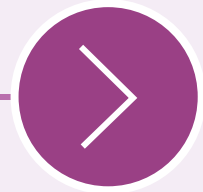


Position Statement - Strategic Alliance

Corporate Peer Challenge - January 2022



Welcome to High Peak and Staffordshire Moorlands

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We're very pleased to welcome the LGA Peer Challenge Team to High Peak Borough Council and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council and our strategic partnership, which throughout the week you'll hear our joint workforce refer to as 'The Alliance'.

Now in its 14th year, our strategic partnership is one of the earliest and most successful within local government; achieving budget savings of over £15.7m whilst continuing to deliver high performing, low cost services.

Our strategic partnership has come far since the signing of the initial Concordat back in 2008; evolving from separate workforces led by a shared Chief Executive, to the single 'Alliance' workforce that we have today, whilst still serving the separate but similar needs of two distinct geographic and political areas.



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The partnership has withstood changes in political control during the last 12 years and remains strong: built upon foundations of collaboration, leadership of place, and value for money services.

Sharing a border, but sitting within different counties and different regions, means that our partnership is perhaps more complex than some other local authority examples, but we haven't allowed this to stand in the way of successful joint working. If anything, it demonstrates to others that collaboration across regional borders and across political spheres can and does bring real benefits for the people that we're here to serve. We're proud to show you how our partnership works and the exciting plans we have for our areas and we're equally proud to share with you our 'One Team' approach and how the Alliance is an idea that works!

In addition to the five core components of the Peer Challenge, we've also asked you to look at our response to climate change and the plans we now have in place to meet our ambitious net zero target by 2030. We trust that the joint partner workshop on this important theme will prove insightful in addition to the full timetable of meetings scheduled for the week.

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Our interactive Position Statement provides useful links to a library of supporting documents, which we hope will give you an insight into some of our key achievements, the challenges we face, and the direction of travel for both councils over the next few years. Producing it has provided both

Councils with an opportunity to reflect on how far we have come over the last 14 years and we look forward to hearing your feedback at the end of a productive, collaborative week; working together to improve local government services.



Andrew Stokes, **Chief Executive**



Leader,
Councillor Anthony
Mckeown
**High Peak
Borough Council**



Former Leader,
Councillor Sybil Ralphs
MBE
**Staffordshire Moorlands
District Council**

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Understanding our places...

We believe that High Peak and the Staffordshire Moorlands are two of the most enviable places in the country to live, work and visit.

Renowned for being areas of natural beauty, and including large parts of the Peak District National Park, around 30% of each geographic area is classed as rural. With relatively low levels of crime and above average employment rates the picture looks enviable but we nevertheless face some significant demographic and financial challenges.

Both areas have aging populations, with residents aged 65 and over projected to become the largest demographic in the next 10 years. This brings with it specific and increasing demands on council services and local infrastructure. And, although both areas rank relatively low in

High Peak



Staffordshire Moorlands



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terms of average IMD scores, there are nevertheless geographic pockets of deprivation and social inequality that belie these results.

North Staffordshire has traditionally been a low growth area, with lower land values making development less appealing. This has meant that the District's approach to growth has been different to that of High Peak, where land values are higher and prospects for growth are good. Some of our town centres are thriving; Leek and Glossop both have comparatively low vacancy rates and a strong mix of independent traders but we also have one of the highest vacancy rates in the West Midlands for Cheadle town centre, and Buxton's shrinking high street has been successful in gaining £6.6m of funding from the Future High Street Fund. Our case studies on Buxton Town Centre and the

Norfolk Square, Glossop



Getliffe's Yard, Leek



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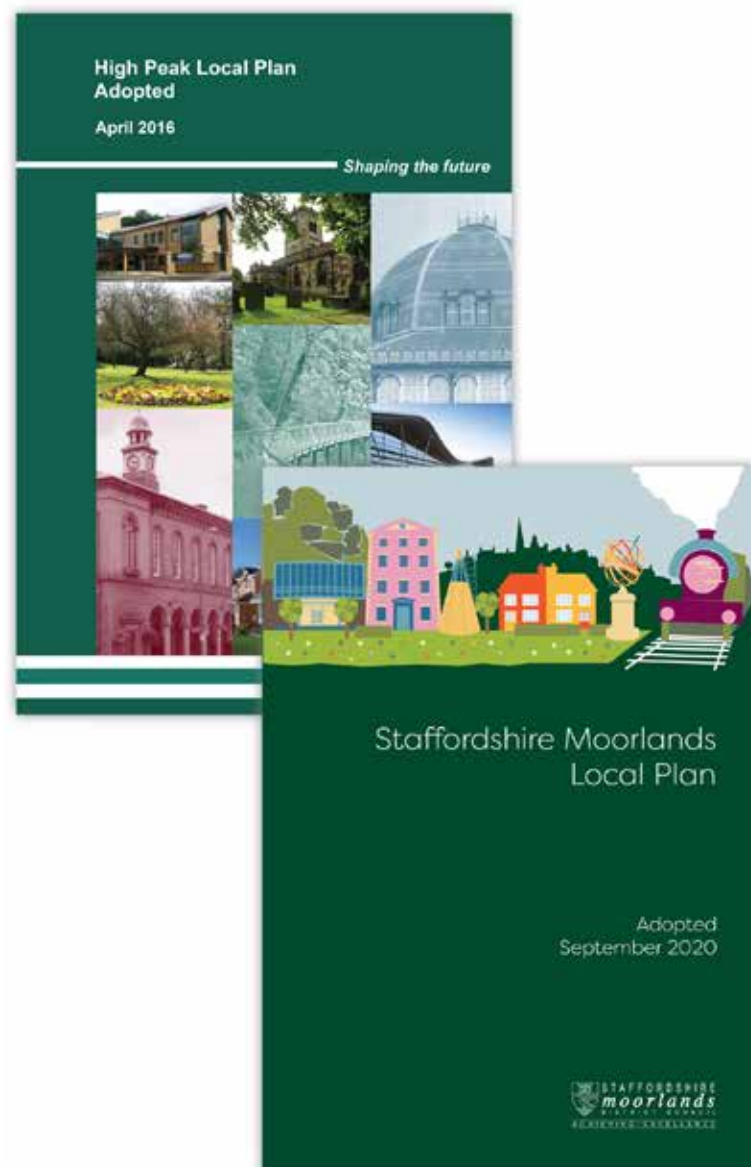
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Churnet Valley Masterplan provide more details on some of our future plans.

