Foreword

This proposal sets out how local businesses and residents will gain from the joining of the public and private sectors in our Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). This will act swiftly to develop an economy that has innovation and enterprise at its heart.

Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire gives us the optimum geography for a LEP with 1.1 million residents, economic scale with 32,700 businesses and an excellent mix of public, private and third sector partners large and small.

Focus will be on enterprise and innovation initiatives which unlock the potential of the private sector to create employment and wealth to begin growing, restructuring or sustaining the local economy. Creating the right environment in which businesses can invest and grow will be central to the success of the partnership.

We have the key ingredients to support growth, the potential entrepreneurs, environmental and quality of life strengths, and major Higher and Further Education institutions. These, together with the economic drivers around Staffordshire of Birmingham, Derby/Nottingham and Manchester could, if properly harnessed, drive a resurgent private sector led economy. However, in parts of our area, particularly the north, we have considerable economic challenges in developing enterprise and attracting private sector investment. We need a LEP to help accelerate our transformation to an economy based on enterprise and innovation.

We want to deliver initiatives which are proven to:

- Drive enterprise and innovation
- Generate fast returns at low unit cost
- Engage with and gain leverage from the private sector
- Create growth which is economically and environmentally sustainable.

We believe that our key attributes are:

- A strong manufacturing sector that we want to build on and grow (15% of our jobs are in manufacturing, compared to a national average of 10%)
- Competitive costs of land and labour
- A flexible and loyal workforce with low attrition rates and 13,500 graduates a year
- An excellent quality of life and environment capable of attracting investors
- Excellent connectivity across the UK and beyond
- Strong highly specialist sectors of ceramics and health in the north and automotives in the south and east where we want to grow and diversify the businesses and supply chains
- A growing rural economy supported by the tourism and food and drink sectors and the low carbon economy
- Universities that are a key part of our ability to innovate and boost enterprise – we need to improve how they energise our business base
- Competitive costs of land and labour
In achieving our aims we will work strongly and effectively across boundaries with neighbouring LEPs. We understand our complex functional economic geography – we are strategically located and Staffordshire is a bridge between Birmingham and the Black Country to the south, to Derby and Nottingham to the east, and Cheshire and Manchester conurbation to the north.

We recognise that the pattern of linkages to other areas will mean that some partners will see value in becoming members of neighbouring partnerships. However, our view is that economically the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire proposal represents the optimal solution to delivering the growth needed in the sub-region in terms of its scale and coverage.

The following proposal is being submitted by a partnership of the business community and local authorities in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire following consultation. It sets out the plans for the partnership, profiles our local economies and challenges, and sets out what needs to be done. We have a strong track record of delivery.

Philip Atkins      Mohammed Pervez
Leader Staffordshire County Council  Leader Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Tom Fanning      Mike Herbert
Chair of Staffordshire Economic Development Strategy Group  President
Chief Executive Midland Expressway Ltd.  North Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry
A genuine partnership

- Our aim in proposing a Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP is to create a **powerful partnership** combining the strengths of the public and private sectors able to deliver the scale of economic growth needed to rebalance the local economy.

- **Led by a private sector Chair**, the composition of the Board will reflect the geographic and economic diversity of our area and particularly the importance of manufacturing to our economy. It will also aim to draw on the energy, innovation and entrepreneurial flair and ‘know how’ of many of our most successful business leaders. It is expected that there will be 12 full Board members with associate members where appropriate, six of the full members will come from the private sector including the Chair (from within the LEP area), and six from local authorities.

- Our two local universities; Keele and Staffordshire and our local colleges are keen to work with the partnership, reflecting both the need to up-skill and diversify the labour force and their role as drivers of innovation in our key economic sectors with good growth potential. Local partners also recognise the important role that the **Voluntary and Community sector** can play in economic regeneration, including supporting the development of social enterprises.

