improvement – from the City Centre bus station redevelopment to dedicated tourist routes built around ceramics attractions
- A Park and Ride proposal should be considered
- The City Centre Tourist Information Centre needs relocation in the ‘heart’ of the city, as well as support from additional Tourist Information Points
- North Staffordshire needs to be part of an integrated Destination Management System (DMS) for Staffordshire



## Workforce Development and Business Support

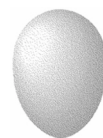
- The key challenge is encouraging businesses to take up the support available to them – and this is particularly difficult in urban areas where awareness of being ‘tourism’ businesses is minimal. The strategy is to work closely with the Regional Centre for Tourism Business Support to help develop focused programmes which will address the needs of tourism businesses in North Staffordshire.

## Key Indicators / Performance Measurement

- There is a general demand for data collection and dissemination
- There is also a need to establish (and prioritise) targets and key indicators, such as the following examples:
  - Public sector investment in tourism projects
  - Private sector investment in tourism projects
  - Number and value of partnership projects
  - Overnight visits
  - Spend per visitor
  - Overall spend
  - Positive mentions in guidebooks / media
  - Qualitative visitor survey results

## Organisation

- Tourism is a key part of the wider regeneration agenda (but not a panacea)
- The ‘Marketing and Selling the City’ group aims to be a strong partnership offering visionary leadership to the *city region*
- It needs to complement and co-operate with Destination Management Partnership for the *county* – avoiding duplication of effort and waste of resources
- Some functions (e.g. conference bureau) may best undertaken by a regional partner



## 5.2 Rural North Staffordshire

### Key Principles

- Fully integrate the Staffordshire Moorlands into the Peak District
- Prioritise sustainability and eco-development
- Make the most of Alton Towers
- Promote local food and drink

### Marketing and Branding

- *Staffordshire* is the primary brand for promoting the attractions of the county, although Staffordshire Moorlands will be promoted as an integral part of both *Staffordshire* and the *Peak District*
- Alton Towers currently dominates the Staffordshire Short Break campaign – to beneficial effect – and this ‘star brand’ should be supported and enhanced in its relationship to the wider *county* brand
- Key themes for the *county* are heritage (including canals and steam railways), outdoor activities, food and drink, landscape and environment

### Attractors and Key Projects

- A gateway project and streetscape improvements in Leek will enhance the relationship of the *county* to the *Peak District*
- The Three Dales Vision (although within Newcastle-under-Lyme and therefore the geographic *city region*) picks up on some of the key themes for the *county* and further work is needed to determine whether this vision is viable as a tourist destination; Apedale Heritage Centre represents an emerging attraction with particular appeal to the VFR market and local residents
- Trentham (in Stafford Borough) will create a major leisure destination with thematic links into the urban core and outwards to the gardens and landscapes of the *county*



- Star attractions such as Shugborough continue to bring in significant numbers of visitors, and also play host to an increasing number of profile-raising events
- The Great British Kitchen will be an important project for Stafford if it progresses
- Significant new conference facilities in Stafford Borough, on the periphery of the *city region* in Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough, and across the border in Cheshire are increasing the county's business tourism offer
- Creative Industries and the Creative County programme link with key themes (including design and innovation) for the Stoke-on-Trent city region
- Co-ordinated programming of festivals and events across the county (and with neighbours)

### Infrastructure

- Tourist Information Centres within the *county* and beyond (esp. *Peak District* TICs such as Buxton) need co-ordination and attention to the presentation of the *Staffordshire* offer
- Need county boundary signs to help create a sense of place
- North Staffordshire needs to be part of an integrated Destination Management System for Staffordshire

### Key Indicators / Performance Measurement

- There is a general demand for data collection and dissemination
- There is also a need to establish (and prioritise) targets and key indicators

### Organisation

A County Destination Management Partnership is evolving from the current work of Staffordshire Tourism (County Council). It is important that the DMP actively engages key public and private sector organisations as well as support agencies, and that it is sufficiently funded in order to make a real difference in terms of delivering improved products, servicing the industry's needs and marketing and brand awareness.



## **6 Promoting the City Region**

### **6.1 Urban North Staffordshire = the Stoke-on-Trent *City Region***

*North Staffordshire* is represented by organisations including the North Staffordshire Regeneration Zone Board. Its economic development is strategically guided by the priorities attached to the Regeneration Zone. This entity (urban *North Staffordshire*) can be expected to draw down significant public sector funding over the coming decade for regeneration-focused investment.

### **6.2 Creating the Destination Effect**

Tourism is being successfully used as a regeneration tool around the UK and the world. From iconic projects like the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art in Gateshead or the Lowry in Salford, to more functional (and financially sustainable) developments like mixed-use waterfront regeneration in Birmingham and Manchester, destinations that are good for tourism are seen as good for residents and good for business.

In Stoke-on-Trent as elsewhere, the development of a vibrant visitor economy is inextricably linked with the creation of a strong 'place brand', and the enhancement of the case for inward investment. We use the 'virtuous spiral' diagram below to illustrate the context of what we call the Destination Effect – what happens when the place brand takes hold.





## **6.4 Big Idea 1: Making Stars of World Class Brands**

### **6.4.1 A Unique Sense of Place**

Stoke-on-Trent is unique in the UK in that it is the home of an industry that boasts myriad world class brand names. The steel industry is no longer visible in Sheffield. The shoe industry is no longer visible in Northampton. While the numbers of people employed have substantially reduced, the ceramics industry is still very visible and very much alive in Stoke-on-Trent.

In this sense, it is a bit like a wine town in France (such as the champagne headquarters Epernay). The presence of famous brands at every turn gives it a highly distinctive sense of place; we must build strongly on this.

### **6.4.2 The Brands are the Star Attractors**

The ceramics industry already underpins leisure tourism in Stoke-on-Trent, but it is mainly driven by people coming to visit factory shops. The presentation focuses more on heritage than modernity.

Most people who visit Stoke-on-Trent for the ceramics do not do so because they are interested in the heritage of the industry.

They do, however, have a general awareness that ceramics are made in Stoke-on-Trent, and that this is the UK centre of the ceramic industry.

But the big draw is the power of the brands. The allure of international brands making ceramics in Stoke-on-Trent, e.g. Wedgwood, Spode, Aynsley, Moorcroft, Royal Doulton, Portmeirion and the rest.

These are brands that are truly world famous and they are still overwhelmingly associated with quality. They are desirable possessions and even investments.

This is what Stoke-on-Trent should build on: that it is the home of these magnificently powerful and alluring brands.

### **6.4.3 Exploiting the Brand Values of the Ceramic Brands**

It is understandable that some stakeholders query whether the ceramics industry is an asset or a liability to the city. In 1970, one in three jobs in Stoke-on-Trent were in the ceramics industry. Now the figure is more like one in ten, but what has gone is hard manual labour and what remains is artistry and design skills.



The ceramics industry gives Stoke-on-Trent a unique sense of place and it is the reason why tourists are attracted to visit the city. There was a strong consensus about this in the seminars that informed the preparation of this strategy.

It is unquestionable that Stoke-on-Trent must attract new economic activity, and it must find new sources of wealth.

This does not mean, however, that it should turn its back on the famous brands with which it is synonymous.

Rather, it should use the positive values associated with those brands in a way that helps to generate new economic activity.

The key values that are important in this respect are excellence in design, highly skilled craftsmanship, world class quality and 'made in Stoke-on-Trent'. The city needs to find a way of celebrating these values, both when it comes to promoting itself as a visitor destination and when planning its renaissance.

#### **6.4.4 Proudly Celebrating its Brands**

The challenge is to make stars not only of the old factories, as interesting as they are, but more of the world class brands.

Stoke-on-Trent should show that it is proud to be the place where these brands are made. That they represent the best in design, quality and English manufacture. That the ethos of progressive design and commitment to quality design that drives these brands permeates the city and its culture.

The brands should be proudly on display. The development of the cultural offer should be focused on making greater connections with them, to emphasising that Stoke-on-Trent is a city with design and creativity at its core.

It should proclaim itself from the marketing material.

It should be very evident to everyone who drives past or through Stoke-on-Trent on the M6 or the A50.

It should be very evident to everyone who visits the city.

