Welcoming, Developing and Sustaining

A Tourism Strategy for South Staffordshire
Contents

Foreword by Councillor David Billson - Page 2

1. Introduction - Page 3
2. Aims and Objectives - Page 5

3. South Staffordshire – The Place - Page 7
4. The Importance of Tourism to South Staffordshire’s Local Economy - Page 17

5. South Staffordshire’s Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats - Page 19
6. Challenges and Opportunities - Page 21
7. Strategic Links - Page 23
8. Key Themes - Page 29
9. Underpinning activity - Page 37
10. Conclusion - Page 39

Appendix

I. Regional attractions - Page 41
II. Map of South Staffordshire - Page 42
III. Localities - Page 43

Glossary - Page 45

Front and Back Cover images: Front: L-R, Chillington Hall (left), Baggeridge Country Park (Top), Cannock Chase Trekking Centre (Bottom), Staffs & Worcs Canal (Top Right), Weston Hall (Bottom Right) Back: L-R, Weddings, Fireworks at Weston, Kinver Rock House (Top), Love British Food (Bottom), Bratch Pumping Station (Top Right), Patshull Park (Bottom Right)
I am delighted to introduce this, our first Tourism Strategy for South Staffordshire which will take us to 2012.

The purpose of this strategy is to set out a clear vision for the future of our tourist industry that will seek to benefit all who live, work and visit the District.

Located in the Heart of England, South Staffordshire is steeped in history, rich heritage and rural splendour, which attracts thousands of tourists each year, and plays an integral role in the District’s economy.

This strategy marks the beginning of a new journey for local tourism. Through working in partnership with residents, businesses, community groups and voluntary organisations, together we can make South Staffordshire a thriving hub for tourism, helping to foster a sense of community pride for all.

This strategy identifies the exciting projects that lie ahead. There will continue to be challenges in the future but I am confident that through the implementation of this strategy, South Staffordshire will continue to have a successful and vibrant tourism economy for many years to come.

Councillor
David Billson
Deputy Leader
Strategic Services
South Staffordshire Council
1. Introduction

This tourism strategy for South Staffordshire has been prepared following consultation with stakeholders along with identifying linkages to local, regional and national strategies which impact on the District’s local economy.

This strategy will look at developing and sustaining tourism within South Staffordshire whilst welcoming visitors and local residents to enjoy the delights South Staffordshire has to offer.

Why a Tourism Strategy for South Staffordshire?

South Staffordshire’s tourism industry is a key contributor to the local economy. Not only does it contribute to the wealth of the local economy, tourism also encourages:

- Employment opportunities
- Relief and escapism as well as contributing to a person’s health and well-being
- Community Pride
- A catalyst for the justification to preserve and conserve our historic properties; and
- Educational experiences, young enterprise and entrepreneurship.

South Staffordshire Council recognises these benefits and is therefore committed to making the District a safe and healthy place to live, with prosperous communities where everyone can develop their abilities to the full, and pass on a better environment to future generations.
‘Our Vision’

‘This strategy aims to celebrate the District’s distinctive environment whilst contributing to its protection and enhancement; offering an attractive, quality and enjoyable experience that will benefit the local tourism economy. It aims to improve ‘well being’ and create a thriving and sustainable future for people who live in, work in and visit South Staffordshire’
2. Aims and Objectives

Working in partnership with local people, businesses, community groups, voluntary organisations and neighbouring authorities, this strategy aims to:

- Encourage high quality service delivery.
- Improve skills.
- Support businesses and signpost accordingly.
- Raise the profile of South Staffordshire as a visitor destination.
- Encourage sustainable development.
- Achieve greater value and volume to the local economy.
- Take advantage of opportunities that may arise from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- Where appropriate, use innovative technology and approaches to improve efficiency, effectiveness and accessibility to tourism information.

It will achieve this by having:

- **Four Key Themes**
  - Destination Marketing
  - Sustainable Tourism
  - Quality Counts
  - Partnership Working

- **Three Underpinning Activities**
  - Business Engagement
  - Skills and Training
  - Communication

- **Sector Specific Focus**
  - Food and Drink
  - Accommodation and Business Tourism
  - Attractions and Countryside
  - Events
South Staffordshire has assets that are of International, National and Regional significance
3. South Staffordshire - The Place

South Staffordshire lies within the heart of the West Midlands and is a very special area that acts as a green buffer for the densely populated conurbations of The Black Country and Birmingham. The District is made up of 27 parishes that enjoy an enviable combination of rural life with city facilities on their doorstep.

South Staffordshire is a tranquil place, steeped in history, heritage and rural splendour with much to explore and enjoy. Here’s why:

WESTON-UNDER-LIZARD

Weston-under-Lizard is a village straddling Watling Street. It was built to serve the Earl of Bradford’s estate at nearby Weston Park. Weston Park was built in 1671 and has a landscaped garden by Capability Brown, plus extensive grounds that feature many curious historic buildings, planned walks and a deer park.

Many famous people have visited Weston Park. The Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli, wrote of it in 1878: “You will find Weston beautiful. I marvel whether I shall ever see the like of it again! It is a place that always pleased me.” More recently the Park was the venue for the G8 Summit of World Leaders. The 1,000-acre Weston estate is used extensively for shows and events, most notably the ‘V’ Festival of music each August.

PENKRIDGE

Penkridge is a market village with a long history and is said to have been the capital of England for a day in 958 AD, when Edgar, King of Mercia, signed a charter there. When the Grand Junction Railway, the UK’s first trunk railroad opened through the village on 4 July 1837, a ride across the embankments and viaduct, which is almost 40 feet high, was deemed a thrill.

Today, a large market is held in Penkridge every Wednesday and Saturday, drawing in many visitors. The village has many shops offering a wide variety of goods, plus various hotels and inns, including The White Hart, where Queen Elizabeth I once dined.

Penkridge also has many notable buildings. The Church of St Michael & All Angels is an architectural gem. It is Grade I listed and has foundations dating to 850 AD.
South Staffordshire is a tranquil place, steeped in history, heritage and rural splendour with much to explore and enjoy.

Rodbaston Hall nearby is now a noted agricultural college and part of South Staffordshire College. Onsite is a visitor centre, shop and tearooms. At weekends, the Animal Zone, which is home to a wide variety of exotic, farm and companion animals, is open to the public.

BREWOOD

Brewood is the jewel in the District’s crown, an attractive village with an outstanding Conservation Area, home to more listed buildings than any other part of South Staffordshire.

Its history pre-dates the Roman invasion and its name is derived from the description the Britons gave to the ruins of the Roman fort there, which they called ‘Breude’ – meaning fearful or ghostly. Although the spelling has changed, the village is still known by the name the Britons gave it.

Brewood has always been a village of some importance; so much so that an 18th century description of Wolverhampton usefully pointed out that the town was ‘near Brewood’

Today, Brewood remains an attractive place to shop and explore. There are many fine buildings in and around Brewood, including the Church of St Mary & St Chad and the nearby Chillington Hall, home of the Giffard family since 1178, both of which are Grade I listed.

WOMBOURNE

Wombourne’s name is derived from the Old English for ‘the winding stream’, this being the Wom Brook. Its centre evokes the quintessential English village, with a core of historic buildings around an expansive green, which serves as a cricket pitch and tennis courts. In the 1930s a photograph of a cricket match on the green appeared in The Times to illustrate the essential English village.