We use a range of data sources to inform our understanding of the local area and have invested in Grant Thornton's Place Analytics platform, from which we're able to produce our annual High Peak and Staffordshire Moorlands Place Profiles which set the context for our Annual Reports. In addition a number of strategic studies have informed the production of our Local Plans, which provide the framework for sustainable development. High Peak adopted its Local Plan in 2016 and was the first council in Derbyshire to do so. Staffordshire Moorlands' Local Plan was adopted in 2020.



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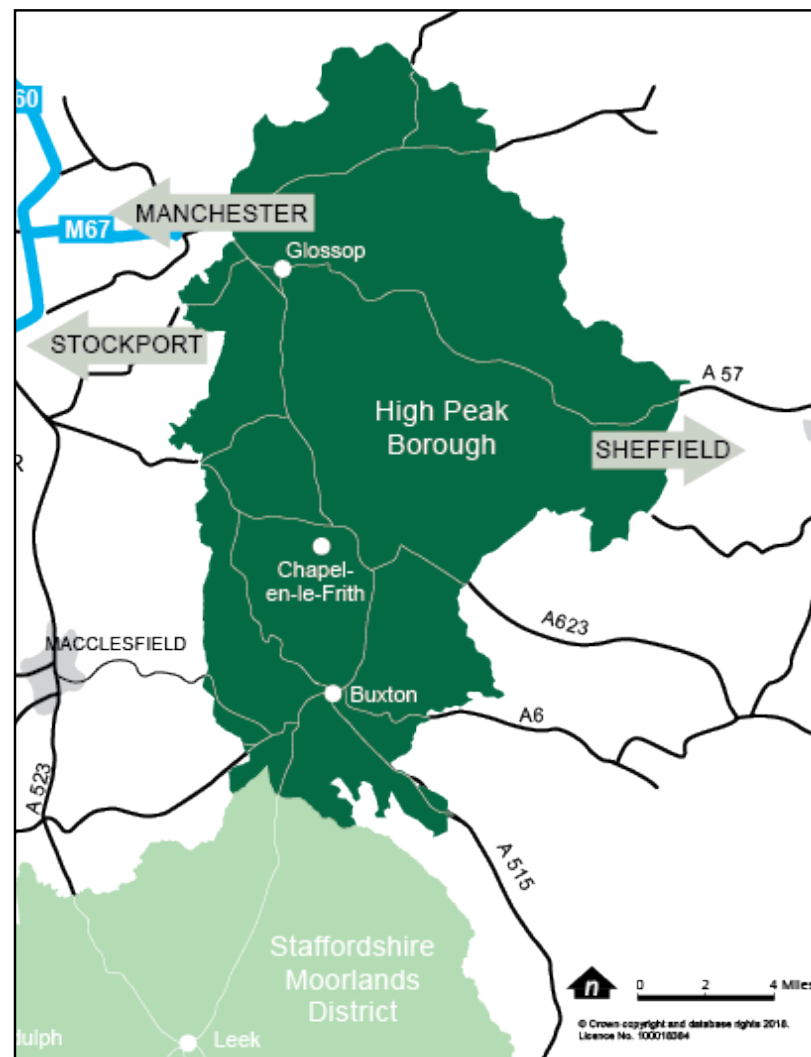
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High Peak is situated within the Peak District at the north-western tip of Derbyshire and the East Midlands Region. At 53,915 hectares the Borough is the 2nd largest in the County and has a population of 92,633. Its stunning Dark Peak and White Peak landscapes and its distinctive townscapes, together with its close proximity to Manchester and Sheffield make it a highly popular visitor destination and sought after area in which to live. Whilst two-thirds of the Borough lies in the Peak District National Park, most (93%) of its population lives outside the Park, with the major population centres being around Glossop to the north, and Buxton to the south. Unique to the High Peak is its position surrounded by five counties (Cheshire, Staffordshire, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester).



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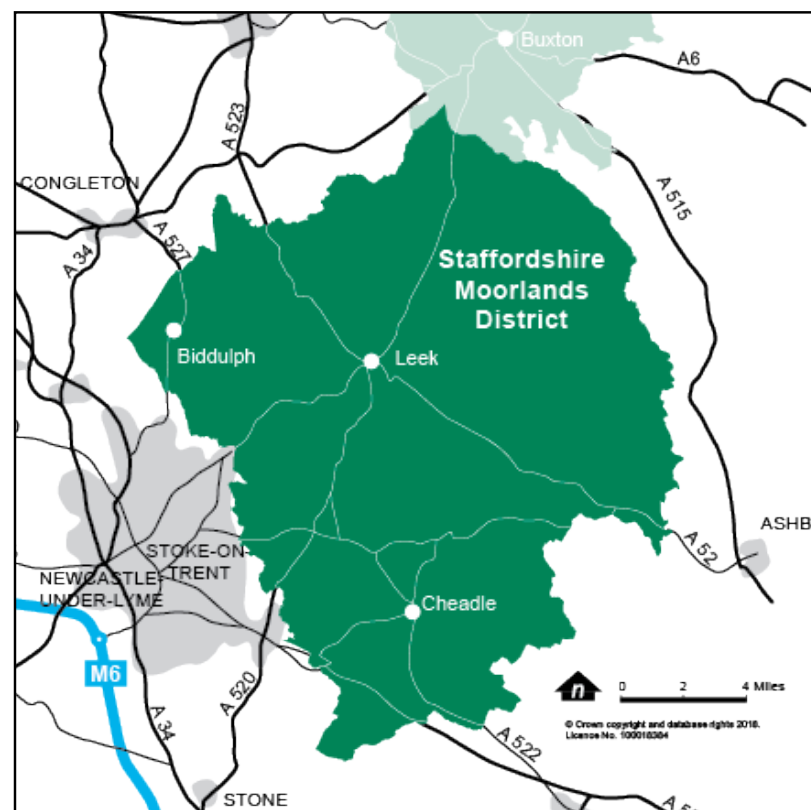
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Staffordshire Moorlands is in north east Staffordshire, bordered by Cheshire to the north-west, Derbyshire to the east and Stoke-on-Trent to the south-west. The district covers an area of 57,624 hectares and has a population of 98,427. Around 54% of the population is based in the three towns of Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle; around 22% of the population lives in the larger settlements of Cheddleton, Endon, Werrington & Cellarhead and Blythe Bridge, located in the west of the district. The remainder are divided among 43 rural parishes. A third of the district lies inside the Peak Park and of the remainder of the Moorlands around 30% is designated as Green Belt. The district has close links to parts of Cheshire, as well as to the city of Stoke-on-Trent, which exerts a strong influence on the west of the district in particular, and provides significant employment opportunities and services for



many people in the district. Population growth is the slowest in the region, which means a declining workforce and increasing pressures on public services.