- We will develop **clear and robust governance arrangements** for partnership, minimising bureaucracy, focusing on delivery and providing accountability. The legal status of the partnership will be decided by the Shadow Board. The partnership will be judged on its achievements in making a difference on the ground to businesses and residents.

- The Board would be supported by a small number of **delivery groups** focusing on the key priorities. These would be made up of relevant partners and specialist sector interest groups. The Destination Management Partnership (DMP) would be one of these groups.

- Our Partnership will be built around the reality of the **economic linkages** that take place across our boundaries, such as travel to work, travel to study, travel to enjoy, travel to shop, and movement of raw materials, finished goods and services. This means a recognition of the need to work across these boundaries to deliver the best outcomes, for instance by partners and District Councils having strong and effective ‘Associate’ membership of neighbouring LEPs. Many of these arrangements are already in place, covering planning and transport, capital economic development projects, business support and tourism and inward investment marketing, and we will build on them and strengthen them where necessary.

- The LEP for Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire **fits within the emerging proposals for neighbouring partnerships**. In the West Midlands, these are; Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire; Telford, Shropshire and Herefordshire; Coventry and Warwickshire; Worcestershire; Birmingham and Solihull; and
Our proposal also fits with the emerging proposals for Cheshire and Warrington and Derbyshire. In Cheshire, Cheshire East, Chester and Cheshire West and Warrington propose to form a single LEP. In Derbyshire, Derbyshire County Council, Derby City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City Council propose to form a single LEP.

We have been hindered by the construction of artificial regional boundaries which ignored the economic connectivity of our transport and business links. Because of our strategic location our partnership must look outwards and mobilise the collective intelligence and resources to support private sector growth in our urban centres and along our transport corridors for the benefit of Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire.

The strong relationship we will build with those with whom we have longstanding economic ties complements the proposals of the LEP being developed for those areas to the north of the County (Cheshire and Warrington), to the east (Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire) and to the south and west (Birmingham and Solihull, the Black Country, Telford, Shropshire and Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Coventry and Warwickshire).

The LEP will use the expertise and knowledge of its members to set clear priorities for growth and drive fast solutions to creating new jobs and supporting business growth.

We understand our local economy

Staffordshire is a complex county as evidenced by the West Midlands Regional Observatory analysis of sub-regional dynamics. “Of all the strategic local authorities in the region, Staffordshire has perhaps the most complex functional economic geography.” The economic geography is characterised by a range of distinctive market catchments, the largest being Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire, followed by Burton upon Trent, Stafford and Southern Staffordshire with its strong links to the Birmingham and Black Country Conurbation.

In the north, the city of Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme, along with parts of Stafford Borough, Staffordshire moorlands and part of South Cheshire, particularly Congleton, represent a travel to work area. In the Stoke-on-Trent travel to work area, about 85% of people live and work in the area. North Staffordshire has economic linkages with South Cheshire and Greater Manchester. To the north east of the County, the rural parts of the Staffordshire Moorlands have clear economic linkages with Derbyshire and a common identity with the Peak District. Although the Peak District is normally associated with Derbyshire, a third of the National Park is actually in Staffordshire.
Within the LEP, Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire displays the most serious economic weaknesses and the work to transform the economy (begun in 2007) will need ongoing support from the LEP. North Staffordshire will need to generate significantly more private sector jobs to reduce worklessness, increase graduate retention, raise the aspirations of its young people and attract new investment.

In a region showing one of the slowest economic growth rates in the UK, Stoke-on-Trent was the slowest within the region and the second slowest in England between 1995-2005. In terms of GVA per head in this period, it has fallen from 2% above regional average to 12% below. Although its stock of businesses has grown by 10% the size of the business base is still nearly 30% lower than regional average, illustrating its limited success in diversifying its business base and growing private sector jobs. Between 1998 and 2008, 20,900 private sector jobs have been lost with only about 4,000 created. Overall levels of employment are lower than average and 29,000 people of working age have no qualifications. This is mirrored across the North Staffordshire economy. We also have an over reliance on public sector jobs in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire and will need to create at least 13,000 new jobs in the private sector to re-balance the economy.