The compact centre belies later development, which has resulted in Wombourne being numbered amongst the largest villages in the country with a fine array of restaurants and shops. Despite this, the countryside is never far away with Baggeridge Country Park, Bratch Locks and the South Staffordshire Railway Walk all within easy reach.
The Bratch is a unique area, alive with history and interest. At its heart is a picturesque staircase of three locks on the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal, the first such construction on any canal in the country and built by the celebrated engineer James Brindley. Nearby stands Bratch Pumping Station. Erected in 1895, it is an architectural delight with polychromatic brick and Venetian Gothic detailing and houses a working steam engine, Victoria. Adjoining the Bratch is the former Wombourne Station, which now lies on the South Staffordshire Railway Walk.

HIMLEY

Himley is a small village with manorial origins, which predate the Norman Conquest. Within the village lie a number of manor houses and other sites of great interest.

Holbeach House was the retreat of several of the conspirators in the Gunpowder Plot of 1605 – their captors caused them to flee by setting the house ablaze. Nearby, on the boundary with Gornal Wood is The Crooked House, a pub that shows all too evident signs of subsidence due to mine workings beneath. It is said that when the rooms cease to look askew, you have had enough to drink.

Himley Hall was the home of the Earls of Dudley. It was built on the site of a medieval manor house. With a fortune derived from the mineral wealth of the Black Country, the Dudley’s lived in style and enjoyed regular royal patronage, notably
For many years, Kinver enjoyed the status of an inland resort. Its Sunday opening and more relaxed licensing hours made it a magnet for Black Country people seeking a respite from their toil. Between 1901 and 1930 an electric tramway linked Kinver directly to the Black Country tramway system. One Bank Holiday Monday it carried 22,500 people to Kinver.
South Staffordshire has another 46 villages and hamlets, some of which will make a rewarding visit. These include:

- **Lapley** – steeped in Civil War history, when even the church was fortified.
- **Stretton** – once home to the poet William Congreve who wrote many famous lines, including ‘Music hath charms to soothe a savage breast.’
- **Wheaton Aston** – the most northerly point in the country where the flower, Snakes Head Fritillary is found growing in the wild.
- **Hatherton** – when Irish satirist Dean Swift stayed at The Four Crosses Inn he vented his displeasure at the poor accommodation and the shrewish tongue of the landlord’s wife, by scratching the following on a window pane with his ring: ‘Thou fool! To hang Four Crosses at thy door! Hang up thy wife, there needs not any more.’
- **Coven** – close to Brewood – regularly wins the accolade of the District’s Best Kept Village.
- **Shareshill** – the church is a masterpiece of Georgian architecture and a new housing scheme at The Elms won the District’s overall Conservation Design Award in 2008.
- **Trysull** – turned into an exemplar of Arts & Crafts architecture through the patronage of Howard Mander, a Wolverhampton paint magnate.
- **Bobbington** – remains mostly agricultural and includes Halfpenny Green Vineyards. A light aircraft airfield can also be found in Bobbington offering opportunities for recreational flying.
- **Enville** – a typical estate village, serving Enville Hall. The Cat pub has only had a Sunday licence for the last two years.
- **Saredon** – Home to Hollybush Nurseries which attracts over 1 million visitors a year.
- **Bilbrook** – Aviation history and The Boulton Paul Heritage Project that is open to the general public on selected days.
- **Great Wyrley and Essington** – Offers walking opportunities along the Wyrley and Essington Canal.
- **Cheslyn Hay** – Home to one the finest unlisted buildings in South Staffordshire – Salem Chapel.
- **Huntington** – A former mining village, now a great place to go for panoramic views of Shropshire from a once coal mining ‘slagheap’.
- **Lower Penn** – A small residential village with access to South Staffordshire Railway Walk.
- **Codsall** – The birthplace of sculptor Sir Charles Wheeler (1892-1974)
- **Perton** – Former WW2 Airfield and prisoner of war camp.
The landscape is a key attribute of South Staffordshire

**RURAL SPLENDOUR**

The natural environment of the District is extremely well valued as a recreational resource by local residents, and is also an essential part of South Staffordshire’s tourism products. With 2118 hectares of open space, the landscape is a key attribute of South Staffordshire.

Here’s why:

The countryside provides for a wide range of quiet leisure and recreational activities and important areas include Kinver Edge, Highgate Common, and Shoal Hill Common. There is also Baggeridge Country Park, a country park situated in the South of the District that has achieved Green Flag Status for the last eleven years (2009) and the South Staffordshire Railway Walk and Wom Brook Walk. All 3 are managed by the Council and provide excellent informal recreation opportunities for residents and attract visitors from further afield.

In the North of the District lies Shoal Hill Common that sits within the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Comprising areas of woodland (43ha) and nationally rare lowland heath (30ha), Shoal Hill Common is an enjoyable outdoor location, especially to see Bundle Beeches. An unusual feature, where a bundle of small trees were planted together and have fused into one tree.

Local Nature Reserves (LNR’s) are designated areas that are important for both biodiversity and local communities. These are valuable resources that give people the chance to experience the natural world on their doorstep. They provide an ideal opportunity to study and learn about nature, or simply to enjoy it. There are 5 local nature reserves in South Staffordshire, these being: Wyrley and Essington Branch Canal, Wom Brook Walk in Wombourne, South Staffordshire Railway Walk, Baggeridge Country Park and Shoal Hill Common.
Historic gardens and parklands are a key asset to South Staffordshire. In total there are **13 historic parklands and gardens** within the District. 4 are registered as Grade II* (Chillington, Himley, Enville, Weston), with 1 registered as Grade II (Patshull).

The landscape of these sites plays a significant role in defining the landscape character of the District. **Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown** and **Humphrey Repton** had considerable influence on this, making them an ideal attraction for residents and visitors to enjoy.

South Staffordshire also has a **microclimate** which is a local atmospheric zone where the climate differs from the surrounding area. **Halfpenny Green Vineyards** at Bobbington, is a fine example of a microclimate with south-facing slopes. These slopes give more direct sunlight than opposite slopes and are therefore warmer for longer – hence ideal for growing vines.

**CANALS**

Three canals cross South Staffordshire. **The Staffordshire & Worcestershire** is the oldest. This was the last work completed by **James Brindley** with the canal opening fully on 28th May 1772, just four months before he died. It runs the length of the District, from Acton Trussell in the north to Whittington in the south. On this canal Brindley built his first lock at Compton and his first staircase of locks at The Bratch.

**The Stourbridge Canal**, which opened on 3rd December 1779, clips the southern tip of the District as it joins the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal. It was the work of Brindley’s assistant, **Thomas Dadford**.

**The Shropshire Union Canal**, opened on 2nd March 1835, was one of the last main line canals built in the country and the work of the celebrated engineer **Thomas Telford**. Originally the Birmingham & Liverpool Canal, it is a notable example of Telford’s genius, employing cast iron aqueducts, cuttings and embankments to avoid locks and to ensure long straight stretches. It enters the District on the outskirts of Bilbrook and passes through Brewood and Wheaton Aston.
All of the canals in South Staffordshire are linear conservation areas and many of the locks, bridges and associated structures are also listed. Together they make many parts of the District accessible by water as well as providing opportunities for walkers and people wanting to enjoy holidays on our inland waterways.