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Planning on delivering our Priorities

Our ambitions for High Peak and Staffordshire Moorlands are set out in our 4-year Corporate Plans (2019-2023), which were adopted at both councils in October 2019.

Councillors from all parties took part in priority setting workshops in the summer of 2019 to shape the aims, objectives and priority actions detailed within both the High Peak and Staffordshire Moorlands Corporate Plans. The workshops were prefaced by contextual presentations from each of the Executive Directors, to enable councillors to understand the local and national backdrop against which the priorities needed to be set. This included an understanding of the council's position in terms of prospects for growth; the financial challenges facing us; and the wider opportunities for partnership working at all levels.

A programme of stakeholder communication and engagement took place in the autumn, in order to gain wide support and understanding amongst employees, local residents, partners and businesses of the councils' priorities.

Although separate, our two Corporate Plans follow the same format – built around four strategic aims: one inward looking, and three focused on our environmental, social and economic wellbeing roles – and many of the aims and objectives are shared in common whilst still reflecting local priorities.

Each Plan informs, and has been integrated into, our Joint Performance Framework, ensuring delivery of our priorities through operational Service Plans and individual PEP objectives for every member of staff. Here's an overview of the key areas of focus up until 2023:

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Aiming for a healthier and safer environment for our communities

The priorities for action under this shared aim include: housing, leisure, community safety and community / partner relationships. For High Peak the housing objective also extends to the management and maintenance of its own housing stock, which is made up of approximately 4,000 homes.

A new area of priority in the High Peak Corporate Plan is an ambition to address health inequality, food and fuel poverty, mental health and loneliness.

Spotlight on Housing:

Both Councils recognise that housing is intrinsic to growth and in 2015 we developed tools to measure the Economic Impact of Growth, as a resource for our Planning Committees. At High Peak our

A house bought back by the Council



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accelerated housing delivery programme, linked to the approved sites in the Local Plan and underpinned by a high performing planning service, has reaped significant results:

- 3rd highest housing completions in Derbyshire (2017)
- 2nd highest number of affordable homes delivered across Derbyshire
- 2nd highest proportion of affordable homes (2018/19).

At Staffordshire Moorlands we didn't let the absence of an adopted Local Plan stand in the way of delivering affordable homes. Our Case Study on Ascent provides more information on this innovative joint venture company between the council and Your Housing which led to the development of 290 affordable homes in addition to specialist housing and an extra care scheme at Daisy Haye in Leek.

There has also been a deliberate focus on the south of the district for housing growth, with 146 homes under construction at Blythe Bridge and plans for 200 more submitted. Our Empty Property Strategy runs alongside our focus on growth and uses ward member knowledge, regulatory powers and increased council tax premiums to help bring properties back into occupation.

Daisy Haye, Leek



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Aiming for financial resilience and value for money

The priorities for action under this shared aim include: access to services, our high performing and motivated workforce, asset management, procurement with a local focus, use of IT and innovation to improve services.

Spotlight on Digital Transformation:

In 2016 we developed a Joint Channel Access Strategy to reshape the way in which customers access our services; offering digital channels where preferred, in order to meet ever changing customer demand, deliver efficiencies, and improve processes to fit the digital age.

In 2017 we turned the strategy into reality through our 'ICan' (do it online) campaign centred on a new customer self-service portal. The results show a phenomenal



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increase in take up of online services; with a 500% increase in web visits and a consequent 45% reduction in phone contact as outlined in our Case Study on Digital Transformation.

We're working with the Institute of Customer Services to take the Alliance to the next level in terms of customer satisfaction and ongoing user engagement through a new Access to Services Strategy in 2022, which will sit alongside new complementary OD and IT Strategies.

Delivering excellent customer service



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Aiming for economic growth and local regeneration

The priorities for action under this shared aim include: encouraging new business, flourishing town centres, car parking, promoting tourism and high quality development. A new area of priority for the High Peak is providing support for the development of innovative green jobs across the Borough.

Undoubtedly the most complex, high profile and resource intensive project of the last two decades has been the Buxton Crescent and Thermal Spa project, which Duncan Wilson, CEO of Historic England, recently cited as his project of the decade in Country Life Magazine. This £68m scheme which received £24m from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, saw the Crescent reopen in 2020 as an 80-bedroom hotel and Spa with public



Buxton Crescent and Thermal Spa project



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access to the waters and to the Georgian Assembly Room.

Spotlight on Town Centres

HIGH PEAK: Town centre vacancy rates across the Borough are bucking the national trend at just 9% on average (2020) but there are significant differences between Glossop's 6% rate and Buxton's 12% rate.

Our Buxton Town Centre Case Study explains the plans for the transformation of Buxton Town Centre after the Council successfully secured £6.6m of Future High Street funding from the Government, supported by Council co-funding of £4.2 million to enable the diversification, renewal and reshaping of the town centre. In addition, Buxton has also been successful in securing Heritage Action Zone Funding of almost £1m, which will complement the above scheme and enable

Buxton town centre



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the reinstatement of traditional shopfronts and the restoration of vacant heritage buildings.

In the north of the Borough, the Council has also been successful in gaining funding of £2m for its Glossop Halls project, which will see the Market Hall transformed and new community and creative start up spaces created.

High Peak's record on delivering heritage-led regeneration is impressive, both in terms of the schemes undertaken such as the Crescent, and the ability to attract external funding to these projects. Since 1980 the Council's record on leveraging external funding has meant that for every £1m of investment on the part of the Borough Council, £11.5m in external funding has been secured for the regeneration of the High Peak.

Glossop Halls redevelopment



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Spotlight on Tourism

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS: The Council is promoting the Churnet Valley as a sub-regional tourism asset, to complement and ease pressure on the neighbouring Peak District National Park. The Churnet Valley lies in the heart of the Staffordshire Moorlands; a 15 mile corridor of high landscape value with the River Churnet, Caldon Canal and extensive and ancient woodland.

A Masterplan for the Churnet Valley has been adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document to drive forward opportunities to regenerate and manage the area based around sustainable tourism; and to protect and enhance the valley's natural and historic features. Our Churnet Valley Masterplan Case Study tells you more about its aims.

River Churnet at Oakamoor



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Aiming to improve and protect the environment and responding to the climate emergency

The priorities for action under this shared aim include: effective waste management and recycling, quality parks and open spaces, public amenities, clean streets and environmental health, and meeting the challenge of climate change.

In 2019 both Councils declared climate emergencies and pledged to work towards achieving carbon neutrality by 2030. Since then a significant amount of work has been undertaken with a range of external partners and community groups in developing our inward and outward facing action plans.