And yet against this background there have been some notable success stories, illustrating the wealth of talent in the commercial sector with the potential to be harnessed to drive the growth of North Staffordshire and transform Stoke-on-Trent into a working city. Emma Bridgewater, Portmeirion, Michelin, and Navman Wireless have increased their sales by over 20% in one of the most challenging trading years for decades, whilst JCB, Alton Towers, Vodafone and many others continue to be power brands of international significance.

North Staffordshire has the benefit of excellent motorway and trunk road connections (junctions 15 and 16 on the M6 and the A50 connection to the M1), fast rail links and close proximity to Manchester, East Midlands and Birmingham airports.

Other parts of the area also have their economic weaknesses but also have significant opportunities for growth and employment potential.

In the centre, Stafford is a self-contained travel to work area and local economy, with about 70% of residents living and working in the area. Although the town has lost about half of its manufacturing jobs over the last ten years it still has a strong engineering base, which is well placed to take advantage of the low carbon economy. For example, Alstom/Areva T&D are heavily involved in the high technology low carbon sectors through its focus on energy generation and transmission including renewable energy. As the county town it is also the administrative centre of Staffordshire with a high proportion of public sector jobs. About 40% of all jobs in Stafford are dependent upon the public sector. It has important locational advantages with easy access via junctions 13 and 14 to the M6 and national motorway network. The town has the ability to attract significant inward investment.
In the East, East Staffordshire has also lost a significant number of manufacturing jobs but is still an important centre for manufacturing, with 20.9% of the Borough’s jobs in this sector. The town has also become a major hub for distribution and logistics operations and has a growing business and professional services sector, food and drink.

The town of Burton, has relatively high levels of deprivation and poor housing in its older urban areas and pockets of worklessness at neighbourhood level. The town is reasonably self contained, with 68% of people living and working in Burton upon Trent. The town also has strong economic links with South Derbyshire and Derby City. It has strong road and rail links which have assisted in attracting inward investment, including several automotive component companies supplying the Toyota plant at Burnaston.

In recent years, the town has seen significant levels of private investment, enterprise creation, improvements to the road network and growth of the town as a retail centre.

There are considerable opportunities for further economic development related to the proposed FA national football centre just outside Burton upon Trent and the designation of the town as a ‘Growth Point’ area to attract new jobs and housing to the town over the next 20 years.

In the South, there is considerable evidence that much of Southern Staffordshire is part of the functioning economic geography of Birmingham and the Black Country and is significantly impacted by the economic prosperity of Birmingham and the Black Country. Across southern Staffordshire the settlements vary considerably in their nature. The south of the County is a major provider of labour to the Birmingham and Black Country conurbation. Much of this is skilled. Some 60,000 residents of Southern Staffordshire travel into Birmingham and the Black Country which is supported by good road and rail links. This belt around the conurbation evidences the growth of small and medium enterprises, particularly when the demand for labour within the conurbation is reduced. This is where the entrepreneurialism which will help to ignite the economy in the conurbation and Staffordshire resides. We need to encourage this growth. In South Staffordshire, 67% of residents commute out to find work, whilst in Tamworth the figure is 50%. However commuting also takes place from the conurbation into Southern Staffordshire. Over the years, both people and businesses have moved out of the conurbation to settle in Southern Staffordshire, a trend which is expected to continue. In Cannock and Tamworth relatively low skill levels, especially at higher levels, and evidenced through the highest levels of unemployment in Staffordshire, outside of Stoke-on-Trent, is hampering economic growth. There is a critical ‘two-way’ relationship between Southern Staffordshire and the conurbation. We have much to gain from working with the conurbation; the market place that it offers us, the HE and FE resources it has, promoting our cultural offer (such as the Staffordshire Hoard), road, rail and air connectivity, and the ‘locator’ role that Birmingham can play in underpinning the inward investment and tourism strategy for Staffordshire.
The south has a number of key growth corridors along the critical routes of the M6, M6 toll, A38 and M42. Combined with the town centre economies, south Staffordshire has substantial potential to attract private investment and to encourage business start ups.