The message should be the city is proud to be the home of these brands, and that these brands represent the best in quality and the best in creative modern design.

The key to this, however, is doing so in a way that is entirely modern and progressive. Just as Liverpool and Manchester have done, Stoke-on-Trent needs to



build on the best things in its past and its present to present itself as a progressive, modern city.

#### **6.4.5 Providing a Showcase**

Like other industries for which Britain is or has been famous, the ceramics industry in Stoke-on-Trent has conflicting images associated with it.

On the one hand, it is associated with top-notch quality. The Best of British. This reputation has its roots deep in history and there is a danger in relying too much on this.

On the other hand, it retains a misplaced reputation for outmoded manufacturing processes and a lack of spend on design, encapsulated perhaps by the infamous John Harvey Jones television programme about Churchill Tableware.

This second image may or may not be actually true of the industry, but it is clearly important for both the industry and the city to shake off all traces of the “outmoded” image.

The image that the city and the industry should present to the outside world should be one and the same – high quality and progressive (although respectful of tradition).

Yet, it is arguable that the outmoded image is the one that is presented to the casual visitor to Stoke-on-Trent.

Many of the ceramics attractions are of outstanding quality, and present a modern, quality image, but that is not true of the city as a whole and the way that it is presented.

In the city as a whole there is very little of the urban environment that conveys a message of outstanding quality, little that says that this is the home of any industry that is a foremost centre of progressive, modern design. All that, we think, needs to change. It is not easy because the scale of the challenge is so large, but other cities have shown that it is possible.

### **6.5 Improving the Image**

This is a tourism strategy, but its concern extends deep into the much deeper issue of the image of the city and the way that it presents itself to the world.



There is a great deal that needs to be done to improve the image of the city. This was a common theme emerging from the stakeholder seminars.

Stoke-on-Trent is in a similar situation that post-industrial cities like Manchester, Birmingham, Newcastle, Leeds, Sheffield and Glasgow were in ten years or more ago, except that Stoke-on-Trent has retained its principal industry.

They, of course, have enjoyed a remarkable renaissance. That has made them attractive places to visit and is one of the reasons that, in all cases, they have enjoyed a tremendous boom in their tourism infrastructure.

More importantly, however, they have become attractive places to live, work, invest and play. These qualities are interlinked – the more attractive they are to live and work in, the more attractive that they are to visit.

There is a tendency to think too narrowly about what makes a city an attractive tourist destination. That building more visitor attractions is the key. In fact, the quality of the urban experience is just as important, if not more so. It is not the quality of their visitor attractions that has made the cities listed above so successful as destinations, it is the quality of the whole experience – the shopping, the restaurants, the night life, the culture and, simply, the urban “buzz”.

If Stoke-on-Trent is to improve its position as a destination, it needs to improve the overall quality of the experience that it offers.

It has got a long way to go, but it does have the experience of others to follow and it does have raw materials to work with, such as the ceramics industry and proximity to the Peak District.

## **6.6 Big Idea 2: The City Centre**

### **6.6.1 Joining the Urban Revival Train**

There are factors that are common to the revival of cities like Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool, Sheffield and Newcastle/Gateshead.

There has been substantial investment in the urban infrastructure: pedestrianised streets, public squares, street furniture, tram systems etc.



This has stimulated investment by the private sector, especially in inner city residential accommodation. This has been increasingly popular with young professional people who enjoy the vibrancy and convenience of the urban lifestyle.

The particular obstacle that Stoke-on-Trent faces traces back to its origins as six separate towns. As a consequence, the city centre (Hanley) is small in relation to the size of the city. Unlike other cities, it does not have a strong professional quarter. As yet, it has seen little of the inner city residential development that is so characteristic now even of cities of equivalent size (such as Southampton).

Unless it can overcome this challenge of not having a “proper” centre, there is a great danger that Stoke-on-Trent is going to miss out one of the great trends of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century – the renaissance of city life.

The only obvious means of preventing this is to have a very clear strategy of creating a visitor-friendly City Centre. This is the theme of the current masterplan for the city centre, and we endorse it.

Although this goes far beyond a tourism strategy, this is a central plank of what we believe Stoke-on-Trent needs to do to become a successful destination in the future.

## 6.6.2 Case Study - Sheffield

Sheffield offers, in our opinion, the most inspiring example of a strategy that Stoke-on-Trent could replicate.

Faced with a similarly enormous regeneration challenge across the entire city, Sheffield decided to focus on creating a new benchmark of quality at the heart of the city.

This clear vision was translated into a masterplan.

They have used three key, interlinked and publicly funded projects to create the momentum and to make it quite clear what the heart of the city is:

- Peace Square – a beautifully designed public space with water features
- Millennium Galleries - Galleries displaying artefacts from local collections and a continuing series of exhibitions from the Tate and the V&A
- Winter Garden – a stunning interior botanical garden



The quality that makes this project outstanding, however, is the exceptional accessibility and popular appeal of the cultural elements, and the way that they are interwoven into the fabric of the city centre.

Both the Millennium Galleries and the Winter Gardens, therefore, are – and will be even more so when the project is complete – major pedestrian routes through the city centre. It is easy to pop into one of the galleries en route from one part of the city to another. Likewise, it is easy to walk through the Winter Gardens when walking from one part of the city to another.

They are totally integrated with commercial development. Construction is due to start soon on a four star hotel alongside the Winter Gardens. It will have an “open” lobby and a range of restaurants linking the new retail quarter with the Peace Gardens and the Winter Gardens.

The developers Hammersons are finishing the final stages of planning an adjacent retail development that will transform the quality of the city’s shopping offer.

Suddenly, the city has become a very attractive place to live and developers are vying for residential and mixed-use development sites in the city centre.

This is exactly the momentum that Stoke-on-Trent needs to create, and we believe that the best way to get it going would be to follow the same strategy.

### 6.6.3 A Design Centre

Design must anchor itself to something, which for the moment must be ceramics, but we must continually search for new design-led products.

We believe there is an opportunity for a new cultural attraction in the city centre that could do for Stoke-on-Trent what the Millennium Galleries have done for Sheffield i.e. create a highly accessible and high quality cultural facility in the City Centre, integrated with commercial and residential development.

Our view is that this facility should be used to cement and enhance the city’s reputation for excellence in design.

To do so, it could have the following elements:

- Rotated exhibitions from the ceramics collections in the Potteries Museum
- Exhibitions of the latest design work from the Pottery companies
- Exhibitions (and workshops) of independent designers



- Temporary design exhibitions perhaps created in partnership with the Design Museum in London, the Design Council and the Royal Society of Arts.

Although, on the whole, we are very cautious about creating new visitor attractions, we believe that something that gives integrity to the redevelopment of the city centre is needed. As Sheffield has done, it can be used to create a new benchmark for quality and a symbol for a city. An institution focused on design would have the best fit for the brand values of the city (and indeed, the county – soon to be rebranded “the Creative County”).

The most important consideration, however, is how a public investment of this nature could be fully integrated with the day to day life of the city and its commercial redevelopment. An expensive, inaccessible new “attraction” sitting in a corner of the city is not what is needed.

#### **6.6.4 The Ceramics Festival**

As a further means of establishing the cultural strength of the city centre, there seems to be an obvious opportunity for a major arts-based event in Stoke-on-Trent that celebrates the ceramics industry. The aim would be to create a populist annual event that, over the years, builds a national and international reputation.

### **6.7 Making the City Legible**

#### **6.7.1 Creating Clusters**

A core challenge with Stoke-on-Trent as a visitor destination is that it is very difficult for visitors to work out where everything is and how to get to it.

Most of the attractions are located in the towns and each of the towns has a grouping of attractions within walking distance of each other. They are, in effect, “quarters” and destinations in their own right.

It is not realistic to persuade visitors to drive between lots of independent attractions. We think that a strategy that is more likely to be successful is to create clusters based on the individual towns, attract people to them, and then persuade them to stay there and spend more money there.

This “cluster” strategy should start with marketing, which should make it clear that there is a bundle of attractions under each town.



It should continue with signage on the main roads, which should group the attractions under the particular towns. There should be large signs at the main entry points listing the attractions under each town. This is a strategy that Portsmouth – another city with a large number of attractions over a wide area – has recently adopted.