Brough Park, Leek



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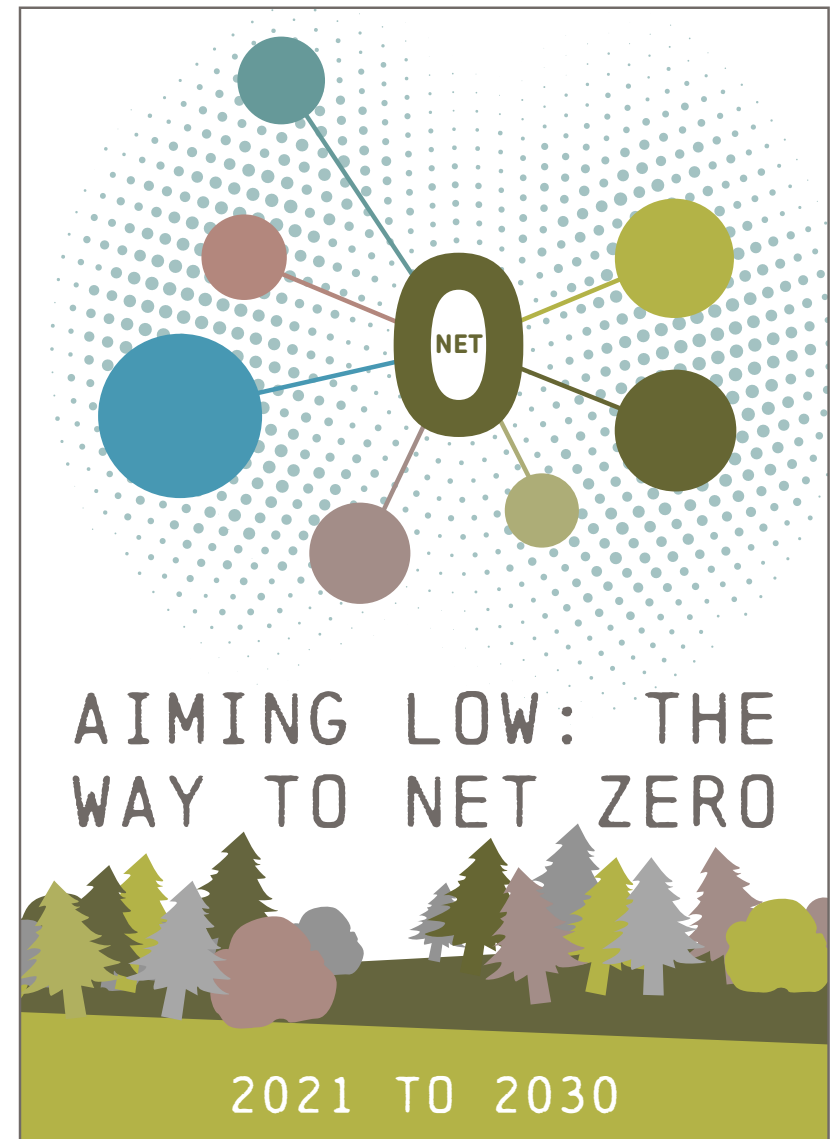
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Spotlight on Climate Change:

The Councils' path to carbon reduction began three years ago with the production of a Green Infrastructure Strategy at Staffordshire Moorlands and a single use plastics working group at High Peak. A year later both councils declared Climate Emergencies in 2019 and backed up the commitment with dedicated Councillor Portfolios and a strategic commitment in the new 2019-2023 Corporate Plans.

Since then both councils have been working with partners to draft their road maps to reach carbon neutrality by 2030, targeting council emissions (Part 1) but also seeking to reduce the district and borough wide emissions (Part 2) as part of their community leadership role.

You can read more about the path to net zero in our Climate Change Case Study



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Covid Recovery Plans

When setting our 4-year plans in 2019, none of us could have envisaged the devastating impacts from the covid pandemic and the changes we would need to make across the Alliance in order to support our communities and keep our workforce safe.

The response from all employees was truly humbling with everyone pulling together to not only adapt to new ways of working whilst in some cases juggling home schooling, but also to ensuring that business support grants got to local businesses quickly and correctly. The running total for grant payments across all schemes now stands at £93m as at the end of October 2021.

Our 5-pronged approach to recovery from the pandemic is led by the Chief Executive through a Recovery Board, which oversees the work of the recovery workstreams whilst ensuring the positive legacies for the environment and work life balance through new ways of working can be taken forward. There's more information on how we supported our local communities throughout the pandemic with the help of our partners in the next section.

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Next Steps in 2022

Access to Services Strategy

OD Strategy and review of pay grade

IT and Digital Strategy

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Both Councils operate within a three-tier structure (County, District/Borough and Town/Parish) and relationships with our place partners across these tiers and with other public sector agencies are constructive, productive and well established.

Partnering for Growth

High Peak sits within the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Local Economic Partnership known as D2N2. The Leader of the Council sits on the D2 Prosperity Board, which provides political leadership across the LEP in Derbyshire. We also support the County Council in its role as accountable body for the Derbyshire Economic Partnership, whose membership also includes the local business community.

Our own plans for economic prosperity are set out in the High Peak Growth Strategy, which sits alongside the 2016 Local Plan (the first to be adopted in Derbyshire) and is underpinned by locational masterplans.

Staffordshire Moorlands sits within the Stoke and Staffordshire Local Economic Partnership. The District was the first in Staffordshire to agree a Joint Growth Strategy with the County Council, and both Leaders have a seat at the Growth Board which meets quarterly. The Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan was adopted in September 2020 and is also underpinned by locational masterplans.

Both councils produce a monthly Business Newsletter, which goes out to over 2,000 local businesses each month; providing information on funding streams, tender opportunities, business events and relevant news.

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County Deals

Derbyshire councils are actively considering their routes to securing a County Deal. Government are currently in discussions with a number of authorities across the country and it is expected that the Government will invite a small number of these to be pilot areas. Derbyshire County Council recently submitted a formal expression of interest requesting that Derbyshire be considered as a potential County Deal pilot area.

The creation of new formal governance arrangements, in the shape of a Joint Committee, has now been agreed and this will be responsible for improving the delivery of functions already within the remit of local authorities through statute or through specific collaborative work to improve the economic, environmental or social wellbeing of the areas within

Derbyshire. The core ambitions and associated priorities of Vision Derbyshire are:

- Seize Innovation - Business Entrepreneur Scheme, Smart Towns Programme
- Achieve Relentless Ambition – Careers, Skills and Employment Research, Festival of Business, Social Mobility
- Communities – Homelessness, Independent Living, Domestic Abuse
- Live and Work Sustainably - Climate Change, Shared Planning Policies

We have embedded our commitment to working to help achieve a county deal for Derbyshire by integrating this work into our revised corporate priorities.

