

**STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Report to Cabinet**

**1st December 2015**

<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>Update on Potential Designation of Northern Gateway Development Zone (NGDZ) and Associate Partnership</b>
<b>PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>Councillor Sybil Ralphs – Leader of the Council</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>Dai Larnar – Executive Director (Place)</b>
<b>WARDS INVOLVED:</b>	<b>Non-Specific</b>

**Appendices Attached**

**Appendix A – Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire LEP Concordat**

**1. Reason for the Report**

- 1.1 To appraise members of a rapidly emerging discussion among the Local Enterprise Partnership and the local authorities representing areas in North Staffordshire and Cheshire about the potential opportunity of establishing a high-growth development zone predicated on HS2 investment in the area supported by a form of economic partnership.

**2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 To note this report and the actions undertaken so far.
- 2.2 To note the signing of a concordat by the LEP of Stoke and Staffordshire as well as Cheshire and Warrington.
- 2.3 That Cabinet authorise the Leader of the Council and relevant officers to continue discussions regarding the Northern Gateway Development Zone (NGDZ) initiative and the potential partnership that may arise.
- 2.4 That officers report back on the progress of this initiative at appropriate times.

### 3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 Councillors will be aware of the emergence of the “Northern Powerhouse” and, more recently the “Midlands Engine”. With these matters in mind the two Local Enterprise Partnerships (Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire and; Cheshire and Warrington) have recently signed a joint Concordat that seeks to demonstrate a preparedness to work collaboratively to achieve mutual economic benefit across the intervening geography of North Staffordshire and Cheshire (see Appendix A).
- 3.2 In addition Councillors are aware that a decision on the route of HS2 (north of Birmingham) is due soon (anticipated to be announced in November as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review). There is a growing confidence and expectation that Government’s decision in this matter will confirm HS2 investment somewhere in the broad area of North Staffordshire and South Cheshire.
- 3.3 If this is confirmed then it is important that the local authorities in the area are in a position to ensure that the area derives an economic benefit (reflecting the spirit and intent of the LEP concordat). Whilst the Stoke on Trent City Council and Cheshire East Council are competing with one another for the HS2 line/station investment in Stoke or Crewe respectively, there is a mature appreciation that once the decision is made, the LEPs and Local Authorities in the area should work together to optimise the economic benefits for all parties.
- 3.4 As a consequence of the above Leader and officer meetings have taken place over the past couple of months comprising representatives of the following councils:
- Cheshire East Council (CEC)
  - Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWCC)
  - Stoke on Trent Council (SoTCC)
  - Staffordshire County Council (SCC)
  - Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC)
  - Stafford Borough Council (SBC)
  - Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council (NuLBC)
- 3.5 At this stage the discussion has been at a high level and within the broad principles set out in the jointly-signed LEP concordat (appendix 1) and on the assumption that there will be significant HS2 investment in our broad geographical area. Nevertheless it is important that the matter is sensitively handled and that Councillors are made aware of the emerging discussions and the costs and benefits for their area before any definitive decision is made.
- 3.6 To this end the consistent position adopted by both the Leader and officers of this Council in these recent discussions is that the existing needs for growth within Staffordshire Moorlands are defined, in the main, within the current Core Strategy (adopted by the Council in 2014). Key locations for both housing and employment are indicated in this document and are reflected in subsequent consultation documents for the Site Allocations process of the Local Plan preparation.

3.7 Partners have been made aware that the Council will consider the economic impact of HS2 investment decision on the district specifically in relation to infrastructure improvements such as rail and road connectivity. SMDC officers will continue to engage with the emerging NGDZ partnership in order that any opportunities and/or other practical implications for the district can be properly assessed and influenced by the actions and decisions of this Council.

3.8 In terms of governance and practical working arrangements, at this stage the partnership is informal in nature. A steering group, comprising senior officers of the seven local authorities and the two LEPs has been established and has begun to identify the key work streams and to prepare proposals for governance of the partnership. The group is also being used to co-ordinate the preparation of materials to inform meetings of Leaders and officers, as well as other audiences such as with civil servants.