### 6.7.2 A Central Orientation Point

Most stakeholders agree that the current tourist information centre is not in the best location, although, being rent free, it is a cost-effective solution for the City Council.

Given the dispersed nature of the attractions, and the fact that most of them travel to them by car (there is no realistic alternative), a better option would appear to be an orientation centre in an easily accessible location near the main road access points or a better location as part of upgrading the City Centre.

The sustainability of this is, of course, a big issue. Perhaps there is an argument, however, for combining it with a large showcase and store for ceramics made in Stoke-on-Trent, possibly, but not necessarily, including factory shopping.

One of the difficulties for visitors is that there is nowhere currently where they can see and purchase the merchandise of all the producers. Nonetheless, it is clear that many visitors prefer to buy at the factory stores.

A showcase store in conjunction with a visitor facility could potentially, however, provide an outlet for smaller manufacturers while sustaining a high quality visitor orientation point.

The new tourist information centre could equally provide an important orientation point for Alton Towers and for the Peak District / Staffordshire Moorlands. If designed to a high quality, it could also provide the “gateway” symbol that many in the city argue for.

Finally, it could be the focal point of shuttle bus services to the attractions, replacing in a more sustainable mode the China Bus service.

However this proposal will need to be considered in relation to the business dangers faced by the ceramics manufacturers – do they have the resources to support the strategy? Are they being asked to subordinate their own business interests? The economic basis of the city’s future relationship with its iconic brands



needs independent discussion and an assessment of all possible funding streams for supporting the development of the ceramics industry in Stoke-on-Trent.

## 6.8 Branding: Stoke-on-Trent or The Potteries?

What name should be used for promoting the attractions in Stoke-on-Trent?

The area is well-known as The Potteries, which is the name, on the whole, favoured by stakeholders. It is quite evocative and probably has meaning for many customers of the ceramics companies. This sub-brand is used to promote the ceramic tourism product, and its future needs to be regularly reviewed.

The disadvantages are that it possibly sounds old fashioned and does not necessarily portray the industry in the most progressive light, but it does mean something to outsiders.

*Stoke-on-Trent* is a better, albeit riskier, investment in the long term. Ultimately, Stoke-on-Trent has to embark on the long road of image change that rivals like Manchester, Birmingham and Liverpool have been following for some time.

Given the links between tourism and a wider economic development agenda, it is our view that the investment should be made in an 'umbrella' *city region* brand – Stoke-on-Trent – which appeals to inward investors, visitors and residents alike. This may not be the quickest win available for tourism and the decision will need to be debated in more detail.

If the decision is jointly and individually made to invest in *Stoke-on-Trent*, it is an axiom of marketing that the brand promise will need to be carried off. A visitor who arrives on the strength of an image should find a reality to match. Nothing is harder to make up for than unmet expectations, and given the importance of word-of-mouth marketing this is not a risk the *city region* can afford to take.

Visitors currently come with an expectation of The Potteries product, which is broadly delivered, but they have no expectation of the Stoke-on-Trent product. The aim should be to raise expectations of the city offer, and then deliver on those expectations.



## 6.9 Connecting Urban and Rural

The regeneration of the *city region* will have beneficial spin offs for the surrounding 'rural' area in providing first class facilities – theatre, entertainment, restaurants, shopping etc – for residents as well as visitors. The need to convince and sell the vision to the community to generate 'civic pride', is essential and the proposed parallel marketing and PR campaign will have to be creative as well as carefully timed. The civic pride will need to extend beyond the Stoke-on-Trent city area and be absorbed by other Staffordshire residents too.

The vision provides a great opportunity to pioneer a green city – not only in design and provision of public spaces, etc, but also in the development of a sustainable non-car public transport system within and connecting to the city.

A key priority for Staffordshire Moorlands is the regeneration of the market towns, and this is reflected in the MTI and SRB programmes already in place for Leek, Cheadle and Biddulph. However these have not long to run, are un-connected programmes with relatively small-scale budgets. The towns need to be included in the wider context of this strategy to realise their tourism potential. Cheadle for instance could develop as a good service centre for Alton Towers – providing accommodation, eating/drinking places. Leek already has a good tourism offer which could be further developed with supporting infrastructure, e.g. a hotel development brief is currently being developed.

The links and interdependency between rural area and city are highlighted in the action plan accompanying this strategy. Although generally attracting different target markets there are important overlaps – day visitors from the city area to the countryside form a big market, many overnight visitors stay, or would like to stay, in Stoke-on-Trent hotels and travel to Alton Towers, American visitors visit the factory shops and visitor centres and stay in traditional B&Bs in the countryside. Also, there is a common industrial heritage interest in the canal corridor. Transport links such as the Biddulph Valley Way cycle route, Caldon canal, and possible rail revival between Stoke-on-Trent, Leek and Alton, could be developed to capitalise on these links.



## **ACTION PLAN**



## 1 Partners

The Action Plans have been written to guide specific programmes of action which are on the 'critical path' to achieving the Vision for North Staffordshire. Some will need committed input from Local Authorities, who are likely to be working with a Staffordshire-level Destination Management Partnership as well as a Stoke-on-Trent City Marketing & City Centre Management Organisation. Cross-over with the Southern Staffordshire Visitor Economy Strategy is highlighted in Section 2.

Partnership with Advantage West Midlands and the North Staffordshire Regeneration Zone are also crucial to deliver many of the actions outlined here. This report takes into account the final draft of the Regional Visitor Economy Strategy prepared by Locum Destination Consulting for Advantage West Midlands (final version dated February 2004), and the new organisational structure for supporting the region's visitor economy.

This strategy establishes the foundations for a new approach to tourism management and marketing in North Staffordshire, with the supporting programmes in Section 3. These programmes will need to be addressed with a sense of urgency.

In the action plan programmes in Section 4, we have focused on priorities for North Staffordshire and for making the most of North Staffordshire's unique product offer – the remarkable mix of the Peak District, Alton Towers and the Potteries.

This report is intended to supplement rather than replace existing action plans developed by individual local authorities, the county council, other agencies and partnerships.



## 2 Implementing the Strategy

### 2.1 Shared Priorities

*Exhibit 4: Priorities for North Staffordshire*

	<i>Stoke-on-Trent</i>	<i>Newcastle-under-Lyme</i>	<i>Stafford</i>	<i>Moorlands</i>
<b>Marketing and Branding</b>	<i>Marketing and Selling the City</i>		Staffordshire	Staffordshire / Peak
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Public Art / signage		signage / information	
<b>Skills &amp; Business Support</b>	work with Regional Centre for Tourism Business Support; quality initiatives			
<b>Attractors</b>	Ceramics	Food & Drink	Shugborough	Alton Towers
<b>Performance Measurement</b>	Investment / quality		overnights	
<b>Organisation</b>	SoT City Region / Staffordshire		Staffordshire	Staffordshire / Peak
<b>Key Projects</b>	City Centre	Market	Trentham; GBK	Leek Gateway

### 2.2 Working with Southern Staffordshire

North Staffordshire and Southern Staffordshire have a lot of common ground, and it is a fundamental assumption of this strategy that a county-level Destination Management Partnership is a desirable outcome of the emerging partnership between public and private sector across the county of Staffordshire.

Actions which are included in this document, and which represent shared priorities with Southern Staffordshire as expressed in the Southern Staffordshire Visitor Economy Strategy (SSVES), include the following:

- The development of a County Destination Management System, taking into consideration the regional perspective, existing activities in Lichfield, and the need for links into a well publicised Staffordshire portal website.
- Destination Branding and Marketing. The Short Breaks, Taste of Staffordshire and Creative County initiatives have provided a solid platform on which to build.
- Gateway initiatives to incorporate signing, interpretation, and information provision to create a "sense of place" and enhance local pride.



- Canal product development, to reinforce associations with industrial heritage, and to improve its contribution to the economic growth of the area by encouraging more visits from canal users.
- Improving accommodation provision to capitalise more fully on potential growth, particularly around Alton Towers, with reference to SSVES's "Distinctive Accommodation Development" initiative.
- Developing and marketing events and festivals, perhaps a "Festival of Staffordshire programme".