Over in Staffordshire the County Council is not seeking to become a pathfinder but is laying the foundations for the development

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of a potential County Deal, which builds on existing joint working arrangements and planned enhancements to two-tier work around:

- Climate Change
- Waste
- Economy
- Improving Public Services
- Health Inequalities

In pursuing a County Deal the Leaders will seek to start a new, ongoing dialogue with central government, that builds on Staffordshire's strengths, and addresses national challenges at a local level. The Staffordshire Leaders & Chief Executive meeting recently agreed the formation of a Joint Committee to strengthen the governance arrangements in readiness for the Levelling Up White Paper.

Partnering for Health

Both Councils recognise the importance of working with strategic health partners to influence positive outcomes around the provision of accessible health and social care, particularly for the elderly given our aging populations.

Health partners in the Staffordshire Moorlands include North Staffordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and the Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. The District Council has an active scrutiny programme through its Health Panel, which has included regular updates from the local CCG and NHS Trusts on topics such as discharge provision, rural ambulance services and integrated care hubs.

In High Peak our health partners include Derby and Derbyshire CCG and Tameside & Glossop CCG. The Community Select

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Committee receives regular updates from health sector leaders and has requested presentations on the Care Closer to Home Programme and further information on access to mental health hospital bed spaces in the locality.

Both Councils are in discussions with health partners over future Community Hub facilities within the area. In Buxton a site has been purchased by the NHS, and High Peak is a partner member of the project control board, which is overseeing plans for a new hub in the town adjacent to the train station. The Community Hub scheme will fundamentally address the challenges of Place based delivery, by ensuring the key service providers are located in one place, providing the associated benefits of accessibility and joined up care which is not currently possible in the existing estate. In Cheadle, options for potential uses of key sites in the town centre are being



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developed following public consultation in the summer. Staffordshire Moorlands is considering schemes aimed at increasing the number of people visiting the town and spending money on the high street as part of its commitment to creating safer and healthier environments for people to live and work in and creating a strong economy. To help inform this work, the Council asked residents, businesses, organisations and partners for their views on five emerging priorities for the town to ensure that local opinions and views form a key part of future plans. A Stakeholder Panel has been set up to oversee this process.

Officers are also working with Sport England and other local and regional partners to influence and improve how physical activity is built into our daily lives. This includes helping to design more active new housing developments,

Cheadle town centre



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securing investment into new leisure and recreational facilities and finding creative ways to activate our parks and greenspaces.

Operationally, officers are working closely with Lex Leisure to develop an Active Communities Plan which sets out how our Leisure Centres will deliver a wider range of services to local residents, especially focused on people who may not currently be active. The approach involves working closely with local health services, community organisations and other statutory bodies in order to connect and create more opportunities which meet local people's needs and build on the already excellent core programme of activities and classes available at our centres that engage thousands of people in physical activity already.



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Our Community Safety Partners

The Community Safety Partnership in Staffordshire Moorlands has a three-tier structure. The Strategy Group, comprising of senior officers and Councillors, meets quarterly. Below that, there is a weekly virtual meeting to discuss vulnerable individuals and a monthly meeting to discuss those problematic issues that are escalated from the weekly meetings. Examples of the effective partnership working include the Intoxicated project, which aims to reduce problems associated with the night-time economy, and the SPACE project which provides diversionary activity during holiday periods and attracted over 1800 participants pre pandemic.



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The Community Safety Partnership in High Peak is overseen by a Strategy Group, comprising of senior officers and Councillors, that meets quarterly. There are weekly tasking meetings, which are hosted by Derbyshire Constabulary, and a sub-group that focuses on licensing-related issues. Examples of successful partnership projects have included the 'Goalz' diversionary project, support for the Crossroads domestic abuse service, and targeted multi-agency 'beat sweeps'.

Parish Partners

Both High Peak and Staffordshire Moorlands have regular liaison meetings with local parish councils, coordinated by our Democratic Services Team, to ensure the meetings include topics that are of mutual interest. The High Peak Parish Forum meets on a 6-monthly basis, whereas the Staffordshire Moorlands

Parish Assembly meets quarterly, but both meetings bring together the parish clerks, councillors and officers to discuss items of common interest and to exchange updates.

Past topics have included: updates on the planning process; disabled facilities grants; climate change; recycling; community hospitals; environmental enforcement; and the Local Plan. High Peak also organised a specific workshop for parishes on social media training and at Staffordshire Moorlands one meeting a year is opened up to other local public and voluntary sector organisations to promote their services to parish councils and provides a useful networking opportunity for councillors and clerks.

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Partnering with our Community in Place Making

The Alliance supports and promotes Neighbourhood Planning, which helps people to influence planning and place making in the areas in which they live and work. A neighbourhood Plan for Chapel-en-le-Frith was adopted by High Peak Borough Council in 2015 and now forms part of the Development Plan for that parish, giving it formal status within the planning system. A further four towns or villages are engaged with Neighbourhood Planning, including Whaley Bridge and Buxton.

Eight communities in Staffordshire Moorlands are engaged in Neighbourhood Planning. The Leekfrith Neighbourhood Plan was the first in the District to be made in June 2021 following an independent examination and referendum. The plan

includes policies for the redevelopment of Upper Hulme Mill and the management of on-street parking. A Neighbourhood Plan for Biddulph is currently subject to examination alongside a Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO). The NDO seeks to grant consent for replacement shop fronts in Biddulph town centre. Other areas in the Moorlands with plans in preparation include Leek and Checkley.

Councillors Community Initiative Fund

Through the two Councillor Initiative Funds the councils aim to support the role of Councillors as leaders in their local communities. The funds provide every Councillor with access to an annual fund of £500 to £1,000 each, which can be used to tackle local problems and support activity by local people that will improve the wellbeing of their communities. It operates

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as a grant fund with community groups and Parish Councils applying for funds for specific activity; it is a condition of a grant that the Ward Councillor supports the application. Ward Councillors are usually aware of the project before an application is made, they often encourage specific applications to be made and as an added flexibility they can work with officers in the council to bring forward a specific project to tackle a local issue. Members often take part in the activities and or visit the groups which have made applications to the fund.