**WALKING**

South Staffordshire’s expansive and varied countryside provides many opportunities for walkers. The District forms part of two nationally known walks. One is the 92.5 mile (148 km) **Staffordshire Way**. This starts at Mow Cop on the Congleton Edge and in the District passes through Bednall, follows the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal to the centre of Penkridge, goes on to Lapley and the Shropshire Union Canal down to Brewood, across the Upper Avenue of Chillington Hall, through Codsall, Nurton, Tescott, Seisdon, Highgate Common Country Park, Enville and finishes on Kinver Edge, where it links with The North Worcestershire Path and The Worcestershire Way.

The second major walk is the 610-miles (976km) **Monarch’s Way**, which begins at Old Powick Bridge in Worcester and ends in Shoreham, West Sussex. From Worcester it first turns north to Boscobel House, then turns south again – passing through the District as it does so. In his retreat from the Battle of Worcester the then future King Charles II set out to cross the River Severn into Wales, but found his way blocked by Cromwell’s patrols. He sought refuge at Boscobel House, hiding first in a tree which is now known as The Royal Oak and then spending the night in a priest-hole in the attic.

Within the District there is also the 5.5 mile (8.8km) **South Staffordshire Railway Walk** between Compton and Pensnett, passing through Lower Penn, Wombourne, Swindon and Himley, along with five **circular walks** which radiate from Wombourne Station. In addition there are recognised walks around Acton Trussell and Bednall, Chillington Hall and Brewood, Codsall, Enville, Highgate Common, Weston Park, Himley, Kinver, Pattingham, Penkridge and Wheaton Aston. Many of these are celebrated during **South Staffordshire’s annual walking festival** which is held around June and July.
Local health walks are also organised by South Staffordshire Council in partnership with local communities along the many public footpaths and Rights of Way in the District to help improve the health and well being of local people.

**CYCLING**

South Staffordshire’s rural nature offers ideal opportunities for cycling, whether it be canal towpaths, within country parks or around our rural network of roads.

Opportunities include the **Mountain Bike Trail at Baggeridge Country Park** and the flat terrain of **South Staffordshire Railway Walk** offering ideal opportunities for beginners or those wanting a not so challenging ride.

For those who enjoy road cycling, a number of routes are mapped out by Sustrans, the UK’s leading sustainable transport charity.

Cycling events also take place at the former home to the Earl of Bradford, **Weston Park**, when it hosts its annual **Cycling Fun Day**.

**NEIGHBOURING ATTRACTIONS**

South Staffordshire is ideally situated as a base from which to visit many attractions in neighbouring areas. Within an approximate **one hour drive** from the centre of the District there are over **112 things to see and do**. These include, Cannock Chase (AONB); Wightwick Manor; the Aerospace and Cold War Museums at RAF Cosford; Ironbridge Gorge Museums; the Black Country Living Museum; the Severn Valley Railway; Shugborough Hall; Trentham Gardens; Alton Towers; the historic settlements of Lichfield, Shrewsbury, Ludlow and the cities Wolverhampton and Birmingham. More attractions are listed in appendix I.
What is Tourism in South Staffordshire?

South Staffordshire is a destination with a wealth of tourism opportunities for all to explore and enjoy. This strategy therefore considers South Staffordshire’s tourism profile to be:

- A strong rural character, with settings ranging from woodlands, heathlands, floodlands and farmland to 18th Century parklands. Some of this land is now used to produce high quality, fresh, local food and drink.

- A variety of walks that take in the District’s distinct idyllic countryside, villages, attractions and events.

- A wealth of Historic Houses, parks, gardens and picturesque villages steeped in history and heritage are pepper potted through the District, which welcomes visitors to explore and enjoy.

- 27 parishes each with their own distinctive rural character and tranquil settings.

- Garden centres in plenty. Some of which are award winning – Ashwood Nurseries.

- Over 150 Food and Drink providers, including restaurants, traditional pubs, cafés and coffee shops.

- A canal network offering historic importance and leisure opportunities including holidaying, walks, cycling and fishing.

- A foundation for relaxation and tranquil holidays/short breaks with the opportunity to enjoy over 112 attractions all within an approx one hour drive.
4. The Importance of Tourism to the Local Economy

The tourism industry within South Staffordshire is a key contributor to the wealth of the local economy.

Compared with Manufacturing and Construction, the Service sector is the biggest sector within South Staffordshire, offering 75.5% of all jobs. (Construction provides 2,200 jobs (7.2%) and Manufacturing 4,400 (14.5%)) Source: NOMIS 2007

The diagrams below give an overview of the value, volume and employment tourism brings to South Staffordshire.

**Employment**

According to the Official Labour Market Profile for South Staffordshire (2008), produced by NOMIS, 3600 jobs in South Staffordshire are within the tourism sector.

The table below gives the % of employee jobs in tourism against all employee jobs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>% of Employee Jobs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Staffordshire</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: South Staffordshire (EIA) 2008 by The Research Solution Company
The tourism industry within South Staffordshire is a key contributor to the wealth of the local economy.
5. South Staffordshire’s Strengths, Weaknesses

Following a stakeholder consultation event hosted at Weston Park and direct mail consultation to all tourism businesses on the Council’s database, a SWOT analysis has been compiled highlighting what the businesses see as the District’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

These findings have been acknowledged and where feasible incorporated into this strategy. The findings are as follows:

**STRENGTHS**

- Historic houses, gardens and heritage
- No central town, 27 parishes
- Geographic location—Heart of England
- Good farms selling high quality local produce
- Unspoilt and un-reclaimed countryside
- 19 conservation areas with numerous listed buildings
- Access to walks and Staffordshire Way
- Beautiful, typically English villages with individual characteristics
- Canals
- Good variety of tourist attractions
- Proximity to large population
- Industrial heritage
- Easy road access
- Good pubs and variety of restaurants
- Close proximity to many attractions
- Outdoor sports such as fishing and golf
- Number of garden centres
- Tourist Information Points strategically located within the District
- South Staffordshire Tourism Association (SSTA)
- Staffordshire Destination Management Partnership – Destination Staffordshire
- Detailed visitor guide
- Members of Staffordshire DMP
- The V Festival
- The quality of a diverse landscape
- Proximity of National Trust and English Heritage attractions

**WEAKNESSES**

- Geographic shape of South Staffordshire
- Poor perception of interest in history and heritage in general by society
- North of the county has a stronger promotion of tourism attractions
- Destination Management Partnerships will only promote and work with Quality Assessed Accommodation
- Not fostering links with neighbouring destinations
- Lack of knowledge in tourism businesses about the work of the SSTA and Destination Staffordshire
- Limited accommodation
- Not enough promotion of villages and wealth of heritage.
- Poor data collection and up to date knowledge of economic impact
- Lack of support from supermarkets, restaurants and accommodation providers to support local growers and farmers
- Poor promotion of events
- Lack of touring camping and caravanning sites
- Limited number of South Staffordshire businesses featuring in the marketing activities – looks poor on the District
- Limited car parking in some villages
- Do not use the Tourist Information Points (TIP’s) to our advantage
- TIP’s location
- Hidden heritage
- Direct Transport links between attractions and villages makes access harder.
- Poor use of website to promote South Staffordshire and its businesses
- Lack of quality assessed accommodation
- No main central town
- Lack of promotion about South Staffordshire on a larger scale
- Poor signage
- Poor understanding of what tourism actually is and the benefits it can bring
- No central Visitor Information Point
- South Staffordshire not perceived as a tourist destination
**THREATS**