### **Attraction Development in Stafford**

Key attractors in Stafford Borough which are not featured in this action plan due to greater synergy with the key themes of the Southern Staffordshire Visitor Economy Strategy include:

- The County Showground
- Shugborough
- Plans for Great British Kitchen
- Events and Festivals such as Stafford Festival, Shakespeare Event at Stafford Castle, Music Festival and Film Festival
- Several important heritage attractions including the Castle and Ancient High House.

## **2.3 The Importance of Alton Towers**

The importance of Alton Towers as an attractor for North Staffordshire, and indeed as a venue for conferences and events, cannot be underestimated. In terms of this strategy, which is largely concerned with the future actions of public sector players, the key aim is to support this attraction and maximise the benefits flowing out to other tourism businesses in North Staffordshire. The Staffordshire Short Breaks campaign is an example of partnership working which builds on the strength of the Alton Towers offer. The organisational development recommended here for a Staffordshire DMP will encourage further joint working of this type.



## 2.4 Hotel Development

The most important indicator of success in North Staffordshire will be an increase in bednights. Currently the vast majority of North Staffordshire's visitors are day visitors to the sub-region – despite the fact that many of them are on a short break visiting attractions in North Staffordshire. But they are not staying locally. It must be seen as a high priority to reverse this trend.

In this area as in others, close partnership with InStaffs (on inward investment) and with regeneration delivery bodies, will prove essential to the success of the Vision and Strategic Framework.

A 2002 hotel development study found a gap in the market at the higher end, and at the same time found that there is little incentive to improve standards at the budget end of the market as most competition is local, i.e. based on price.

The achieved room occupancy in Stoke-on-Trent in 2001 was 68% with an achieved room rate of £44. Room occupancy is reasonable but the yield per room is too low to support development of full service hotels. The room occupancy for the wider area was slightly higher at 70% at a room rate of £39.

Development interest is coming from the budget hotel chains. There is no interest in the 4 to 5 star bracket. Potential hotel development has been considered at Wedgwood (a unique showcase for lifestyle products), Trentham (a 4 star hotel recreating the stately home and a budget hotel on the A34) and Keele University (conference campus centre and hotel adjacent to the railway station).

There are a number of hotel sites available - mainly in Radial Park and Etruria Valley. The site at the railway station has potential as a conference hotel. Wedgwood and Trentham present flagship hotel prospects. The redevelopment of Stoke-on-Trent City Centre calls for identification of hotel sites as well.

The surrounding environment at potential hotel sites is a major deterrent. Public realm improvements, public art and signage will help matters in the short term – and are essential – in anticipation of a concerted effort to attract hotel investment.



### **3 Supporting Programmes**

This chapter presents a series of on-going 'supporting programmes', in contrast to the 'action plan programmes' in the following chapter (which are focused on delivering a new state of affairs and new products).

These supporting programmes will be driven and championed from the Staffordshire Destination Management Partnership. The full participation of all partners, and in particular the Local Authorities and the County Council, is critical. The key to success will be to integrate these high priority supporting programmes into new organisational structures from the beginning.

Business Support, Workforce Development, Signage and Visitor Information should all be considered in conjunction with issues highlighted under the Southern Staffordshire Visitor Economy Strategy. They should also open up useful delivery partnerships with the Regional Tourism Agency and the Regional Centre for Tourism Business Support.

#### **3.1 Business Support and Quality Assurance**

All North Staffordshire programme delivery will have links with the regional Quality At Heart network to ensure that business support, quality assurance and customer care training are available and utilised throughout the sub-region. This is a high priority and will require focused management by the Destination Management Partnership. The Regional Tourism Agency and Regional Centre for Tourism Business Support will be key partners, as will other sub-regional DMPs with Quality At Heart programmes underway.

A survey of SME accommodation and attraction businesses in North Staffordshire undertaken as part of this strategy's research programme revealed that only a small percentage of North Staffordshire's tourism sector businesses are engaged at all with the public sector support mechanisms intended to help them. Most of the sector's most vulnerable businesses are operating outside of formal and informal networks. Although most of them have not made much effort to find out what services might be available to them, their expectations are low and they do not expect the help on offer to be relevant to them.

The Regional Centre for Tourism Business Support (RCTBS) would act as the first stage of support services for these SMEs. At present the RCTBS sends an advisor to undertake a half day diagnostic, and then signposts the business towards sources



of information, training or further advice. They also have a remit for developing collaborative networks, and establishing sub-regional workshops to address any generic business issues.

Moving on from this 'first stage' service, the RCTBS have suggested that there may be an opportunity for sub-regions to invest in longer term services for tourism and leisure businesses, in particular, the on-going development and administration of collaborative networks. The RCTBS would be able to help implement a networking project with the collected membership of a DMP, but this is a function which may require a dedicated 'network management' function at DMP level (possibly implemented by a team of local authority tourism officers).

The networking benefits offered to members and the specific clubs / best practice workshops / mentoring schemes / etc which developed in a particular DMP area (in this case, Staffordshire) will need to be visibly 'supporting business' – responding to business demands, and delivering results – not simply delivering a greater volume of diagnostics, important only to the public sector.

There is a good working relationship built around the Staffordshire Short Breaks campaign and other public / private partnership working in the county. This can be the basis for a leading programme of quality assurance and business support in North Staffordshire – both key planks in the foundation needed for North Staffordshire's future success.

### 3.2 Workforce Development

Impact Research delivered a Tourism & Leisure Workforce Development Strategy to Advantage West Midlands (dated October 2003). It focused attention on the following regional priorities:

- 1 The key criterion for any workforce development intervention project for the region is that it will help improve business productivity;
- 2 The second, is that it will improve the visitor experience;
- 3 The third is that it will create opportunities for individuals to upskill and progress their career within the tourism and leisure cluster.

The following sub-sections are excerpted from the Impact Research study.



### 3.2.1 Learning and Skills Council Activity

In LSC Staffordshire's local strategic plan 2002-2005, hospitality is identified as one of eight "most relevant" sectors for the area, having reviewed NTO / SSC workforce development strategies. Others include the food and drink, ceramics and voluntary sectors.

LSC Staffordshire is currently (2003/04) compiling sector reports for 14 sectors including one for leisure and tourism. As such, it is difficult to suggest in this document what sort of priorities the local LSC might adopt for the cluster. However, there is a direct link between the cluster and the LSC's objective to increase the Engagement of Employers in Workforce Development, which will see the LSC and its partners:

- Identify and define the current and future skills needs of employers.
- Promote the benefits of workforce development to employers.
- Ensure the availability of appropriate learning provision to meet the needs of employers.
- Encourage the participation of employers in learning programmes and promotional activity.

Any plan for the cluster will look to take account of skills, qualifications and learning trends in Staffordshire including:

In the most recent employer survey conducted in the Staffordshire LSC area, one in four employers reported a skill shortage (particularly felt by employers in the North Staffordshire conurbation), relating in the main to basic skills and generic employability skills as opposed to technical skills.

One in ten businesses reported a gap in the skills of their current workforce, tending to be more prevalent in larger companies. More than one-quarter of adults hold no qualification at all. The percentage of each cohort holding no qualifications increases with age (47.8% of cohort aged 55+ hold no qualification, compared to 24.3% of cohort aged 16-24 years).

### 3.2.2 Priorities for Staffordshire

- This is a mixed economy with some industrial centres and the potential for tourism growth, which would create employment for a wide age range, but there are problems of perception.



- Local career opportunities for young and older people to engage with the local community encouraging the use of leisure and culture as a tool to tackle a number of social objectives e.g. increase physical activity, diversionary activities and social well being.
- Customer care/ambassadors for this area - particularly young staff. Small businesses - strategic management / business planning (already addressed to some extent through Business Link).
- Develop quality small businesses and higher skilled employees.
- Customer service plus career structure for women.
- Focus on: low skilled, school leavers, small businesses and older people.
- An initiative anticipated to emerge out of the Southern Staffordshire Visitor Economy Strategy is a "Distinctive Accommodation Development" project aimed at providing accommodation operators with the tools needed to develop high quality innovative businesses offering a very high standard of facilities and service. It is intended that this initiative will act as an exemplar for the region.