Projects have had a range of benefits: Reducing social isolation, providing opportunities to learn new skills, improving the physical environment, promoting community spirit and cohesion, promoting health and wellbeing. A whole range of projects and activities have been funded: Youth activity, play facilities, social events for older isolated people, village hall

improvements, community events and celebrations, environmental projects and community clean ups, support for local voluntary groups.

Working in Partnership to tackle Climate Change

We have strong local partnerships with Derbyshire and Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, the High Peak Green Network , the NFU and others to respond to the climate change and nature emergencies. Some examples of recent work include:

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HPBC	SMDC
Formation of a Climate Change Working Group that includes representatives from the High Peak Green Network (local green/sustainability groups) and multi-agency Biodiversity Group	Formation of a Climate Change Sub-Committee and Working Groups that included representation from local 'green groups'
Working with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust to complete a habitat map of the Borough and develop a 'land and rural emissions profile'	Production of Green Infrastructure Strategy with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust. Developing a 'land and rural emissions profile' with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
Monthly meeting with High Peak Green Network	Working with Town and Parish Councils to deliver community orchards
Worked with Derbyshire County Council and Derbyshire Dales District Council to submit a successful bid to the Office for Zero Emissions Vehicles to install charging points in Glossop and Buxton	Work with Staffordshire County Council, Beat the Cold and others to deliver the Staffordshire Warmer Homes scheme
Collaboration with Derbyshire County Council to produce an EV Charging Strategy (due March 2022)	Collaboration with Staffordshire County Council to produce an EV Charging Strategy (due April 2022)
Worked with Marches Energy Agency to map cold and damp homes and associated measures	Successfully applied to the Green Recovery Challenge Fund with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to obtain £176,000 of funding for natural flood management and nature reserve improvements along the River Churnet
Both Councils are members of the UK100 network of local authorities that are working towards Net Zero (https://www.uk100.org/)	
Worked with Keele University to deliver Carbon Literacy Training	
Commissioned Anthesis to carry out workshops with: Council Officers and Key Partners, Elected Members, Residents and Businesses	

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Supporting our Communities through Covid and beyond

Both Councils participate in and support a large number of place based partnerships focused on living and working conditions, as well as social, cultural and environmental improvements in each area. The fact that these community based groups were already established and had good knowledge of vulnerable residents in the area was a boon in setting up the support networks needed throughout covid. The Councils' partnership arrangements have come to the forefront during the Covid pandemic with Council officers meeting representatives from public health, the Voluntary Sector and others on a regular basis to co-ordinate local action. The Councils also introduced a Countryside Problem Solving meeting involving partners from across the two council areas to respond to issues caused

by large numbers of people visiting the region as lockdown lifted.

At High Peak, Councillors considered several reports on partnership working and work with the voluntary sector in 2021. This included adopting a set of principles for partnership working and reaffirming its commitment to supporting, and collaborating with, the voluntary sector. The Council intends to review its partnership working in Staffordshire Moorlands in 2022 (community safety partnership arrangements were reviewed in 2021).

We will continue to build upon our partnership arrangements and officers will be undertaking external training on stakeholder engagement and management in early 2022

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Organisational Leadership

Following a review of management reporting arrangements in 2020, the Alliance Leadership Team (ALT) and Alliance Management Team (AMT) now share the responsibility for the delivery of the councils' priorities and the management of services and the workforce. The changes introduced were built on principles of increased collaboration, strengthened communication, improved planning and better member relationships.

ALT is made up of the Chief Executive and Executive Directors and is supported in discharging its strategic functions by eight corporate assurance groups:

- Risk Management Group
- Transformation Programme Board
- Health & Safety & Compliance Group
- Growth Board
- Management / Trade Union Liaison
- Information Governance Group
- Safeguarding Board
- Corporate Governance Group

AMT is made up of ALT plus the councils' 15 Heads of Service; it meets monthly and focuses on tactical issues.

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Through our 'OneTeamTwenty16' project the Alliance moved to a new 'hub' work base arrangement; with each team having a single base or 'hub' in either Leek or Buxton, supported by hot desking facilities at each main site. We're immensely proud of how truly joined-up our single workforce has become since then, and believe we're one of the few strategic partnerships to have removed all duplicate management roles. Following the most recent transfer of services to AES on April 1st 2020 year, our combined workforce across the Alliance now stands at just over 330 employees.

As part of our positive legacy plans we are moving to an agile workforce with a new policy about to be launched which will formalise the flexible approach adopted during the last two years, bringing mutual benefits for the business, our employees and the environment.

Staying Focused

Our Joint Performance Framework ensures that the Councils' corporate priorities are fully aligned and integrated into Service Plans across the Alliance, which in turn inform individual PEP objectives at officer level. Progress against performance targets is reported monthly to Alliance Management Team and is reported to scrutiny committees quarterly, as part of a combined report alongside financial and procurement monitoring. Members play an active role in shaping and scrutinising the annual review of the Performance Framework through the two overview and scrutiny committees. We have been invited to submit a good practice case study on our Performance Framework to the LGA in order to share our approach with other local authorities.

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Annually, we ask all teams in the new year, to talk about their achievements during the last 12 months and we bring these together in our ‘Celebrating Success’ publication which we have been running since 2015. You can read about each team’s achievements here and how these relate back to our corporate priorities in a Keeping You Informed special edition.

The Transformation Board oversees all projects across the Alliance through the Transformation Programme, which is fully aligned to corporate objectives and uses a project management methodology based on Prince 2.

Risk Management arrangements are strong – ‘the Alliance takes risk management seriously and the process is well managed. Documentation demonstrates that the organisation is very mature in its risk management’ (Zurich, Strategic Risk)

– and complement our performance framework; ensuring that the risks to our objectives are understood, assessed and managed. The Audit Committees provide third line assurance of our risk controls and include independent members with specialist experience and relevant skills. They also approve the bi-ennial review of the councils’ Risk Management Strategy, which sets the Alliance’s risk tolerance thresholds.

Challenge is systemic within our performance and risk frameworks, with Heads of Service presenting operational and project risk assessments to the Risk Management Group, which meets every three months and is chaired by the Chief Executive. We also work closely with our insurers and commission annual strategic risk reviews, which in the past have looked at information governance,

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commercialisation risks and public liability inspections to name just a few.

We're one of only a few local authorities who have developed an approach to assessing opportunity or 'upside' risk (as opposed to risk threats) and this is an area we are embedding with managers through our risk management guidance and face to face training.

Our ASSURED framework has brought together our information governance policies and procedures into a branded toolkit with advice on protective marking, data protection, information security and document retention. We have comprehensive Information Asset Registers across every service area and have introduced internal peer challenge into the review process through our Information Governance Group.