The economic growth of the County, in particular Southern Staffordshire, can make a significant contribution to improving the economic position of Birmingham and the Black Country. Staffordshire should be seen as part of the solution to the economic challenges faced by the conurbation.

- Beyond Staffordshire’s network of towns, a significant rural community accounts for around three quarters of the land area, 20% of the population and 25% of all businesses. The rural areas of Staffordshire contribute to the economy of Staffordshire as a whole, and are an important source of economic output in their own right. The diversity of Staffordshire’s rural communities stretches from the fringes of towns and urban areas, through market towns and villages to the remote upland areas of the Peak District National Park.

Staffordshire has a strong agricultural tradition which accounts directly for £150m of economic output and has a strong relationship with the food and drink, and tourism and leisure clusters which employ around 40,000 people between them. The importance of land based industries are likely to increase in the longer term as local sourcing and food security issues become more prevalent.

Rural areas of Staffordshire offer an attractive and competitive environment for businesses to set up, especially where they are well connected to serve the extensive economic markets that surround them.

Staffordshire’s rural areas present their own socio-economic issues, in particular the affordability of housing among first time buyers. The most isolated communities also face issues around access to public transport which tends to be less frequent (around 12% of rural households have no access to private transport) and high quality broadband. The future economic prosperity of Staffordshire’s rural areas, and the County as a whole, will require innovative and flexible solutions to these challenges.

- Partners believe that Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire is the most effective geographical area on which to form our Local Enterprise Partnership.

  - It is large enough to be strategic, yet local enough for us to understand our issues and craft local solutions. We will play strongly into the LEPs of those areas where we have established economic connectivity through associate membership, as it is important that we are at the right table at the right time. We need to do this because we have to be part of their solution, and our prosperity is dependent on the development of the economies with which we are intertwined. At the same time we need to ensure a cohesive approach to development.
across our transport corridors and housing markets and we will pull this together through our Staffordshire LEP.

- A considerable amount of **operational planning and delivery** of regeneration activity is already based on this area and it is possible to provide the appropriate accountability and build on the experience gained working at Sub Region, County and District level.

- Local partners already have a number of **working arrangements and delivery partnerships** that demonstrate that we can work across borders to secure efficient and effective delivery. Associate membership of other LEPs is an anticipated development of this.

- Local partners have developed a strong local research and intelligence capacity and have a wealth of economic intelligence and the two upper tier authorities are currently preparing **Local Economic Assessments (LEA)**. These will provide an important baseline for shaping plans and measuring performance.

**We know what needs to be done**

- Local partners have a **clear view of their economic priorities** and their vision for the future of the local economy. There are well established strategies across the LEP area for delivering solutions to the challenging economic issues faced.

- Broadly we will focus on **growing competitive businesses** by delivering - growing competitive sectors including manufacturing and ceramics and niche sectors through an Industry Support Framework, and ‘Creating the Conditions’ for sustainable growth through the development of a Special Investment Zone, inward investment, first class office and commercial accommodation and modernising infrastructure in our towns and centres with North Staffordshire as a key priority.

- Within the LEP, **Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire** displays the most serious economic weaknesses and the work to transform the economy will need ongoing support from the LEP. North Staffordshire will need to generate significantly more private sector jobs to reduce worklessness, increase graduate retention, raise the aspirations of its young people and attract new investment.

The **south** of the County provides significant opportunities for generating private sector growth (commercial) economy. Research carried out for the review of the Regional Economic Strategy in 2006 placed a number of the towns in the south of the County as part of the so-called E31 belt – an area which exhibited strengths related to entrepreneurship, environmental advantage and innovation.