### 3.2.3 Local initiatives / projects

- LSC Staffordshire is producing a tourism and leisure sector skills report to inform workforce development planning between June and September 2003. This will help prioritise local interventions in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.
- The latest ESF bidding round (July 2003) presents opportunities for the sector – please consult co-financing plan form LSC Staffordshire. Contact David Griffiths, Research Manager 0845 019 4149.
- "Great British Kitchen" is a project concept to use a redundant Stafford hospital as the basis of a tourism and leisure complex including a catering academy, hotel exhibition centre and range of food outlets. Training and work experience opportunities would arise from the development. The project is currently the subject of a feasibility study commissioned by AWM to determine if it is to proceed or not. If the project does go ahead initiatives will probably include the development of a Chefs' school, Amateur Cooks' school and Junior Cooks' school. If it does not certain elements of the project relating to training and improving standards within the food and drink sector



will nevertheless be incorporated into a wide "Food and Drink Action Plan" for Staffordshire. This will be produced over the next few months to help guide the "Taste of Staffordshire" initiative as well as address business support, training, quality, local sourcing, branding and inward investment issues.

- The Chase Experience – Objective 3 project led by Cannock Chase Technical College delivering training in retail, ICT and customer service and basic skills to support the tourism and leisure industry within the Chase district. Also delivered to unemployed residents who wish to gain employment in customer service roles. (Measure 3.1)
- Diversification of Rural Skills – Objective 3 project led by the Consortium of Staffordshire College focusing on the generic skills and at risk sectors affected by the foot and mouth outbreak. (Measure 4.1)
- Cannock Chase DC - Construction of a new £3,000,000 Leisure Centre in Rugeley Staffordshire, also expansion of the arts and sports development teams.
- Staffordshire Moorlands District Council - proposal to organise customer care & guiding workshops
- "Staffordshire - The Creative County". A recently launched public/private sector initiative aimed at promoting locally produced arts and crafts, through an annual open studios event and showcasing promotions. Business support and training initiatives will also be built into this project.
- Staffordshire University Graduate Design Start-Up Initiative. Funding has been secured for a pay-as-you-go incubation facility in Burslem. A Steering Group is being formed.
- Staffordshire Accessibility Forum. A forum co-ordinated by Staffordshire County Council to inform tourism related organisations on issues relating to accessibility and the DDA. Includes a programme of events and workshops as well as financial support to offset the cost of accessibility audits.

### 3.3 Visitor Information

Improvement to the provision of visitor information across Staffordshire is key to the long term success of all the action plan programmes. Starting points include:



- Leek TIC is excellent but needs more visitor-friendly hours
- Stoke-on-Trent TIC needs relocation within the City Centre
- Tourist Information provision needs to be considered for Festival Park and Trentham
- All TICs / websites should be treated as 'gateway' points to Staffordshire; this can be set off against a significantly strengthened Stoke-on-Trent brand within the city
- Staffordshire needs an integrated Destination Management System (DMS).

The organisational development programme will provoke consideration of several issues regarding visitor information provision, across physical and on-line facilities. At this stage we would suggest that a single 'landmark' TIC in the city centre be run by the Stoke-on-Trent DMO, and that all other tourist information throughout the county be co-ordinated by the emerging Staffordshire Destination Management Partnership (including a DMS).

### 3.4 Signage

Roger Bradshaw has initiated a significant programme of action relating to gateway signage for Staffordshire, which is consistent with the Vision and Strategic Framework for North Staffordshire.

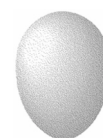
Signage will also need to be considered as part of the Stoke-on-Trent city branding strategy. Within the city region, directional signage is a serious problem: confusion between Hanley and Stoke will always cause difficulty to the visitor. Finding the city's centre in Hanley may necessitate calling it the City Centre. Longton and Burslem may need distinctive straplines or symbols on signs to help visitors locate key ceramics quarters. This could allow for the demotion of some of the ceramics brands currently shown on brown-on-white signs. A few key brands could be used as 'signposts' for the rest.



## 4 Action Plan Programmes

### 4.1 Organisational Development

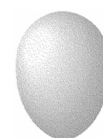
Programme	Organisational Development
<b>Rationale or Objectives</b>	<p>To establish a Staffordshire Destination Management Partnership (DMP) as part of a regional network. Staffordshire DMP will also need to work in partnership with Peak District, National Forest, Derbyshire and other neighbours.</p> <p>To establish a Stoke-on-Trent city region Destination Management Organisation (DMO) integrating visitor management and marketing with other city management and place marketing functions.</p>
<b>Location</b>	<p>Staffordshire: Staffordshire Moorlands, Stafford and other Staffordshire Districts</p> <p>Stoke-on-Trent City Region: Stoke-on-Trent &amp; Newcastle-under-Lyme</p>
<b>Programme Description</b>	<p><b>A programme of organisational development in which roles and responsibilities of two Destination Management (and Marketing) Organisations are defined, and steps are taken towards establishing these organisations as linked but independent entities within a regional network of DMPs.</b></p> <p>The proposed structure for a Staffordshire Destination Management Partnership recognises the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Build on Staffordshire's proven track record of joint working, involving public, private and voluntary sectors as well as support agencies such as Business Link and the LSC.</li> <li>(ii) Integrate visitor management, product development, inward investment, training, business support and marketing to maximise the economic benefits of</li> </ul>



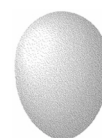
Programme	Organisational Development
	Staffordshire’s tourism industry.
	(iii) Improve communication between tourism agencies, operators and the market.
	(iv) Raise Staffordshire’s profile through “brand” awareness and marketing activity focusing on key attractions and destinations to increase overnight visits.
	(v) Identify champions, partners and resources to deliver the key actions identified in the Southern Staffordshire Visitor Economy Strategy, North Staffordshire Tourism Strategy and Staffordshire Tourism Action Plan.
	(vi) Work with Advantage West Midlands, the Regional Tourism Agency and the Regional Centre for Business Support to help deliver promotion, information/e-business, strategy, financial bids, business support, quality and skills (through Quality at Heart) and membership (potentially).
	Stoke-on-Trent City Region needs a seamless, joined-up approach to <i>Marketing and Selling the City</i> , with a leading role for tourism. This recognises the value of the tourism offer to the wider regeneration agenda, and vice versa.
	There is pronounced private sector scepticism about the value of a Stoke-on-Trent brand – it may take time and visible change to win private sector confidence sufficient to generate partnership investment. At the same time, it is critically important that the organisational development programme establishes a constructive dialogue between the Stoke-on-Trent DMO and the city region’s private sector operators from the start.
	The two DMPs will need to work closely together. Some functions may be shared or allocated between them, to avoid duplication of investment and market confusion. For example, Staffordshire DMP might be established as a membership organisation including businesses within the urban core, and



Programme	Organisational Development
	<p data-bbox="632 450 1369 568">produce a county-wide accommodation guide. (This could be a first phase approach, with the potential to 'split off' membership in a Stoke-on-Trent city region DMO later.)</p> <p data-bbox="632 595 1369 925">To take another example of the possibilities for co-operative working: Stoke-on-Trent city region DMO may have a stronger rationale and budget for the development of 'civic pride' projects which will involve businesses and activities beyond the urban core. Meanwhile, the Staffordshire Destination Management Partnership, and particularly Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stafford Boroughs, could take the lead on festivals and events.</p> <p data-bbox="632 952 1369 1328">Membership of the Staffordshire &amp; Stoke-on-Trent Conference Bureau should go through the Staffordshire DMP. How services are then delivered (to members and to conference organisers) will need further consideration, in light of proposals currently under review for an England Convention Bureau with a hub and spoke approach to regional networks. (At some time in the future, Staffordshire &amp; Stoke-on-Trent Conference Bureau could aim to become a 'spoke' or branch office of a Birmingham or Telford/Shropshire 'hub'.)</p> <p data-bbox="632 1355 1369 1559">Development of the organisational model may require a feasibility study / options analysis. Starting options would include a CV One model for the city region and a South Warwickshire Tourism model for the county DMP (with greater integration between the two than exists in Warwickshire).</p> <p data-bbox="632 1585 1369 1870">The CV One model includes city centre management functions (including parking) along with tourism and inward investment marketing for Coventry (and to a lesser extent North Warwickshire). Meanwhile, South Warwickshire Tourism markets the tourist product of Stratford, Warwick and Leamington Spa on behalf of their District Councils, and in two out of three locations runs the TIC.</p>



Programme	Organisational Development
Timescale	Establish roles and responsibility of two DMPs with clarity and key stakeholder approval – early 2004
TARGET	
DATES	Establish preferred model and detailed programme of organisational change for Stoke-on-Trent city region – mid 2004
	Establish preferred model and detailed programme of organisational change for Staffordshire DMP – mid 2004
Performance Measurements	New organisations in place without loss of professional expertise or private sector relationships
/	
Desired Outcomes	Effective advocacy for the tourism sector in Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire and a strong awareness of destination development issues in the regeneration agenda
	Longer term:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more effective public sector marketing spend across the county</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• high levels of private sector membership and investment in sub-regional campaigns</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a well-resourced Stoke-on-Trent brand which carries some weight in the private sector</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a compatible Staffordshire brand which plays a strong role regionally.</li> </ul>
Champion and Leadership	Roger Bradshaw for the County.
	Jane Randall for Stoke-on-Trent City Region, within the Marketing and Selling the City Group and particularly working with Mayor Wolfe as Champion and Mark Morrison on 'place marketing'.