#### 4. **How this report links to Corporate Priorities**

4.1 This initiative has the potential to help deliver our Corporate Plan priorities.

#### 5. **Options and Analysis**

5.1 Option 1 – to not engage with the emerging NGDZ partnership. This option is not considered a preferred option. The NGDZ proposal presents potential opportunities for infrastructure improvements in Staffordshire Moorlands that are worth exploring in detail. Not being part of the NGDZ partnership could leave the Council isolated and we may lose out on any future opportunities for infrastructure development within the district. **Not recommended**

5.2 Option 2 – to engage with the emerging NGDZ partnership. Provided that the Council's representatives operate within existing policy parameters then it is better to be a partner at this stage to help in shaping of any Growth Strategy and programme / project delivery formulation. There is no formal commitment required from SMDC at this stage to be part of a 'deal'. Recognising the potential benefits for the district, it is better to continue a dialogue with the NGDZ partnership without prejudicing the SMDC policy position on growth and housing. **Recommended**

#### 6. **Implications**

6.1 Community Safety - (Crime and Disorder Act 1998)  
No implications

6.2 Workforce  
At this stage the workforce implications are none. Unquestionably the initiative will require support from a range of both senior officers and key professional/technical staff, this will be achieved, at least in the immediate short term, by prioritising this within existing work programmes.

- 6.3 Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessment  
No implications
- 6.4 Financial Considerations  
Each participant authority of NGDZ has agreed to pay £8k towards funding 6 months of programme management cost for NGDZ.
- 6.5 Legal  
The Council has powers under the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended) to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of its area; this assimilates previous provisions in Part III of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 that enabled the promotion of economic development (now repealed).
- 6.6 Sustainability  
No implications
- 6.7 Internal and External Consultation  
Senior officers and the Leader have been involved in the process so far. This report is part of the internal consultation process to keep the councillors informed. Officers will need to recommend appropriate consultation measures to be agreed at relevant stage in the process of the NGDZ deal.
- 6.8 Risk Assessment  
No significant issues have been identified. There are reputational and organisational risks of either being involved in this initiative or not. By agreeing to option 2 with the safeguards referred to then it is considered that any risks are adequately mitigated. It is considered that the major risk would lie in not engaging in this potentially strategically significant initiative could be harmful to the long term economic and social wellbeing of the district.

## 7. **Background and Detail**

- 7.1 A noteworthy point is that as a result of the work on the case for investment for the HS2 station being made by both CEC and SoTCC they have forged relationships with central government (and HS2 Ltd) over a number of months. In particular senior civil servants across various government departments have been engaged in the dialogue with CEC and SoTCC. This culminated in a “Summit” held at Keele University on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2015 – chaired by the policy advisor to Greg Clark MP, the Minister for Cities – involving Leaders and Chief Executives of the seven Councils listed above along with the Chairs of the two LEPs, an array of senior civil servants and representatives of HS2 Ltd. The pretext for the event was to demonstrate the potential to achieve economic benefit over a wide “zone of economic influence” (the NGDZ) on the back of HS2 investment.
- 7.2 More recently the partners were encouraged by senior civil servants to promote the emerging NGDZ opportunities at a national property event (MIPIM) in London running from 20<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015; this was attended

by the two LEPS. In addition, there were indications of a follow-up meeting with senior Civil Servants (and possibly a senior government Minister) in mid-November to enable preliminary discussions about the potential “gives” (from the area) and the “asks” (of government) that might form the basis of a “Growth Deal” with Government for the geographical area encompassed by the local authorities listed above.

- 7.3 It is evident that at this stage a key foundation block of the NGDZ initiative is the early preparation of a Growth Strategy. The starting point for this would be the existing known commitments across the district. Any additional growth forecast on the back of HS2 investment would need to be the subject of a rigorously refreshed evidence base. The Growth Strategy would require formal sign-off by all of the partners in due course.
- 7.4 Preparation of the Local Plan in accordance with the agreed timetable will be crucial in order to establish a firm baseline planning policy position to guide the growth capacity of the district.
- 7.5 With regard to the emerging ambitions of the NGDZ partners the high-level aims are as referred to in the Concordat (Appendix A). A brochure for inward investment is produced to promote a few strategic investment sites across the whole area of which the Blythe Vale in Staffordshire Moorlands is one (information included is planning policy-compliant). In addition to the short-term promotion, the other messages are as follows:-
- The investment in HS2 to the north of the UK would be catalyst for this new growth-focussed partnership.
  - The NGDZ is expected to deliver plan-led sustainable growth to optimise the benefits of HS2 investment.
  - The zone is situated between the emerging “Northern Powerhouse” and “Midlands Engine” offering excellent connectivity within the UK into major transport links.
  - The NGSZ would facilitate a programme of infrastructure-led development with a focus on brownfield-first regeneration and improved connectivity, especially rail links, within the zone, framed by a new Growth Strategy.
  - It would capture and channel investment into key development sites in urban areas.
  - It would enable delivery of a package of regional, local and sites-based infrastructure to achieve maximum economic return from HS2.