- Partners understand that developing an enterprise culture requires considerable investment in enhancing the entrepreneurial aspirations and
skills of **young people**. They will be the next generation of entrepreneurs, developing new businesses and creating jobs over the next 20 years.

- On the fringes of the area, there are opportunities for growth shared with neighbouring LEPs, for example clusters of high technology manufacturing across southern Staffordshire.

- By December 2010, the Local Enterprise Partnership will produce a **joint economic delivery plan** that will build on existing strategies and plans and capitalise on new opportunities. The priorities of the Partnership will be set by the Board, and will be rooted in a clear and robust evidence base. It is likely that, initially, these will include reducing worklessness in North Staffordshire and making Stoke-on-Trent a ‘Working City’ and supporting Stafford and Burton upon Trent as growth points.

- The current and emerging strategies for our LEP are consistent with the national strategy to **rebalance the economy both geographically and sectorally**. In particular, they highlight the need to:
  - Develop much greater numbers of private sector jobs in sustainable knowledge based companies with long term growth potential.
  - Develop jobs in growing sectors such as health and low carbon and advanced manufacturing and facilitate diversification and stimulate supply chains.
  - Move away from the reliance on public sector jobs.
  - Remove the barriers to growth being experienced by private businesses, including unnecessary red tape.
  - Develop an entrepreneurial economy, with high levels of new business formation and survival.
  - Build on the strengths of the manufacturing industries like ceramics.
  - Develop the workforce skills needed for the new economy.

**What will our LEP do?**

- The scope of the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP will include economic development, skills, planning, housing, transport, tourism and the transition to the low carbon economy. Its role will be to:
  - Set a clear **vision** and **strategic direction** for the area’s economic development;
  - Agree a **Delivery Plan** with SMART targets;
  - Secure, co-ordinate and manage **resources** to deliver objectives;
• Manage **performance**.

• We will tackle our area's "enterprise deficit". We will do this in two ways:

(a) Through creating an **enterprising culture** amongst young people and adults alike.

(b) Through addressing **barriers to enterprise**: Access To Finance; a good Portfolio of Business Premises; opening up supply chains to local small providers; extending business mentoring networks.

• We will encourage all public bodies and social landlords within Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire to sign up to a **Public Procurement Compact**. This will ensure that all large contracts tendered will include clauses securing local employment and skills outcomes, as well as benefiting the local supply chain. We will take this further – a key element of this LEP will be ensuring that the way in which the public sector engages with and does business with the private sector is efficient and focus on facilitating private sector growth. This will be led by our involvement in the Business Matters project, and by the Think Local 4 Business project – both of which aim to help the public sector engage more strategically and relevantly with the private sector.

• Partners recognise that in the current financial circumstances this will involve difficult, but essential, decisions around the allocation of scarce resources. While the initial **priority areas** are likely to be focused on those in greatest need (North Staffordshire), the principles of balanced benefit and balanced growth will ensure that, over time, all parts of the LEP area can share the benefits of LEP investment and success.

• The LEP will also wish to play a key role in **supporting local businesses**, whilst recognising the need to avoid overlap and duplication between what is delivered nationally and locally. Local partners would wish to support new business starts and survival, trade development and export promotion, innovation, key sector support activities, and finance to business.

• **Marketing Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire** to attract visitors, business tourism, inward investors, students and workers is a key component of our strategy. The work of the Staffordshire Destination Management Partnership and the co-ordination of inward investment services will be critical to the LEP's success.

• Partners will continue to exploit all the funding streams available to support the economic regeneration of Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire including opportunities such as the **Regional Growth Fund**. Partners will be making a comprehensive bid by December 2010.

• The LEP will adopt a "**Total Place**" approach in developing its investment thinking, looking at investment across funding streams to maximise impact. An example of this is the work in the Blake area of Cannock Chase.
What will success look like?