- Lack of appropriate development in Green Belt for necessary, suitable, in keeping, tourism attractions
- Opening times of attractions are seasonal
- Climate change
- Pressure for new development
- Cut backs to rail and bus services
- Road charging
- Economic recession
- Projects and developments may take time due to limited resources
- Unforeseen threats such as poor weather or outbreaks of foot and mouth and other similar animal outbreaks
- Congestion and noise if the District is over developed
- Lack of support to independent businesses and inaccessible parking amenities in villages could mean possible closure of small and medium sized businesses
- Fuel costs and green lobby against unnecessary journeys

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**OPPORTUNITIES**

- Better targeted and segmented marketing campaigns
- Better use of the Council’s website as a means of promotion
- Make better use of the Tourist Information Points
- Close to main motorway links. So could offer overnight stays for people travelling north to south
- Continue to support Staffordshire DMP and be a key contributor to its management structure
- Ageing population has more leisure time and disposable income
- Encourage more businesses to support county publication to raise the profile/awareness of South Staffordshire tourism products
- Ensure that local plans consider adequate parking in key locations to support village businesses
- Encourage accommodation providers to be quality assessed
- More sector networking opportunities and Business to Business development
- Sector specific newsletters
- Better signage within and outside of South Staffordshire
- Easier access of information for visitors.
- Better use of CRM
- The Olympic Games - London 2012
- Encourage local restaurants, grocery stores and supermarkets to think local
- Continue to support South Staffordshire Tourism Association
- More promotion of South Staffordshire at key locations/events with high footfall and specific trade shows
- Link the District’s history and heritage with education. Possibly gain Heritage lottery funding
- Utilise e-databases from other tourism businesses to increase the viral marketing affect
- Contribute to the UK’s health agenda via walks and cycling
- Support, promote and work with other District Council departments
- Contribute to reducing the impact of climate change
- Foster partnerships with neighbouring authorities
- More efficient and effective means of communication
- Improve skills of the workforce – better quality encourages repeat visits and sustainability
- Better understanding of business needs
- Fewer people travelling abroad
- Link tourism to other relevant Council and non-council strategies and plans
6. Challenges and Opportunities

The tourism industry is an extremely vulnerable sector that is susceptible to unexpected opportunities and threats. Quite often, the impact on the national, regional, sub-regional and local economy can be immense. Take for example, Foot and Mouth in 2001, other natural disasters such as flooding and wet summers, the rise in fuel costs, and more recently the global economic downturn.

Whilst these challenges can seem negative at the time, they also bring with them opportunities for the industry. For example, the economic downturn may see more Britons holidaying in the UK. The weakness of the British pound offers good opportunities for the UK to encourage more overseas visitors.

Research carried out by a number of industry related organisations, including The Heart of England, The Henley Centre and The Tourism Network, have highlighted a number of trends that will influence visitor behaviour and decisions, including:

- **Population growth.** An increasingly ageing population will be in better health and have higher disposable income than previous generations.
- **We will become an ‘experienced’ and ‘shrewder’ economy, wanting quality of life over material ‘things’.** Visitors will be looking for an experience which is of high quality, memorable and distinctive.
- **Social structure will change.** Social opportunities with friends and family will be more important. (Visiting Friends and Relatives VFR).
- **There will be an increase in short breaks, as there will be a growth of the ‘cash rich and time poor’ sector.**
- **Reversal of past trends: Big brands will lose favour, large businesses will struggle, especially high street retailers.**
- **There will be a growth in small businesses and the self-employed.**
- **Work patterns will change, away from 9-5 mentality.**
- **More students will study at home, as opposed to going away to college or university.**
- **National identity will weaken further and local identity will replace it.**
- **On-line communities will develop even stronger identities.**
- **Consumers will be better informed: more spontaneous; harder to reach.**
- **Physical and mental well being will become more important, especially the need for more ‘energy’.**
- **Environmental concerns will increase.**
- **The city will become a focus for pleasure as well as work.**
- **Society will become more ‘networked’ as a result of the internet and mobile phones.**
- **An increase in segmented marketing.**
- **Sustainable tourism.**
- **Increased awareness of opportunities for disabled people.**
- **Leisure activities will become more fragmented due to increased competition.**

**Key interests for visitors will be:**

- Gardens
- Heritage, Culture and Stately Homes
- Local icons
- Countryside

**In addition:**

- The day visitor market will become the strongest market
- The internet will be key in the future and strongly influence the decision making process in terms of accommodation, attractions and destination information
- The core market will be mature couples aged 45+
- Key overseas interest will be from USA, France, Germany, Ireland, Belgium, Netherlands and Scandinavia.

This strategy must therefore acknowledge these trends and the vulnerability of the sector and be flexible in its delivery and approach to changes within the economy.
Good opportunities for the UK to encourage more overseas visitors
7. Strategic Links

As highlighted within The West Midland Regional Spatial Strategy (WMSS), South Staffordshire has assets that are of International, National and Regional significance, including V Festival at Weston Park, Weston Park estate, Moseley Old Hall, Kinver Rock Houses and Wightwick Manor, which is situated just on the boundary with Wolverhampton, it is important that this Tourism Strategy is aligned to the aims and objectives of the wider canvas of strategies that exist at National, Regional, Sub-Regional and District level, including:

**National Strategies:** -

- Winning: A Tourism Strategy for 2012 and Beyond

**Relevant Regional & County Strategies include:** -

- West Midlands Visitor Economy Strategy (WMVES) March 2008
- West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS) January 2008
- Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan 1996-2011
- Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Legacy Action Plan for the 2012

**South Staffordshire Council Strategies include:** -

- South Staffordshire Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2020
- South Staffordshire Council’s Corporate Strategy 2008-2012
- Emerging South Staffordshire Local Development Framework (LDF)
- South Staffordshire Open Space Strategy 2009-2018
- South Staffordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2009

**Winning: A Tourism Strategy for 2012 and Beyond produced by the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS)**

The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games are a real opportunity for the whole of the UK. Visit Britain estimates that collectively regions outside London will accrue approximately £2.1 billion of benefits from the 2012 Games in the period up to 2012. This strategy, therefore aims to maximise the financial benefits of the 2012 Games for the tourism industry.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is working with local and regional government, and national administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to ensure that all maximise the tourism potential of the Games. The vision of the national strategy is to:

- Engage with all UK tourism Businesses
- Improve the perception of Britain
- Deliver a first class welcome to all visitors
- Improve skills of the workforce
- Drive up quality in accommodation and improve customer feedback
- Maximise opportunities for increasing business visits and events
- Spread the benefits of the games to every part of the UK
- Improve sustainability
To ensure that South Staffordshire can make the most of the opportunities that will evolve from London 2012, it is important to engage with and support partners in the sub region, including the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Legacy Action Plan for the 2012 games. Themes include:

### Culture:
- **Events and Festivals**
  Increase engagement with cultural activity by delivering a programme of high quality and sustainable events and festivals as part of the Cultural Olympiad.

### Tourism:
- **Visitor Economy**
  Develop, manage and market Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent as a major and easily accessible visitor destination for key domestic and overseas markets before, during and after the 2012 Games.

  - **Cultural Olympiad**
    To develop, manage and promote the sub-region’s Cultural Olympiad programme to domestic and overseas visitor markets.

  - **Pre Games Training Camps**
    Promotion of the Unique Selling Points and wider tourism opportunities in Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent to support negotiations with Olympic and Paralympic teams, and capitalise on opportunities to raise the profile of the sub-region when agreement is reached with any competing country.