**Dai Lerner**  
**Executive Director – (Place)**

**Web Links and Background Papers**

Files kept electronically  
Stoke & Staffordshire Economic  
Summary.pdf

**Location**

Regeneration Team  
Moorlands House  
Leek

**Contact details**

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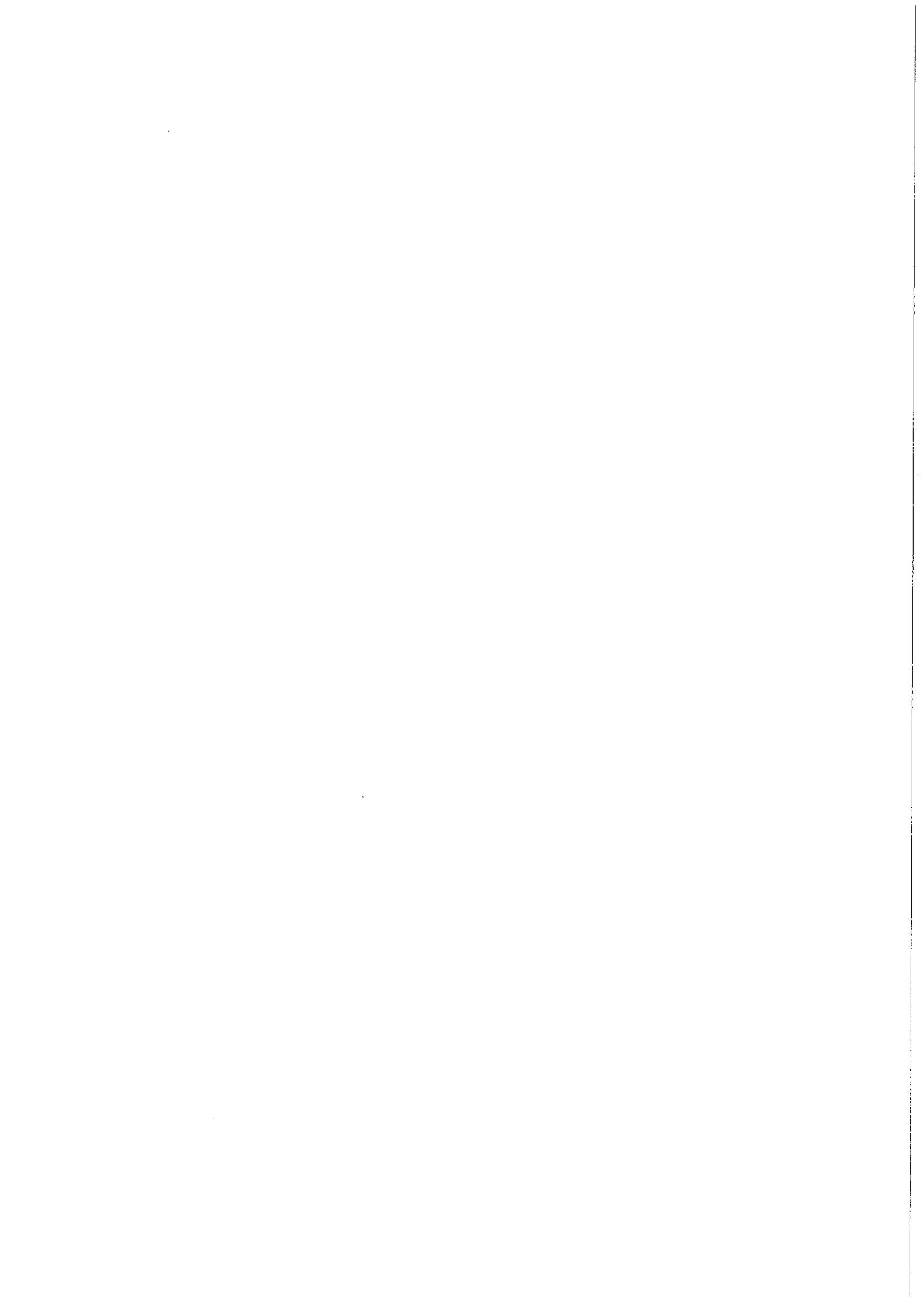
**Stoke-on-Trent  
& Staffordshire**  
Enterprise Partnership