- We will have the ability to respond swiftly to deliver the following impacts:
  - Supporting the growth and rebalancing of the economy, including the low carbon sector, with new jobs and apprenticeships.
  - Securing more new inward investment locations.
  - Increasing leisure tourism footfall across the LEP area.
  - Reducing the number of workless people.
  - Reversing the decline in house building and completing more new homes.
  - Completing retrofit of energy efficiency in a significant number of homes.
  - Securing the delivery of the regeneration of Stoke-on-Trent City Centre, I54 in South Staffordshire and Kingswood Lakeside in Cannock.
  - Addressing the issue of low skills in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire’s manufacturing and private sector workforce by securing the commitment of more companies to recruit Apprentices.
  - Increasing the number of businesses in the area.

- Delivering the above means we will
  - Invest more in developing our skills base, with improved provision of “in work” training and qualifications, including management and enterprise skills.
  - Secure more funding for growing and marketing our tourism base and visitor destinations.
  - Position the region as an international centre for design, research and innovation in ceramics.
  - Improve fuel security by developing more local decentralised low carbon energy supply and distribution.
  - Grow the capacity for science and innovation in our already renowned universities and improve graduate retention.
  - Support the diversification and growth of our existing businesses with design led manufacturing, export and inward investment support.
  - Invest in incentives for businesses to relocate to the area.
  - Use Think Local 4 businesses to engage the public sector with the business community.

What are we asking for?

- To achieve our ambition we have a series of “Asks” of Government;
  - We need the authority to create a clear and strategic vision that is acknowledged by Government and its agencies and have a power of general competency.
To be able to **secure and co-ordinate resources** including being able to support the development of joint ventures and raise local finance where agreed by all partners.

To take **delegated decisions** on the local resource allocation of national programmes, either working collectively with other LEPs, or on programmes within our own area.

**Transfer of assets and ongoing projects** from AWM to the LEP is essential to ensure continued and effective delivery of services. For example, i54, a major employment site in South Staffordshire, is not yet fully serviced. For the site to fulfil its potential, considerable further investment is needed over a number of years. This should now be carried forward by the new Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP in partnership with the Black Country LEP. We would also wish to ensure that the assets of the Central Business District in Stoke-on-Trent are transferred to our LEP. Other assets include Keele University Phase 3, Lymedale Enterprise Centre, Towers Business Park and Chatterley Valley.

The transfer of assets and contracts is essential if key regeneration projects are to be completed and delivered quickly and the desired outcomes achieved. These assets would be held by the relevant strategic authority, but their delivery would be directed by the LEP Board.

To work with partners **commissioning/procurement powers for all adult skills** so we can respond quickly to what employers need, especially potential inward investors.

To have responsibility for **delivery of the Work Programme** within the LEP area.

To have shares of ERDF and other **European funding** streams and the Regional Growth Fund that are reflective of the needs of the local economy.

To have **Special Investment Zone** status to incentivise inward investment and relocation.

To have continuing funding to enable us to complete our programme of **housing market renewal in North Staffordshire**.

**Next steps**

The economic potential of Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire needs to be realised alongside actions to address the challenges facing Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire. These are **urgent**. Local partners and the private sector wish to see the **LEP formed as soon as possible** to ensure we can quickly contribute to boosting private sector creating the conditions for enterprise and
innovation. Following its formation we can make meaningful progress in shaping and delivering our future. Partners have a genuine sense of urgency to get on with the job.

- We want to work closely with Government and Advantage West Midlands to create the LEP as soon as possible, and to oversee an *orderly transition from the old to the new*. It is essential that the winding down of the RDAs, especially managing contractual commitments and the transfer of assets and liabilities must not hold up the formation of Local Enterprise Partnerships.