### Economic and Business Development:
- **Skills**
- Encourage investment in skill development in business sectors relevant to the 2012 games.

To support partners, South Staffordshire’s Tourism strategy will also focus on:

- **Better Business Engagement**
- **Improved Perceptions**
- **Quality and Customer Feedback**
- **Improved Sustainability**
“West Midlands Visitor Economy Strategy (WMVES) March 2008”

The new West Midlands Economic Strategy (WMES) 2008 sets an ambitious vision for the West Midlands:

‘To be a global centre where people and business choose to connect.’

The West Midlands Visitor Economic Strategy (WMVES) supports that vision, and confirms that the strategic objectives for tourism are to attract more visitors from outside the Region, more business and high-value leisure visitors and attract more private sector tourism investment:

The visitor economy has a key role to play in delivering the WMES objectives. To do that, the focus for the next 3 years will be:

- To deliver Birmingham as a premier European city break destination that celebrates its contemporary culture and further enhances its role as an international leader in the conference and exhibitions sector
- To capitalise on the region’s world-class business tourism venues and fully exploit its location and established high profile as a business destination
- To place contemporary culture and the cultural heritage of the West Midlands at the heart of the visitor experience and to use it to drive visitors to the region and to grow the short break market, capitalising on the opportunities of the Cultural Olympiad
- To deliver a high quality food and drink experience that captures the very best of the English countryside and for our shire and market towns to delight their visitors with a distinctive experience and warm welcome
- To make the West Midlands a region of celebration throughout the year, led by a high profile events and festivals programme that attracts visitors from across Britain’ (West Midlands Visitor Economy Strategy March 2008 pgs. 6 & 4)

Visitors to South Staffordshire are offered a unique and distinctive experience of the English countryside which is within easy access of Birmingham, with other regional attractions also within easy access from South Staffordshire.

The WMVES encourages local tourism strategies to:

‘In the next 3 years, the focus will be on encouraging companies to adopt best environmental practice in the development and management of their businesses, including encouraging the uptake of the Green Tourism Business Scheme and using local produce and local suppliers wherever possible. Local authorities will incorporate environmental considerations in undertaking their responsibilities for developing and managing the public realm and the countryside and landscapes.’

(West Midlands VES March 2008 pg. 42)
“West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS)”

The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS) provides a framework for the development of local policies which will be delivered through the Council’s emerging Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF will guide development proposals that have a positive impact on tourism locally.

‘Local authorities, AWM, the Regional Cultural Consortium, tourism bodies and other cultural agencies should encourage the further development of tourism and culture, including media and sport, as a key element in the diversification of the Regional economy. In doing so, recognition will be given to the important contribution that tourism and culture can make to employment generation, to local business development, environmental quality, educational opportunities and regeneration.’

(West Midlands RSS para 7.50, page 56)

RSS Policy PA10 (Tourism & Culture) identifies a number of key regional tourism and cultural assets and expects local authorities, through their LDFs, to encourage the improvement of existing provision as well as the creation of new facilities. Key regional tourism assets of significance within South Staffordshire are:

- The canal network
- Significant historic sites, buildings and gardens

South Staffordshire also has good access to other key regional tourism assets, outside the District but within a one hour drive and in some cases are also easily accessible by public transport. These key regional assets are identified in RSS Policy PA10:

- The International Convention Centre and Eastside regeneration in Birmingham
- Historic town and city centres such as Ludlow, Shrewsbury, Worcester and Lichfield
- Black Country Heritage Attractions in particular Dudley Town Centre and its surroundings
- Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site, the Severn Valley Steam Railway and West Midlands Safari Park
- Alton Towers and Drayton Manor Park
- Region’s network of live theatre and music venues
- The ceramics and pottery heritage of Stoke

Local authorities, through their LDFs, are encouraged to identify the facilities that are needed to support tourism:

‘Where it is appropriate to encourage tourism development, plans should identify the facilities needed to support it. These may include, for example, accommodation, improvements to public transport, regional footpaths or cycle routes, alterations to the right of way system and opening up of inland waterways. Particular attention should be given to promoting links between urban and rural areas.’

(West Midlands RSS para 7.51, page 57)

“Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan”

The Structure Plan has ‘saved policies’ relating to the use and development of land within South Staffordshire, pending the adoption of the LDF for South Staffordshire. The Structure Plan recognises the contribution that tourism makes to the local economy:

‘Tourism is related to a wide range of activities, including visits to the countryside, theme parks, cultural attractions such as historic houses, museums and theatres, and industrial heritage/interest locations. It now supports several thousand jobs within the Plan area and is becoming one of its...”
A plan for the future that will benefit all who work and live in South Staffordshire

main industries; it is also a significant factor in encouraging investment by generating a positive image of Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent...’ (Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan Para 6.36 page 56)

Specific policies that relate to the key regional tourism assets within South Staffordshire, canal network and historic buildings and gardens, include: -

‘Proposals for the positive management and regeneration of historic parks and gardens will be encouraged where they are sympathetic to the special character and interest of the site, and comply with an appropriate formulated assessment and management plan’ (Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan Policy NC17B, page 111)

‘New canal facilities and associated services, such as moorings, service facilities, marinas, hire and trip boat facilities, information points, restaurants and heritage attractions should be sited in or adjacent to towns, villages and canal junctions, subject to the need to protect the countryside and Conservation Areas. Canalside development should contribute positively to the function and appearance of canals, wherever possible, providing new life for redundant buildings. The wildlife value of canals is recognised and will be conserved and enhanced’ (Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan Policy R7, page 126)

South Staffordshire Council Strategies

“South Staffordshire Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS 2008-2020)”

The purpose of the South Staffordshire SCS is to set out a vision and a plan for the future that will benefit all who live and work in South Staffordshire. The SCS has been developed by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), which is made up of a number of key agencies working within South Staffordshire. The agreed vision is: -

‘We will strive to make South Staffordshire a safe and healthy place to live, with prosperous villages and thriving communities, where everyone can develop their abilities to the full, and pass on to future generations a better environment.’

Tourism features prominently within the Economic Vibrancy chapter of the SCS document where the intention is to harness the opportunities that South Staffordshire has to offer by encouraging business growth, raising skill levels, raising aspirations and promoting better engagement with local businesses. One of the actions of the SCS is to: -

‘Develop a tourism strategy for the District.’

“South Staffordshire Council’s Corporate Strategy”

The Council’s Corporate Strategy has five aims and objectives that are all of equal importance. One of these aims is ‘to be a District of thriving and sustainable communities’. Included within this aim is the commitment to: -
‘Promote tourism that is appropriate to South Staffordshire.’

One of the key tasks of this Tourism Strategy will be to provide clarity about the type of tourism activities that are ‘appropriate’ to South Staffordshire. Assistance in this task is provided by the strategy context set out in national, regional and local strategies.

“Emerging South Staffordshire Local Development Framework (LDF)”

Work is currently focussed on developing the Council’s Core Strategy. As part of this process a Preferred Spatial Strategy Consultation Document was published in February 2009 which set out the preferred approach to the future planning of the District. The Core Strategy will consider how sympathetic economic and tourism development can be enabled in line with Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Development. When adopted following Public Examination, the Council’s LDF will replace the saved policies that relate to tourism within the County Structure Plan. However, at this stage, it is important to acknowledge that ‘developing tourism and raising awareness of the District’ has been identified as one of the issues and challenges facing South Staffordshire in the Core Strategy Consultation Document: -

‘Tourism is an important part of the local economy and it is recognised that there is a need to support and encourage improvement of tourist facilities and attractions and promote South Staffordshire as a tourist destination, particularly as a base from which to access a wide range of different tourist attractions within the West Midlands Region and beyond, in addition to the attractive rural surroundings and heritage of South Staffordshire.’