***CONCORDAT  
FOR INTER-LEP  
JOINT WORKING  
AND COOPERATION***

***CHESHIRE AND WARRINGTON LEP  
STOKE-ON-TRENT AND  
STAFFORDSHIRE LEP***

**Stoke-on-Trent  
& Staffordshire**  
Enterprise Partnership







**CONCORDAT FOR INTER-LEP JOINT WORKING  
AND COOPERATION**

**BETWEEN**

**CHESHIRE AND WARRINGTON LEP**

**AND**

**STOKE-ON-TRENT AND STAFFORDSHIRE LEP**



**Stoke-on-Trent  
& Staffordshire**  
Enterprise Partnership



# CONCORDAT

This Concordat between Cheshire and Warrington LEP and Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP, provides a vehicle to foster inter-LEP joint working and co-operation. It mirrors the current pan-LEP collaboration between Cheshire and Warrington, Liverpool and Manchester LEPs around the Atlantic Gateway, and across the Midlands LEPs on Midlands Connect. The Concordat recognises the opportunities for significant economic growth across the Cheshire and Warrington and Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP areas, driven by enhanced capacity on the motorway network, the arrival in the next decade of high speed rail and the wider logistics impacts of the new post-Panamax terminal at the Port of Liverpool.

## OUR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The parties AGREE to work together and jointly explore how collaboration can:

- ◇ Develop a Growth Strategy and delivery mechanisms building on existing Strategic Economic Plans, harnessing the synergies between the economies of the two areas e.g. south east Cheshire and northern Staffordshire.
- ◇ Provide a platform for joint working to maximise the benefits of common opportunities linked to economic growth and prosperity
- ◇ Provide more effective mechanisms for joint working on cross-boundary issues
- ◇ Identify and promote the opportunities for sustainable growth including opportunities for residents to access jobs and training
- ◇ Maximise the contribution to and opportunities from the proposed Northern Powerhouse, taking advantage of our strategic location particularly between the Core Cities of Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester as well as our access to ports and airports
- ◇ Develop a series of clear, strong messages to Government and other investors regarding the economic strengths and excellent connectivity of the two LEP areas

for the mutual and individual benefit of the parties and in the pursuit of the well-being of the communities and businesses of the two adjoining LEP areas.

## OUR SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES

Cheshire and Warrington LEP is a Company Limited by Guarantee, bound by its Articles of Association. Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP is a partnership bound by its constitution.

The Parties will therefore be bound collectively and separately by those laws and requirements in the exercise of this Concordat and in any initiatives, projects or joint working activities which arise from it.

## **OUR SHARED VALUES**

The Parties AGREE to maintain the following shared values during the exercise of this Concordat [examples]:

- A commitment to deliver quality outcomes which offer good value and mutual benefit
- To retain flexibility, honesty and accountability
- A pragmatic approach to ensure to ensure bureaucracy and duplication are minimised
- A belief in partnership and sharing
- A recognition of the rights and responsibilities of each of the Parties

## **OUR APPROACH TO JOINT WORKING**

The Parties will work together to ensure that this Concordat is implemented successfully and will, wherever possible, use the following approach to achieve common goals:

- ◇ Maintain close political links between the two Partnerships
- ◇ Develop closer co-operation and/or joint working
- ◇ Build a framework within which joint project development can become a reality
- ◇ Utilise our collective resources to provide common sources of advice and data
- ◇ Embrace best practice, learning and experience

The two LEPs commit to meet at least four times a year at Board level to ensure that they are working together in a way that fully exploits sustainable growth opportunities across the two areas.