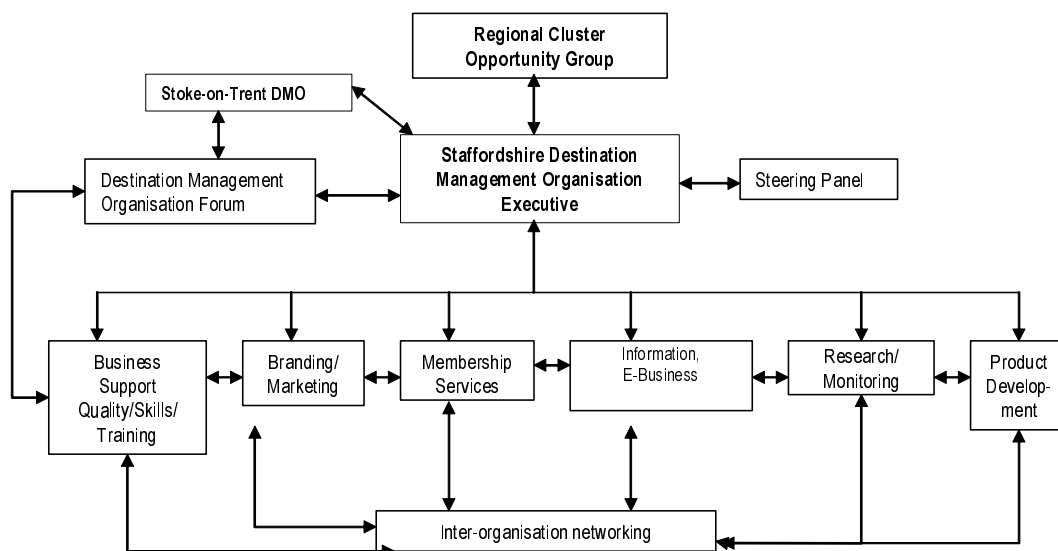
<b>Programme</b>	<b>Organisational Development</b>
<b>Partners</b>	All Staffordshire Local Authorities  Peak District / National Forest / Derbyshire  Advantage West Midlands / Regional Tourism Agency / Regional Centre for Tourism Business Support  Private Sector
<b>Indicative Scale of Resources</b>	Definition of roles and change management up to £50k  Budget of a DMO should be > £2m
<b>Next Steps</b>	Structure and role options for both DMPs will need to be explored and the way forward established.

### **Staffordshire**

The diagram overleaf shows a proposed approach to the creation of an effective and efficient DMP for Staffordshire. Financial and legal responsibilities could be taken on board by a local authority (possibly the County Council) to keep overheads to a minimum. Delivery would be through partnerships of relevant organisations (public/private) with a nominated champion.



**Exhibit 5: DRAFT MODEL FOR A STAFFORDSHIRE DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANISATION**



Source: Roger Bradshaw, Staffordshire County Council

### Staffordshire Destination Management Partnership Executive

- *Role and function:* To develop and oversee the delivery of Tourism Action Plans. To improve communication both regionally and sub-regionally.
- *Chair:* Private Sector
- *Membership:* Public/Private Sectors, Support Agencies e.g. Business Link

### Steering Panel

- To comprise tourism officers, and relevant support agencies to operate alongside the Board to enable it to operate effectively.

### Forum

- *Role and function:* To promote more effective communication between public and private sectors (possibly co-ordinated with training and other activities).



## 4.2 Showcasing Ceramics

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Showcasing Ceramics</b>
<b>Rationale or Objectives</b>	<p>Branding: Primary location brand, key product and theme offering regional excellence, national distinctiveness, overseas appeal.</p> <p>Within the Longton cluster, the key attractors are: factory shopping, with key brands Wedgwood, Royal Doulton, Portmeirion, Aynsley, Staffordshire Enamels and Tams; Gladstone as the "star" attraction, the hub of the cluster, part of the World Heritage site; the design studios at the Roslyn and Hothouse 2.</p> <p>Within the Burslem cluster, the key attractors are: heritage; antiques &amp; collectables; Wedgwood, in so much as this is where it all started; Arnold Bennett; Ceramica; the brands of Royal Doulton, Moorcroft, Burleigh, Lorna Bailey, Wade, Moorland, Cobridge Stoneware, Dudson and Royal Stafford.</p> <p>Infrastructure: Signposting and orientation</p> <p>Flagship projects: International Design Centre with a ceramics showcase; Ceramics Festival</p>
<b>Location</b>	Stoke-on-Trent with primary clusters in Longton and Burslem
<b>Programme Description</b>	<p>CERAMICS AND BRANDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the Ceramics themes to underpin the emerging city region brand</li> <li>• Build on the past and promote the future of the ceramics industry</li> <li>• Become part of the new "made in Stoke-on-Trent" quality hallmark</li> <li>• Build a brand map and bring together the star brands with international appeal</li> </ul>



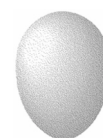
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Programme	Showcasing Ceramics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Position the city region as home to powerful household brand names</li><li>• Understand the positive values associated with the Potteries, Ceramics and star brands to underpin wider regeneration activity</li><li>• Assess the impact of World Heritage Site status for the ceramics clusters in Stoke-on-Trent</li></ul>
	<p>CERAMICS FESTIVAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish a major city-wide annual event to encompass displays, workshops, demonstration work, markets, etc</li><li>• Also consider a festival based on contemporary design in a post-industrial setting: the Stoke-on-Trent Triennale (cf. Ruhr Triennale)</li></ul>
	<p>CERAMICS QUARTERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Designate Longton and Burslem as Ceramics Quarters using the attract and disperse principle to generate city-wide visitor spread</li><li>• Develop an interpretative plan for each quarter</li><li>• Develop a visitor management plan for each quarter to encompass car and coach parking, signposting, sense of arrival, orientation, visitor movement flows, information kiosks, safety, customer care and dispersal to other localities</li><li>• Improve the food and drink offer in the vicinity</li><li>• Work with the Arts Council on an arts incubation project in Longton</li><li>• Work closely with the Burslem Regeneration Company and with Regeneration Zone programmes to ensure that regeneration and tourism efforts are concentrated on the same areas, with everyone working to the same end</li></ul>

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Programme	Showcasing Ceramics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with existing plans for regeneration of Burslem including a contemporary ceramics and crafts market and enhancement of profile as the Hay-on-Wye of ceramics</li> <li>• Support proposals for a museum at Wedgwood (and promote connections with city centre development and 'made in Stoke-on-Trent')</li> </ul> <p>CERAMICS SHOWCASE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a 'showcase' concept as part of International Design Centre proposals</li> <li>• Fully integrate with a new 'flagship' Visitor Information Centre covering Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire, located in Stoke-on-Trent City Centre</li> <li>• Establish transport connections from this central point to the Ceramics Quarters and other key ceramics attractions</li> </ul> <p>CERAMICS INDUSTRY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate all ceramics initiatives within the new Destination Management Organisation (in conjunction with N Staffs Design Initiative)</li> <li>• Develop benchmarking and best practice initiatives</li> <li>• Work with the Ceramics Industry Forum Action Programme</li> <li>• Instigate and oversee the monitoring programme</li> </ul> <p>PUBLIC ART</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider a Gaudi Park covered in ceramics or other very distinctive public art programme (especially to link Longton, Burslem and Hanley)</li> </ul>
<b>Timescale</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ceramics Quarters established by 2007</li> </ul>
<b>TARGET DATES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market repositioning and brand launch by 2007</li> <li>• Ceramics Festival launched by 2009</li> </ul>