(Preferred Spatial Strategy Consultation Document page 25)

“South Staffordshire Open Space Strategy 2009-2018”

Open Spaces are essential elements of the places in which people live. They are a wonderful resource for many types of activities from walking and playing, to simple relaxation. Everyday, people enjoy South Staffordshire’s open spaces, whether for a woodland walk or visiting the historic landscape; This tourism strategy will therefore support the actions highlighted within the Open Space Strategy that have a clear link with tourism opportunities. In particular:

- **Objective EV2** - Promote the use of strategic recreational routes to provide connectivity between settlements, in support of the local economy.
- **Objective HW3** - Promote healthy lifestyles through exercise

In order to deliver these aims and objectives of national, regional and sub regional strategies at the local level, the Tourism Strategy for South Staffordshire will seek to:

- Develop its ‘food and drink experience’
- Take forward the contribution to the local economy arising from the development of the ‘short breaks’ market
- Develop the ‘events and festivals’ programmes
- Wherever possible, encourage the use of ‘local produce and local suppliers’
- Encourage South Staffordshire businesses to adopt ‘best environmental practice’ in the development and management of their operations
8. Key Themes

**Key Theme - Destination Marketing**

‘Welcoming, Informing and Understanding’

In such a competitive environment and with so many destinations marketing their products and brands, informing and persuading visitors to come and enjoy South Staffordshire must be a key element of this strategy.

For the purpose of this strategy, the marketing theme will focus on two marketing elements:

1. **Promotion**
   - Targeted and themed campaigns

2. **Market Research**
   - Understanding consumer needs and wants.
   - Identifying the value and volume of the tourism industry on South Staffordshire’s local economy.

South Staffordshire as a Visitor Destination has a wealth of tourism opportunities. There is something for everyone, families, couples, groups, the young, the not so young, business or pleasure.

The District’s geographic proximity to the Black Country, Shropshire, Staffordshire and Wales also makes it an ideal location for visitors to stay and explore some of the 112 known local attractions, within approximately one hour’s drive. South Staffordshire’s rural makeup also makes the District an ideal rural retreat for visitors from its neighbouring urban areas of the Black Country and Birmingham. The District is also fortunate to have good rail and road networks including the M6, M54, M6 Toll and the West Coast Main Line.

**Current Marketing Activities**

This strategy will continue to build on previous work and continue to raise the profile of South Staffordshire as a visitor destination.

**Promoting South Staffordshire**

Targeted and themed promotional campaigns will be one of the key elements of this strategy, paying particular attention to the District’s attributes, the industry
South Staffordshire has a wealth of tourism opportunities

sectors, seasons and target markets. These include:

Attributes:

- Countryside, open spaces and rural activities i.e walking, cycling, canal holidays, horse riding
- Landscape criss-crossed by historic canals and railways
- Historic churches, houses and estates
- Historic and unspoilt villages
- Home to famous industrial heritage, arts and crafts, and the location of renowned events

Sectors:

- Food and Drink
- Accommodation
- Business Tourism
- Attractions
- Events and Festivals

Seasons:

- Spring
- Summer
- Autumn
- Winter

Target Markets:

- Groups
- Business
- Day Visitors
- Overnight Stays
- Short Breaks
- Local Community

Overall aims of Destination Marketing:-

1. Increase awareness of South Staffordshire as a visitor destination in the most effective and efficient means.
2. Promote South Staffordshire as an all year round tourist destination.
3. Understand the needs and wants of our visitors and local residents.
4. Understand the value and volume of tourism on South Staffordshire’s local economy.

Overall Objectives/Actions of Destination Marketing:-

1. Create a ‘brand’ for South Staffordshire, which can be used in future marketing campaigns and communication.
2. Actively engage with PR and continue to develop relationships with the media to raise the profile of what South Staffordshire has to offer.
3. Represent and promote South Staffordshire at exhibitions and events.
4. Produce targeted campaigns around the District’s key sectors, seasons, attributes and target markets.
5. Promote South Staffordshire as a destination that can be enjoyed all year round.
6. Create a South Staffordshire ‘Press Pack’ and annual familiarisation visit for the media and businesses that will highlight the District’s attributes, events, itineraries and interesting facts.

7. Carry out annual EIA (Economic Impact Assessments) to indicate the value and volume of the industry to the District’s local economy.

8. Conduct market research with both visitors and local people through surveys and South Staffordshire’s Residents’ Panel to understand perceptions, satisfaction, needs and wants.

9. Raise awareness of both South Staffordshire and Destination Staffordshire’s marketing opportunities to South Staffordshire businesses.

10. Increase the level of information currently promoted on the ‘Enjoy Staffordshire’, ‘Visit Britain’ and ‘Enjoy England’ websites, as well as the District Council’s website.

11. Make use of the District’s 27, strategically located Tourist Information Points (TIPs)

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**Key Theme - Sustainable Tourism**

‘Protecting our Environment...’

Due to the rural profile of South Staffordshire, the Council is committed to protecting the very environment which makes it so attractive and the principles of sustainability, in particular, tackling climate change. Protecting South Staffordshire’s distinctive environment is very much at the heart of the Council’s vision for local communities.

Not only is sustainability high on the Government’s agenda it is also now becoming increasingly important to consumers and their decision making process. It is therefore important that South Staffordshire and its businesses promote, where possible, its contribution to sustainability and protecting the environment.

Defined by The United Nations World Tourism Organisation, Sustainable Tourism is ‘Tourism that meets the needs of present tourist and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future’.

In simple terms it is about balancing the needs of the visitor, industry and community whilst protecting and enhancing the environment which sits at the heart of the sustainability model known as VICE.

The VICE Model:-

```
Visitor
   /    \
\     /  \\
Environment
      /    \
Industry  Community
```

Balance the needs of visitors, industry and community whilst enhancing the environment
Overall aims of Sustainable Tourism:-

- **Visitors**
  Welcome and satisfy visitors to South Staffordshire.

- **Industry**
  Sustaining the quality of the District’s tourism industry, local economy and the industry that serves the visitors (Quality)

- **Community**
  Encourage community cohesion and thriving communities, whilst protecting the communities that serve the industry and visitors

- **Environment**
  Protect South Staffordshire’s distinctive environment yet take a sympathetic, balanced and gentle approach to promoting the District and ‘appropriate’ tourism development which is in keeping with the recognised rural profile of South Staffordshire’s tourism industry.

Overall objectives/actions of Sustainable Tourism:-

With the Council committed to the VICE model, as well as minimising pollution and waste, protecting and enhancing the local natural and built environment and providing services which meet current local needs whilst ensuring our local environment is protected for future generations, this strategy will focus on encouraging tourism businesses to adopt the VICE model into the management and development of their business. This strategy with therefore have particular focus on the following:

1. To encourage consumers and businesses to ‘Think Local’ and utilise local product availability.

2. To promote and enhance opportunities for the gentle evolution of appropriate tourism development, in keeping with the rural profile of South Staffordshire. Such opportunities for gentle evolution will allow existing tourism businesses to thrive in a competitive industry.