Next Steps in 2022

Review of partnership working across Staffordshire Moorlands

Stakeholder engagement training for employees



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High Peak Borough Council is represented by 43 elected councillors across 28 wards; with overall control switching from Conservative to a Labour majority administration at the 2019 local elections.

The Executive is the main decision making group at High Peak and is made up of five portfolios, including that of the Council Leader.

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council is represented by 56 elected councillors across 27 wards; with overall control remaining with the Conservative administration at the 2019 local elections.

The Cabinet is the main decision making group at Staffordshire Moorlands and is made up of seven portfolios, including that of the Council Leader.

The relationships between members and officers are good and based upon mutual



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respect. Regular joint meetings take place between ALT and the Executive/Cabinet as well as with the Political Group Leaders at each Council. The Chief Executive has regular meetings with each Council Leader/Deputy Leader and a member of ALT is also responsible for each of the Select Committees and Scrutiny Panels. This includes advising the Chair of each Committee in meetings and also having agenda setting and briefing meetings as requested by each Chair. Senior officers regularly brief portfolio holders and scrutiny chairs on the business of the councils.

Member Working Groups are established at the request of councillors; recent examples include Climate Change at both councils, Council Tax recovery processes at High Peak, and a Car Park Working Group at Staffordshire Moorlands. This is in addition to the annual review of the scrutiny work

programme at each council, which is prepared by Democratic Services and reported to members.

A programme of member induction was completed following the 2019 local elections, with a variety of officer-led in house training sessions. Further training will be based on identified needs analysis as highlighted by the Member Development Groups at each council. Both councils have invested in new technologies to support effective decision making through the Modern Gov committee management system and the rollout of tablet computers to all elected members in 2015.

The Localism Act 2011 requires councils to promote and maintain high standards of conduct for its members. To ensure high standards of ethical behaviour and good governance each council has adopted

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an Ethical Framework. The principal constituent parts of the Frameworks include each council's constitution, code of conduct for members and register of interests together with other supporting codes and protocols.

These various documents are drawn together within one document to clarify their place and role within the overall Ethical Framework. This is endorsed by all political groups within each council and is published on the Council's website with its Constitution, to provide a route map for all Members, Officers and the public to identify and consider the policies and procedures which the councils have in place.

The Councillor Support/Community Leadership Scheme was approved following the publication of the Communities and Local Government Select

Committee report "Councillors on the Front-line". This noted the changing role of elected members, becoming increasingly community-based with councillors spending more time out and about supporting their constituents and working with external organisations. The councils' schemes comprise a package of measures to deliver improved support for councillors in their wards. These include:

Improved IT resources - Tablet computers have been issued to all councillors providing access to the latest Microsoft 365 software including Teams and Outlook. The Modern.Gov app also provides improved secure access to committee reports

Enhanced demographic information – Access to a range of national/local datasets using information produced by the councils, LGA, ONS and the

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police. This includes environmental crime reports, economic statistics and health profiles

The Councillors' Initiative Fund -

The fund provides every councillor with access to an annual fund of £500 - £1,000 each which can be used to tackle local problems and support activity by local people that will improve the wellbeing of their communities

Parish and town council liaison – organisation of regular meetings to discuss topics including environmental enforcement and planning issues.

The future development of the scheme will include the roll-out of a case management system which will allow councillors to log and track constituent queries via a dedicated app accessible via their tablet computers. The data captured will then

be used to identify themes to inform future scrutiny work programmes.

An external review of scrutiny

At High Peak the Council commissioned the Centre for Governance & Scrutiny (CfGS), to review its scrutiny arrangements through its Select Committees. The purpose of the review was to give the Council an external perspective on how well the current model is functioning and fulfilling its essential role of policy shaping, holding the executive to account, and reviewing issues of importance to local communities.

The review involved two days of evidence gathering through conversations with Members and Officers; observing Select Committee meetings; reviewing key documents; and carrying out a Member survey. The review concluded that

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scrutiny's role as part of the democratic decision-making process at High Peak is respected and valued in the Council, with supportive political leaders and Executive Members. The CfGS noted from their interviews that the scrutiny function at HPBC is held in a relatively high regard by the Council overall, further evidenced by Director level support for each Select Committee.

At Staffordshire Moorlands the Council had not undertaken a comprehensive review of its scrutiny arrangements for some time and it was therefore considered appropriate to conduct a review in order to give assurance about existing practices and to challenge and provide further improvements. Again, the review was conducted by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny and the conclusions were reported back to the Council in April of this year.

The report concluded that 'Scrutiny has the conditions for success' and further that 'there are no critical issues for scrutiny at SMDC and the contributions that scrutiny makes are seen as mostly positive'. An all member workshop was held in September to enable the CfGS to share their findings and to provide an opportunity for councillors to give some initial feedback.

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Next Steps in 2022

Both Councils are seeking to take the reviews forward with further actions focused on:

A programme of training / development for non-executive councillors

Review the Executive/ Scrutiny Protocol

Establish an Overview & Scrutiny Programming Group

Develop an approach with Chairs of Panels to consider pre-meetings and preparation work

Consider the structure of Panels and potential to create sub-groups to focus on specific areas of work

Consideration of ways to allow greater public access, openness and involvement

Rollout of case management software to track constituent queries and inform future scrutiny programmes

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Nationally our per capita unit costs (2019/20) are very low - £90.95 for High Peak and £96.47 for Staffordshire Moorlands - placing each Council amongst the lowest 20% of councils nationally. With a strong value for money focus in everything we do, our financial plans have had the protection of frontline services at their heart.

Medium Term Financial Planning

Robust financial management is a key strength across the Alliance, with a history of delivering balanced budgets despite the financial implications of austerity.

Our Medium Term Financial Plans (MTFPs) set out the financial challenges and opportunities facing each council and cover a four year period with mid-year and annual reviews. The MTFPs provide the funding framework for the Councils'

4-year Corporate Plans. They have been successfully underpinned by Efficiency and Rationalisation Strategies that have to date helped to achieve approximately £15.7m in budget savings across the Alliance.

The MTFP and Annual Budget setting process is subject to member scrutiny prior to adoption. Following budget approval, Heads of Service in conjunction with the Council's Head of Finance monitor detailed budgets throughout the year. This enables any service pressures to be identified on an on-going basis. Reports are presented on a quarterly basis to member scrutiny panels which highlight variances between spending and budgets.

The Councils' business partnering approach extends to Finance, with senior officers linked to specific service areas to provide support, guidance and regular liaison.