- Local partners would wish to work with Advantage West Midlands and Government to **secure the smooth transfer of assets** and contracts from the RDA to the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP.

- A tremendous amount of effective regeneration is already taking place locally. We have considerable momentum and want to use the formation of the LEP to maintain and **accelerate the pace** at which local regeneration is taking place. To achieve this, our plan is:
  - **By September**, agree with Government to form a Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and thereafter to work with business to develop our proposal and supporting arrangements.
  - **By October**, to create a Shadow Partnership Board.
  - **By December**, submit a comprehensive bid for the Regional Growth Fund.
  - **By April 2011**, create the full partnership Board.
The LEP is committed to working with adjacent LEPs and authorities in England (and Wales) to reflect our economic connectivity and functioning geography. As such we present our boundaries as being porous and definitely not impermeable. We are already developing strategic alliances with neighbouring LEPs/authorities with the express purpose of securing private sector growth and jobs.

As a mechanism for drawing in adjacent LEPs, authorities or relevant special interest groups our governance arrangements will be developed to ensure that we can offer associate membership for non voting members.

The Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP is committed to working with adjacent LEPs, attached to this submission in Appendix 3 we include letters of support from adjoining LEPs with which we anticipate an early and significant relationship.

In addition and in agreement with LEPs in the vicinity we reserve the option to explore the opportunity to be part of adjacent or non contiguous LEPs where the strategic and/or economic arguments for working in collaboration are clear and unambiguous.

There will be issues where we will need to come together as a group of LEPs to work together on issues which transcend LEP boundaries. We are therefore actively exploring the opportunity to work together as a confederation of LEPs – where the chairs/vice chairs of LEPs, come together to discuss matters of shared importance. The West Midlands Councils\(^1\) working with Business Voice\(^2\) will facilitate this arrangement. We expect to use this mechanism to deliver outcomes collectively where there is efficiency through economies of scale or a clear need for specific expertise or capacity. At this stage we anticipate that the following matters will fall into this category and wish to have an early dialogue with Government to discuss this agenda:

- **Inward investment** - we believe that inward investment services are essential to economic growth but must build on the specialisms and diversity of the regional and local economies. Such services cannot adequately be undertaken at a national level and there is a need to ensure that opportunities are not lost between LEP.

- **Innovation and technology transfer** – working with our universities, the technology strategy board and associated knowledge transfer networks, we will secure the co-ordination and delivery of nationally-funded programmes to support and encourage technology transfer and research and development, to improve business competitiveness.

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1. West Midlands Councils – brings together all 33 local authorities in the West Midlands and aims to provide a strong, coherent voice for local government and to promote the West Midlands on those issues that are important to local government and its partners in business and the third sector.

2. Business Voice West Midlands – provides a united voice, representing the interests of all the major business groupings – professional organisations and trade associations in the West Midlands.
• Specialist skills and training – work with business and individual local authorities to collectively articulate to providers the demand for sector specific and high level skills and training, focused on the needs of our businesses.

• Infrastructure – provide a mechanism for engagement with Government and national private sector infrastructure service providers on key infrastructure challenges facing our areas, including Next Generation Access Broadband, distributed energy networks and collaborative working on transport issues, particularly significant transport projects including High Speed 2, access to airports and Birmingham International Airport expansion.

• Evidence base, business intelligence and economic analysis – development and maintenance of an evidence base focused on economic growth and business-relevant issues. This will also include the capacity to appraise and evaluate projects/investments.

• Response to economic crises – provide a bridge between national and local level organisations in response to economic shocks that have an impact across local authority areas and/or require specialist input (for example, the closure of a major employers or an incident that presents a major disruption to normal business activity).

• Enterprise – ensure that nationally-led provision of advice and support for new and existing businesses is adequately tailored to the needs of the local business community/economy.

• Transition to a low carbon economy – maximise opportunities around existing local sector specialisms and markets, whilst encouraging the involvement of businesses across all sectors with potential for growth.