3. Raise awareness of opportunities available to businesses to reduce Carbon Footprint and CO₂ emissions.

4. Increase the promotion of Green Tourism schemes and encourage business take up.

5. Inform the Core Strategy to ensure support for appropriate, consider supporting sympathetic economic and tourism development in line with national policy.

It is also important to note that the Destination Marketing and Quality themes will also contribute to the sustainability of South Staffordshire’s tourism industry.
Raising and maintaining quality standards is a key element of this strategy

Key Theme - Quality Counts
‘Creating a Competitive Edge ...’

In order for South Staffordshire to have the competitive edge and for the industry to be sustainable, raising and maintaining quality standards throughout the tourism industry has to be a key element of this strategy.

With so much choice available to the consumer and competition for business high, it is simply not good enough to state South Staffordshire is good, South Staffordshire needs to prove that it is good. This in turn will encourage visitors to spend their precious time and money in South Staffordshire as well as spreading the word about their quality experience. In terms of quality, it is not the size that matters, it’s the service and facilities that are offered.

How can South Staffordshire be a Quality Destination?

- Service Delivery (Accreditation Take Up)
- People (Customer Care and Skills)
- Place (The Environment)
- Promotion (Quality Information and Achievements)

It is also important to note that Destination Marketing, Sustainability and the underpinning activities associated with this strategy will also play a key role in raising Quality within South Staffordshire.

Overall Aim of Quality Counts:-

- To promote South Staffordshire as a Quality Destination.
- Encourage repeat visits and referrals.

Overall Objectives of Quality Counts:-

1. Encourage Visitor Attractions to attain VAQAS (Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme) status.
2. Using Familiarisation Visits with the media and businesses create South Staffordshire Ambassadors.
3. Encourage non inspected accommodation providers to achieve ‘quality’ accreditation to a national recognised scheme.
4. Introduce a Quality Mark for South Staffordshire that highlights ‘quality’ businesses.
5. Offer ‘Welcome Host’ training courses to businesses.
6. Ensure that all accreditation symbols are displayed accordingly within marketing campaigns.
7. Increase take up of Staffordshire Ambassadors. (Place Making)
Working together to drive tourism forward

Key Theme - Partnership Working
‘Together we are Stronger …’

Partnership working can contribute to greater achievements and wider coverage in a more cost effective and efficient away, whether it is financial or in kind support i.e. time. In order to achieve economic vibrancy within South Staffordshire and sustain the local economy, it is important that the District Council maximises partnership opportunities wherever possible. This may be with other public organisations/authorities and the private and voluntary sectors and departments within the Council.

It is therefore essential that links and partnerships are forged and sustained for the good of the District’s tourism economy.

This includes:

South Staffordshire Tourism Association (SSTA)

South Staffordshire Tourism Association is a public and private sector partnership that exists to promote tourism within the area of South Staffordshire. Members are drawn from both the private and public sectors, and the Association works with, and enjoys the support of, South Staffordshire Council.

The main role of the association is to bring together the interests of tourism businesses and promote the District’s tourism opportunities.

Destination Staffordshire

Destination Staffordshire, formally known as Destination Management Partnership (DMP) is a dynamic partnership of private sector businesses and local authorities, working together to drive forward tourism in Staffordshire.

The aim is to use the collective strengths of all involved in Staffordshire to attract more customers into the county, keep them here longer and provide the highest standards of customer care while they’re here.

Staffordshire County Council provides the secretariat to the partnership, whilst a private/public sector board steers the partnership forward. Under the DS umbrella there are 10 theme groups, all of which strive to achieve the aims of the DS. Theme groups include:

- Events and Festivals
- Sustainable Tourism
- Press and PR
- Marketing and Branding
- Website
- Research
- Skills and Training
- Tourist Information Centres
- Business Tourism
- Group Travel
The partnership also leads on a number of marketing campaigns, including:

- www.enjoystaffordshire.com
- Enjoy Staffordshire brochure
- ‘Enjoy’ discount card
- Visitor Map
- Taste of Staffordshire
- Great Gardens
- Group travel market

‘Destination Staffordshire’ has now been acknowledged by Advantage West Midlands (AWM) as being the most advanced Destination Management Partnership (DMP) in the region, and recognised as an example of national best practice by the Local Government Association.

Staffordshire Rural Forum

The Forum is facilitated by Staffordshire County Council and includes members representing local authorities, business support and training agencies, regional agencies such as AWM and Natural England, Heart of England Fine Foods, DEFRA, the NFU, the LSC, Business Link Staffordshire, the CLA, the Community Council of Staffordshire, and the private sector representing the tourism and leisure sectors. The objective of the Forum is to 'promote the economic regeneration and well being of the County's rural areas'.

To achieve this objective, the forum has 8 areas of focus, these being:

- Strengthening Rural Business Support
- Tourism Cluster Development
- Food Cluster Development
- Investing in Training
- Enhancing the Rural Environment
- Developing Opportunities for Business
- Building Strong Rural Communities
- Managing the Work of the Forum

To support the District’s rural economy and enhance the tourism profile, the Tourism Strategy for South Staffordshire will contribute to the above areas of focus, in particular:

- **Enhancing the Rural Economy**

  1. Climate Change. Reduce CO₂ emissions and promote renewable technologies.
• **Tourism Cluster**

1. Raise awareness of ‘Destination Staffordshire’ and highlight opportunities available to rural businesses.

2. Identify skills shortages and training needs.

• **Food Cluster**

1. Promote South Staffordshire’s Food and Drink through Taste of Staffordshire.

• **Strengthening Rural Economy**

1. Strengthen engagement and signpost businesses to mainstream support.

2. Signpost rural businesses to support in gaining access to ICT and broadband facilities.

*Other partners include:*

- Southern Staffordshire Partnership
- South Staffordshire Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)
- Business Link
- Neighbouring Authorities
- Internal District Council Departments
- National Organisations i.e. Visit Britain, Enjoy England
- Charitable Organisations/Trust. i.e. National Trust, English Heritage, Forestry Commission
- Staffordshire-and-Stoke on Trent 2012 Steering Group.
- Tourism Businesses

Promote the economic regeneration and well being of the county’s rural areas
9. Underpinning Activity

‘Supporting and Developing …’

Underpinning the tourism strategy and helping to deliver the 4 key themes are 3 key activities:

- **Business Engagement**
- **Communication**
- **Skills and Training**

**Business Engagement**

Through regular engagement opportunities between the Council and business community there will be a greater understanding of business needs and aspirations. It will also allow businesses to have a better understanding and knowledge about the support organisations available to them along with the wealth of information and workshops that could help them prosper in years to come.

*Working in locality areas (see Appendix III), this programme will:*

- Increase the number of businesses the District Council engages with to assist with improving quality of advice offered and signposting to support organisations.
- Build greater relationships between the business community, the District Council and partnerships.
- Understand business needs, aspirations and challenges.

**Communication**

Communication is a two way process, and with people becoming better networked there are opportunities for the Council to improve in this area, therefore this programme will focus on improving communication with businesses, consumers and trade.

*The strategy aims to:*

- Make better use of websites, e-marketing and email as a means of communication and promotion.
- Inform businesses of industry related opportunities and tourism related information, including the 2012 London Olympic Games.

*Objectives:*

- Specific targeted marketing campaigns.
- Produce two business newsletters per annum.
- Seasonal consumer newsletters informing.