<b>Programme</b>	<b>Showcasing Ceramics</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International Design Centre established by 2011</li> <li>• World Heritage Site status achieved by 2014</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Measurements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in footfall and visitor retail spend at ceramic manufacturers</li> <li>• Footfall and retail spend at Ceramics Showcase</li> <li>• Increase in footfall and spend within Ceramics Quarters</li> <li>• Regeneration and property value rises within the Ceramics Quarters</li> <li>• Increase in hotel occupancy from leisure markets</li> <li>• Number of jobs created / safeguarded</li> <li>• Positive change in image perception elsewhere in the UK</li> <li>• Boost to civic pride</li> </ul>
<b>Champion and Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jane Randall</li> <li>• Mayor and City Council</li> <li>• Stoke-on-Trent City Region DMO</li> <li>• Ceramics Manufacturers</li> <li>• North Staffordshire Design Initiative</li> </ul>
<b>Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AWM (Tourism &amp; Leisure COG, High Value Added COG, North Staffordshire Regeneration Zone)</li> <li>• Private Investors</li> <li>• Local Communities</li> <li>• Media</li> </ul>
<b>Indicative Scale of Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feasibility work and concept planning in 2004 at circa £250,000</li> <li>• Branding, marketing and events annual cost at circa £500,000</li> </ul>



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<b>Programme</b>	<b>Showcasing Ceramics</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Capital programme (10 years) at circa £10 to £15 million</li></ul>
<b>Next Steps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Liaise with the Ceramics Industry Forum and North Staffordshire Design Initiative to establish the best structure for joint working</li><li>• Undertake feasibility study for the International Design Centre and Ceramics Showcase, including whether to integrate the two initiatives as one</li><li>• Develop the concept of Ceramics Quarters and prepare Visitor Management and Interpretation Plans</li><li>• Undertake consumer research to build the brand map</li><li>• Implement the Mayor's plans for public art.</li></ul>

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### 4.3 Developing Market Towns

Programme	Developing Market Towns
<b>Rationale or Objectives</b>	<p>Branding: Local brand development, new product brand</p> <p>Attractors: Positioning the market towns as attractive destinations and gateways</p> <p>Infrastructure: Tourist information services, town centre management, visitor management and interpretation</p> <p>Skills and business support: Customer services, business excellence.</p>
<b>Location</b>	<p>Leek, Cheadle, Biddulph</p> <p>Stafford and Stone</p> <p>Newcastle-under-Lyme</p>
<b>Programme Description</b>	<p>ESTABLISH AN IDENTITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Position the market towns as part of the Staffordshire branding</li> <li>• Draw together the “Market towns of the Peak District” as a new marketing concept</li> <li>• Co-ordinate the market towns offer within TICs in the Peak District and in Staffordshire</li> <li>• Leek is a Peak District gateway, a centre for antiques and for the Arts and Crafts movement</li> <li>• Newcastle-under-Lyme traditional market: dating back to 1173, Newcastle-under-Lyme’s market is the heart of the town. Newcastle-under-Lyme also hosts a speciality farmers market once a month.</li> <li>• Stafford is the county town with an impressive programme of Festivals and Events</li> </ul>



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Programme	Developing Market Towns
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stone is a canal town</li><li>• Burslem, and the other towns of Stoke-on-Trent, have an indoor market</li><li>• Cheadle is a gateway for Alton Towers and has a significant Pugin church.</li></ul>
	<p>FOCUS ON FOOD AND DRINK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improve the quality offer through higher standards</li><li>• Make the most of local supply chains and promote the Taste of Staffordshire campaign</li><li>• Use business support to encourage more establishments to meet the criteria within recognised independent guide books</li><li>• Encourage and promote farmers markets such as the one in Stafford</li><li>• Support the development of sustainable plans for the Great British Kitchen</li></ul>
	<p>NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prepare local interpretive plans to draw out the distinctiveness of market towns</li><li>• Focus on distinctive elements that have visitor appeal, such as antiques in Leek</li><li>• Establish local town centre trails and guided walks</li><li>• Promote local events during the visitor season</li><li>• Develop trails and routes (by car, foot and cycle) between market towns</li><li>• Encourage specialist retail as in Leek and Stafford</li></ul>
	<p>ACCOMMODATION GROWTH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support development of high quality and distinctive</li></ul>

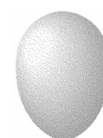
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Programme	Developing Market Towns
	accommodation drawing on the Peak District, Alton Towers and City Region product offers
	VISITOR MANAGEMENT AND THE VISITOR ECONOMY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop a visitor management plan for each town centre to encompass car parking, signposting, sense of arrival, orientation, visitor movement flows, tourist information services, other information services, safety, customer care and the gateway to the countryside role</li><li>• Integrate the visitor economy with town centre management activity</li><li>• Integrate the visitor economy needs within public transport planning using market towns as visitor transport hubs</li></ul>
	BENCHMARKING
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish core indicators to monitor standards and services - e.g. availability and cost of car parking, frequency and quality of public transport, availability and cleanliness of public toilets</li><li>• Adopt some local benchmarking activity and best practice with other Peak District gateways - Ashbourne, Belper, Chesterfield, Glossop, Macclesfield, etc – and with Southern Staffordshire towns</li><li>• Undertake local visitor surveys to identify visitor characteristics and satisfaction levels</li></ul>
	STAFFORDSHIRE IN BLOOM
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stafford are both prominent in the Britain in Bloom event, and Audley, in Newcastle-under-Lyme, is the proud winner of World in Bloom – best practice can be supported and extended to other Staffordshire market towns to enhance the connections between towns</li></ul>

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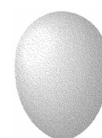


<b>Programme</b>	<b>Developing Market Towns</b>
<b>Timescale</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuity and a step change within existing market town regeneration programmes (MTI and SRB)</li> <li>• Visitor economy roll out over the next five years</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Measurements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in footfall and visitor spend in town centres</li> <li>• Increase in bedstock and occupancy from leisure markets</li> <li>• Number of jobs created / safeguarded</li> <li>• Positive change in image perception elsewhere in the UK</li> <li>• Boost to civic pride</li> </ul>
<b>Champion and Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Angie Guest for Staffordshire Moorlands</li> <li>• Lisa Heaton for Stafford</li> <li>• Janet Baddeley for Newcastle-under-Lyme</li> <li>• Town centre managers / chambers of commerce</li> </ul>
<b>Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local authorities</li> <li>• Staffordshire Destination Management Partnership</li> <li>• Investors</li> <li>• Local Communities</li> <li>• Media</li> </ul>
<b>Indicative Scale of Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitor economy health check and visitor management plans in four designated market towns in 2004 at circa £200,000</li> <li>• Branding, marketing and events annual cost at circa £200,000</li> <li>• Capital programme (5 years) at circa £1 million per town</li> </ul>
<b>Next Steps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake health checks to determine local priorities</li> <li>• Establish benchmarking forum and instigate activity</li> </ul>



#### 4.4 Stoke-on-Trent City Centre

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Stoke-on-Trent City Centre</b>
<b>Rationale or Objectives</b>	To invest in creating a holistic visitor offer in the city centre linked with the Cultural Quarter, which presents the Stoke-on-Trent city brand. To make this a gateway to the rest of the city (and county) offer, and to set a very high standard for the quality of urban design and the visitor experience.
<b>Location</b>	City Centre
<b>Programme Description</b>	<p>ATTRACTORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the Cultural Quarter strategy</li> <li>• Continue developing the concept for the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery / Library and Archives redevelopment project</li> <li>• Create a gateway and centre for interpretation of the city.</li> </ul> <p>SIGNIFICANT PUBLIC ART AND URBAN DESIGN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the Urban Design Strategy</li> <li>• Create a distinctive public space which is the 'heart' of the city</li> <li>• Consider a Gaudi park or other significant public art</li> <li>• Set the highest standards for design in new development and select developers who will ensure it is carried through</li> <li>• Encourage the creation of public space and use of parks and canals</li> </ul> <p>INFRASTRUCTURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relocate the tourist information service to the 'heart' of the city</li> <li>• Develop the new bus station and second shopping precinct urgently</li> </ul>