• Funding – access and ensure optimal use of appropriate sources of funding to deliver the above, including the Regional Growth Fund and European funding. Provide specialist funding expertise in reviewing, prioritising and submitting funding bids to government and other agencies. Build up private sector capacity and funding support through advocacy and co-ordination of activity.
Our Track Record

- Local regeneration partners working together have a **strong track record of delivery** on the ground. Over the last ten years, many major investments have been taken forward which are starting to transform our local economy.

- We have delivered a range of projects and initiatives:
  
  - **Major employment sites**: including Etruria Valley, Trentham Lakes, Chatterley Valley, the Central Business District in Stoke-on-Trent City Centre, Lymedale Business Park and phase 3 of Keele University Science Park at Newcastle-under-Lyme, Kingswood Lakeside at Cannock and Beaconside Technology Park at Stafford.
  
  - **Enterprise Centres**: new enterprise centres have been opened recently at Chatterley in Stoke-on-Trent, Lymedale at Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stafford and Uttoxeter. The Lightworks site in Hednesford has been redeveloped to help business start ups and job creation in the heart of Hednesford. The Dunston Business Village on the edge of Penkridge has attracted business investment from across the UK. These projects and developments highlight the fact that the private sector will invest in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire when the environment and the conditions are right, and when the obstacles and constraints to investment have been reduced or removed.
  
  - **Skills and worklessness**: in North Staffordshire the formation of the Jobs, Enterprise and Training (JET) Centres has been effective at co-ordinating and delivering services to those out of work. Partners have also worked effectively with Job Centre Plus in addressing worklessness. The development of a major new University Quarter as a focus for skills and learning.
  
  - Developing major **tourism** campaigns through the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Destination Management Partnership (DMP).
  
  - **Major capital projects** such as the Rugeley bypass, a £25 million highway scheme, which has assisted in attracting investment to the adjacent Towers employment site.
  
  - More **local initiatives** such as the county-wide THINK Local project which has been developed initially by a group of District Councils across Southern Staffordshire to encourage local business purchasing and trading, and Inner Burton Housing Initiative which is providing homes for rent in a low income area.
  
  - Deliver one of the most successful **housing market renewal programmes** in the country.
• We have **teams of regeneration professionals** already in place to deliver the LEP’s investment plan and take forward the new regeneration agenda, within the public and private sector. We will use this capacity and develop enhanced joint working arrangements where necessary. This will build on what we already have, ensuring the maximum level of LEP resources are directed to delivery.

• **We can work with our neighbours** to develop solutions to cross boundary issues such as the I54 major investment site in South Staffordshire and our support of a framework for working across LEP as appended.
Appendix 3

In developing our proposal we have published drafts on our websites and encouraged responses, as well as circulating drafts. We are grateful for the contributions from businesses, representative groups and Local Authority partners, including the following:

Alstom
Alton Towers
Areva T&D
Aspire Housing
Begbies Traynor
BIC
Black Country Consortium
Burton College
Business Enterprise Support Ltd.
Cannock Chase AONB
Cannock Chase Council
CLA
Community Council of Staffordshire
Drayton Manor Park
Dudson Ltd.
East Staffordshire Borough Council
E.ON
Federation of Small Businesses
JCB
Jobcentreplus
Johnson Tiles
Keele University
Lichfield District Council
Michelin Tyre plc
Midland Expressway Ltd.
National Farmers Union
Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council
North Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry
Select Supply
South Staffordshire Council
Southern Staffordshire College
Stafford Borough Council
Stafford & Rural Homes
Staffordshire Housing Association
Staffordshire Moorlands CVS
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
Staffordshire Parish Councils’ Association
Staffordshire Rural Forum
Staffordshire University
Tamworth Borough Council
Tamworth and Lichfield Business and Economic Partnership
Veolia ES (UK) Ltd.
Waterworld UK Holdings
Wynns Ltd.