**Skills and Training**

Skills and training are an essential element in the delivery of a quality experience. Through this underpinning activity and the business engagement element, the Council can begin to understand what skills businesses would like to develop. Working in partnership with key organisations, the Council can then either deliver training or signpost businesses to providers that can help.

*This programme will:*

- Understand the skills gaps and needs
- Support businesses with their training needs either by signposting or delivering courses.
- Identify work placement/apprentice opportunities to help sustain the industry.
Communication is a two way process
Conclusion

In 1974, South Staffordshire Council was formed and inherited a charming and delightful District full of history, heritage and rural splendour.

During this time, the Council has sought to preserve and enhance the District’s personality, keeping it as a beautiful, rural district, located on the fringe of urban life with a wealth of tourism opportunities for all to enjoy, whether you live, work or visit South Staffordshire.

The tourism strategy for South Staffordshire aspires to realise the District’s unique qualities and maximise potential for tourism opportunities.

The strategy, therefore aims to celebrate the District’s distinctive environment whilst contributing to its protection and enhancement; offering an attractive, quality and enjoyable experience that will benefit the local tourism economy. It aims to improve ‘well being’ and create a thriving and sustainable future for people who live in, work in and visit South Staffordshire.

Welcoming, Developing and Sustaining...

South Staffordshire’s Tourism Strategy
South Staffordshire is made up of 27 parishes, each with their own distinctive characteristics.
South Staffordshire District and main attractions within an approximate 1 hour drive.
Stay in the tranquil setting of South Staffordshire and discover a world of possibilities on your doorstep!

**Shropshire**
- RAF Cosford Air Museum
- Severn Valley Railway
- Boscobel House and the Oak Tree (English Heritage)
- White Ladies Priory (English Heritage)
- Hoo Farm
- Ironbridge, Gorge Museums and attractions
- Attingham Park (National Trust)
- Dudmaston Hall (National Trust)
- Wenlock Edge (National Trust)
- Wilderthorpe Manor (National Trust)
- Acton Scott Working Farm

**Staffordshire**
- Drayton Manor Park and Zoo
- Alton Towers
- The Potteries
- Tamworth Castle
- Lichfield Cathedral
- Museum of Cannock Chase
- National Memorial Arboretum
- The Coors Museum of Brewing
- Tamworth Castle
- Trentham Gardens
- Biddulph Grange
- Chasewater Park and Railway

**Worcestershire**
- Bewdley Museum
- West Midlands Safari Park
- Cathedral
- The Commandery
- Avoncroft Museum of Historic Buildings
- Severn Valley Railway

**West Midlands**
- Walsall Leather Museum
- Walsall Art Gallery
- Wolverhampton Art Gallery
- Wednesbury Art Gallery
- Sandwell Valley Park
- Willenhall Lock Museum
- Cadbury World
- The Bull Ring, Birmingham
- Millennium Point and Thinktank
- Birmingham Art Galleries
- Wightwick Manor
- National Sea Life Centre – Birmingham
- Botanic Gardens
- Black Country Living Museum
- Dudley Castle and Zoo
- Redhouse Glass Cone and Museums

**Appendix II**
A ‘Community of Communities’ is how South Staffordshire’s Sustainable Community Strategy describes the special nature of the District. The District’s twenty-seven parishes, which are made up of villages and small hamlets define the District’s communities.

However, we have found that the partnership’s landscape within the District has become increasingly complex. There was also concern that there was a plethora of groups, advisory boards and community networks being developed by partners to deliver their day-to-day work. We recognised that this could lead to potential duplication, confusion and limited buy in from elected members, partners and the community.

Thus, in early 2007 the Council’s Executive, along with the Strategic Management Team at the Council, identified a need to review the delivery infrastructure to enable us to progress ways of working more effectively with our partners and to also maximise resources.

As a result, South Staffordshire Council took the lead role in co-ordinating a programme of work to tackle the issues identified above, by working closer together with its LSP partners and elected members. Officers linked with the IDEa (Improvement and Development Agency) and assisted the partners to develop a locality-working model for the District. Following focused workshops and a recognition of what could and could not be achieved with existing delivery mechanisms in place, an agreed locality-working model was introduced.

The locality model as illustrated by the map identifies five localities within South Staffordshire. These localities stay true to parish boundaries and electoral divisions.

The key benefits of locality working are:

- Service providers engaging at a local level
- Making services more tailored to local needs
- Partners working together and agreeing local issues
- Identifying and fixing ‘the little things’ in a specific area
- Providing a voice for each locality
- Strengthening communication / understanding and awareness
The locality structure is now being embedded into working arrangements.

Over the last twelve months locality working has grown and developed. As a result four work strands have naturally emerged as a result of the Council’s leadership role.

1) Member Forums

Member forums have been developed in order to engage Members at all three tiers (County, District and Parish) and to enable officers to communicate key and emerging issues and share key data relevant to their locality.

2) Collection of data

A key element of Locality working is the collection of data, which allows us to build up the intelligence within the individual localities and helps support the development of future priorities. All data on the District, where possible, is now broken down to locality level.

3) Consultation

In order to embed a culture of engagement and empowerment within the five localities, it was important to consider information provision, consultation and involvement opportunities in each locality.

4) Shared Services

The success of the locality working concept to date is evidenced by the use of shared budgeting of projects and initiatives, utilising existing funds for specific projects.

Fully resourced Locality Delivery Plans will be launched in April 2009, in each of the five localities, focusing on tackling local issues that have been raised during the locality Member forums and community consultation priority challenge exercises. These will be funded through a range of funding sources including the introduction of participatory budgets for each locality, following a decision by the Council’s Executive to utilise locality working to embed this new approach.
### Glossary of Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AONB</td>
<td>Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty</td>
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<tr>
<td>AWM</td>
<td>Advantage West Midlands</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLA</td>
<td>Country Land and Business Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRM</td>
<td>Customer Relations Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEFRA</td>
<td>Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs</td>
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<td>DCMS</td>
<td>Department for Culture, Media and Sport</td>
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<tr>
<td>DMP</td>
<td>Destination Management Partnership</td>
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<tr>
<td>EIA</td>
<td>Economic Impact Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>LDF</td>
<td>Local Development Framework</td>
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<td>LSP</td>
<td>Local Strategic Partnership</td>
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<td>LSC</td>
<td>Local Skills Council</td>
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<td>LNR</td>
<td>Local Nature Reserve</td>
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<td>NFU</td>
<td>National Farmers Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOMIS</td>
<td>Office for National Statistics (Office Labour Market Statistics)</td>
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<td>PPS4</td>
<td>Planning Policy Statement 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>RSS</td>
<td>Regional Spatial Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCS</td>
<td>Sustainable Community Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWOT</td>
<td>Analysis of Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSTA</td>
<td>South Staffordshire Tourism Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIP</td>
<td>Tourist Information Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VFR</td>
<td>Visiting Friends and Relatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VICE</td>
<td>Sustainability Theory. The interaction between Visitors, Industry, Communities and the Environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAQUAS</td>
<td>Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme run by Visit Britain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMVES</td>
<td>West Midlands Visitor Economy Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMRSS</td>
<td>West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMES</td>
<td>West Midlands Economic Strategy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If you require this publication in another language, larger print, Braille or on audio tape then please contact us.

A detailed action plan can be viewed on the Council’s website. If you do not have access to the internet, please contact us and we will be happy to send you a copy.