<b>Programme</b>	<p><b>Stoke-on-Trent City Centre</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support city centre management</li> <li>• Develop a visitor management, signage and interpretation strategy with city centre management</li> <li>• Improve the experience of arriving by car</li> <li>• Link and feature links to transport hubs including the Stoke-on-Trent railway station</li> </ul> <p>COMMERCIAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage hotel investment in the cultural quarter and city centre</li> <li>• Improve the night time offer for visitors through safety initiatives, transport, events, etc – with city centre management</li> <li>• Encourage retail investment and create a Business Improvement District or other retailers’ association</li> </ul>
<b>Timescale</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dependent on implementation of urban design strategy and PMAG redevelopment</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Measurements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private sector investment</li> <li>• Increase in visitors and particularly first- and second-time visitors</li> <li>• Increase in bedstock and occupancy from leisure markets</li> <li>• Number of jobs created / safeguarded</li> <li>• Positive change in image perception elsewhere in the UK</li> <li>• Boost to civic pride</li> </ul>
<b>Champion and Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jane Randall</li> <li>• City centre management team</li> <li>• Stoke-on-Trent Urban Regeneration Company (to be created)</li> </ul>



Programme	Stoke-on-Trent City Centre
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayor and City Council (planning, urban design, cultural services, et al)</li> <li>• Stoke-on-Trent City Region DMO</li> </ul>
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AWM (Tourism &amp; Leisure COG, High Value Added COG, North Staffordshire Regeneration Zone)</li> <li>• Private Investors</li> <li>• Local Communities</li> <li>• Media</li> </ul>
Indicative Scale of Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capital project to be determined as a result of feasibility study for PMAG redevelopment</li> <li>• Strategy and facilitation for improvement of night-time economy c. £50,000</li> <li>• City centre management, visitor management and information provision strategy c. £150,000 (not including any capital development)</li> <li>• On-going visitor information centre costs per annum to be determined</li> </ul>
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take forward plans for the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery / Library and Archives redevelopment (as outlined below)</li> <li>• Develop city centre management strategy</li> <li>• Develop strategy for signage, traffic and visitor management</li> <li>• Implement the Mayor's plans for public art</li> </ul>



*The points below are taken from Locum Destination Consulting's Feasibility Study and Options Analysis for the redevelopment of the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery and the Library and Archive.*

### **CityScope at Stoke-on-Trent**

The development of a new facility - *CityScope* - provides a wide range of opportunities to support the realisation of the new City vision. The vision for the new facility might be defined as:-

*to use the past achievements of the City and its people as an inspiration for the future*

The primary purpose of the new facility might be summarised as:-

*to help residents and visitors engage with the story of Stoke-on-Trent from multiple perspectives at a variety of levels*

The role of the City's history and heritage collections in supporting the vision and aim is central to the concept.

There is no one story of the City - each resident, each visitor, and each person whose life has been touched in different ways by the City will have a different story to tell. Both the sum of the parts and the parts of the sum represent a powerful way of using the City's history and heritage as a springboard for the future.

In the concept development for *CityScope*, we have argued that the new facility should not be thought of as concentrating on the past, but that it has a key role to play as a focal point in communicating the City Council's vision for the *future* of the City. Critically, it needs to encourage people of all ages to contribute to the realisation of that future for their City. *CityScope* thus has an important role to play in the active citizenship agenda through engaging people not simply with facts, but with issues, possibilities and potentialities.

***CityScope* is conceived of as a new city focus for debate, dialogue and discussion about the past, present and future of the City inspired by the local stories and collections at its core.** Its location at the heart of the Cultural Quarter, the heart of the City, reflects the role of the Quarter in engaging people with the life of the City.



However, the development project and its benefits are much wider than *CityScope* per se. Through its development, it allows for new development programmes for the two existing facilities that share in its creation.

### **A New Museum of Arts and Creative Design**

The existing Museum and Art Gallery will be refurbished and essentially become a new regional Museum of Art and Creative Design. It will reflect the long-established, creative spirit of the City and its people through its internationally important and internationally recognised ceramic collections, together with the City's allied fine and decorative arts collections. But it will also be able to explore through a wide-ranging programme of changing exhibitions of different scale, the role of creativity and design in today's and tomorrow's City. Creativity and high quality design are the City's currency for its future economy. The 'new' Museum will have a powerful role to play in showcasing these forces for the future. Working in partnership with regional, national and international partners, it will be able to contextualise its own work and collections with those of others.

### **A New Generation Library**

The existing Central Library and Archive will also be refurbished to a high standard to reflect the importance now placed by central and local government on the role of Libraries as key delivery agents for the social regeneration of communities throughout the UK. Like *CityScope* and the Museum of Art and Design, the 'new' library has a powerful role to play in the Cultural Quarter, helping to democratise its role and attracting people from throughout the City to make use of the new resources at its heart. Critically, it provides a range of access points to the new information and communications technologies, which have a key role to play in building the city's competencies in design and creativity, and in supporting and developing skills relevant to the new 'knowledge economy'. As with the Museum and Art Gallery and *CityScope*, a new generation Library through all of its resources is ultimately concerned with the inspiration that underpins all forms of creativity.



## **4.5 Parks, Gardens and Waterways**

In addition to the existing assets of North Staffordshire, there are a number of projects in the pipeline under this heading, including the following.

### **4.5.1 Apedale Community Country Park**

Plans have been finalised to improve the heritage tourism offer at Apedale Community Country Park which include the development of the existing Heritage Centre and a new narrow gauge railway and associated Museum.

The Moseley Museum Railway Trust will work with the Apedale Heritage Centre and Country Park over the next two years, bringing its unique collection of rolling stock, track parts and other equipment to Apedale before the end of the year.

When complete, in 2005, the attraction will feature a passenger-carrying railway and could be the premier industrial narrow gauge museum in England.

### **4.5.2 Urban Parks in Stoke-on-Trent**

Greening for Growth, rural sustainability initiatives, significant public art schemes and all other environmental enhancements are essential to the delivery of the vision for North Staffordshire. The rural environment sustains and enhances the city region, and the importance and uniqueness of Stoke-on-Trent's proximity to the Peak District and other countryside will only increase in the coming years. Equally, urban parks and canals are a strong suit for the city and should be enhanced for the benefit of both residents and visitors.

### **4.5.3 Trentham (formerly known as Trentham Gardens)**

Trentham has the potential to significantly change the perception and image of North Staffordshire, which will benefit both rural and urban areas. It may become a major sub-regional attractor, which needs tourist information provision and acts as a gateway and connection point for other attractions.

Proposals include accommodation (both higher end – in the heritage building – and budget), watersports facilities, the gardens, a commercial garden centre and more. The aspirations are very high in terms of quality and scope. This has the potential to be a very significant development for the sub-region.



#### **4.5.4 Canals**

Each part of North Staffordshire has its own canal tourism offer. Bridging urban and rural areas, the canals are an attraction and a focus of destination development in Etruria, Burslem, Stone, Cheddleton and Newcastle-under-Lyme.

There is a particular case for canal-based development in connection with the proposed hotel and further development of the visitor offer on the Wedgwood site.



## 5 Delivering the Action Plan

To achieve the step change required by the vision for tourism in 2014 will require investment, effort and belief on the part of local, sub-regional, county and regional organisations. Important stages of the strategy process have involved the identification of champions and key partners, and the development by key players of a solid foundation for a period of change.

This action plan is about practical steps towards delivering the step change. The programmes outlined here must be flexible and respond to changing circumstances, but the imperative to take bold actions in partnership will remain.

Staffordshire County Council, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stafford Borough and Staffordshire Moorlands District have worked with Stoke-on-Trent to steer and develop this action plan for North Staffordshire. These partners will continue to update and monitor its progress.

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