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Existing Efficiency & Rationalisation Plans

The current Efficiency and Rationalisation Strategy was approved by Members in February 2017, which identified a programme of £5.2 million (£3.1million SMDC, £2.1m HPBC) in savings to be made over the period 2017/18 – 2020/21 (later extended to 2021/22), to balance the MTFP and build the financial resilience of both Councils.

The Efficiency and Rationalisation Strategy aims to both reduce expenditure and increase income. The need to grow income and operate more commercially is now more of a priority as the Councils move towards being self-financing and no longer reliant on direct government funding (the Councils receive no revenue support grant). The strategy has been developed with the underlying principles

of protecting frontline service delivery. It is also intended that the strategy is a tool to ensure that service spending is determined by the established priorities set out in the Corporate Plans.

The delivery of efficiency and rationalisation projects is monitored by the Transformation Board, made up of Directors, Heads of Service along with key Officers and progress is reported quarterly to Elected Members via Scrutiny / Cabinet at SMDC and Select Committee / Executive at HPBC.

Progress against the financial targets in the programme has been good, with less than £0.2m of the total programme forecast to be undelivered by the end of 2021/22 (£0.167m at SMDC). There have been some major projects successfully delivered which have contributed to the savings. The Leisure Centre operational

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contract has been renegotiated at SMDC and retendered at HPBC – delivering £0.8m (£0.512m SMDC, £0.288m HPBC). A concession contract was awarded for the operation of the Pavilion Gardens venue at HPBC saving £0.1m to date. £0.62m has been achieved to date as a result of the establishment of Alliance Environment Services (AES) – a joint venture company for the delivery of waste collection, street cleansing and grounds maintenance. Other savings have come from retendering the insurance contract (£0.25m), service rationalisation (£0.6m), Workforce Planning (£0.56m) and general procurement activity (£0.51m). The remainder of the savings have come from asset rationalisation and income generation (primarily fees and charges).

Impact of Covid and 2020/21 Outturn

Although Covid-19 had a substantial impact on service delivery in 2020/21, both Councils were successful in delivering substantial underspends last financial year, so there was no negative impact on general reserves or the ongoing financial sustainability of both Councils. Both Councils have General Fund contingency balances of £4.1m, against a minimum level of £1.5m. The Councils plan to use £1.8m of reserves over the next 4 years to address pressures created by the pandemic (£1.0m HPBC; £0.8m SMDC).

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Proposed Refresh of the MTFP (2022/23)

The longer term need for a new Efficiency Programme will be considered as part of the revision of the 2022/23 Medium Term Financial Plans, alongside the budget being set for both Councils in February 2022. It is likely that there will be no need for an efficiency programme to balance the 2022/23 budget. However, given the ongoing uncertainty around local government funding at a national level (especially around business rates retention, new homes bonus and fair funding) the proposal is to develop a new efficiency programme during 2022/23 to provide additional financial resilience in case the national reviews have a negative impact on either (or both) Councils. This will include setting aside reserves as well as identifying ongoing budget efficiencies.

The refresh will also include an increased focus on climate change issues as a priority for redirecting and refocussing funding. Both Councils set aside £0.1m each to support the delivery of climate change related projects as part of the 2020/21 outturn as well as considering climate change issues in capital programmes (such as Council buildings and vehicle purchases). Climate Change also features strongly in the Councils' approach to procurement activity.

Financial Risks & Resilience

The MTFPs for both Councils are currently (as at December 2021) in a balanced position. However, there are a number of risks to this position that will be addressed as part of the MTFP refresh, particularly around future inflationary assumptions. The MTFPs also assume income generation from housing and economic growth,

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particularly to underpin the capital programme. In addition, HPBC faces additional financial risk (but also potential rewards) from developing its successful Future High Street Fund bid and both Councils are in the process of developing leisure transformation programmes, with the potential to link with Levelling Up government funding.

Both Authorities have benefited from Business Rates retention and New Homes Bonus (NHB) income receipts in recent years. However, there is uncertainty around the outcomes of national reforms and, in particular, changes to the NHB scheme which may impact on estimated income forecasts. The refreshed MTFP will build in less reliance on NHB. The national economic situation is currently unpredictable. There is a risk that a number of local and national economic drivers such as inflation, interest rates, the

valuation of assets and liabilities and the demand for and funding of services may be affected.

To account for these risks and uncertainties, the Councils ensure that there are adequate reserves to draw on if budgets turn out to be insufficient. As previously mentioned, both Councils carry general fund contingency balances in excess of minimum requirements to help manage this uncertainty. Both MTFPs include a 'Chief Finance Officer (CFO) Section 25 Review' which considers the robustness of budget estimates and adequacy of reserves. As part of that review CIPFA's Financial Resilience Index data has been taken into consideration. As at 2019/20, the "indicators of financial stress" for both Councils indicated that the unallocated reserves balance was at the average (for all non-metropolitan districts), but that earmarked reserves (and the

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change in reserves) demonstrated a higher risk. In 2020/21, £2.018m was added to earmarked reserves (£0.725m for HPBC and £1.293m for SMDC).

Procurement Strategy

The Councils' Procurement Strategy sets out the vision and strategic aims which direct and govern our procurement activities. It outlines the policies, toolkits and processes that we use to deliver the Strategy. The strategy is currently being revised to focus on future direction of travel with an emphasis on our key priorities for the next three years. The refreshed strategy has been subject to continuous development and consultation throughout the pandemic and has been influenced to align its key themes and objectives to those of both Councils' Corporate Plan priorities and those of the LGA's National Procurement Strategy.



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Priority outcomes for the 2022–2025 Joint Procurement Strategy will be:

- Delivering Value for Money
- Commercial focus and effective Contract Management
- Maintaining Transparency and Ethical practices through effective leadership
- Promoting Responsible and Sustainable Procurement
- Supporting the Local Economy and Business Growth
- Delivering Social Value (CSR) through our Contracts

We have consulted on the following key themes with elected members at both Councils and made presentations to Climate Change working Groups, Local Business networks, and have agreed to undertake a consultation exercise supported by the respective Chambers of Commerce in both Council areas. The key themes that underpin our priorities and objectives are :

- Showing Leadership
- Behaving Commercially
- Achieving Community Benefits
- Environmental Sustainability
- Ethical Sourcing

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Each theme has supporting objectives and actions to deliver the outcomes, which Senior Management and Elected Members have agreed in principle to be the basis of the developing strategy. Elected members at both Councils were invited to participate via an online consultation asking for their feedback to further assist us in the development of key actions for delivery.

We have also recently completed the LGA Procurement Strategy Diagnostic for contracting authorities to benchmark themselves against regional and wider LAs in their positioning against the NPS objectives. This enables the Councils to reaffirm their priorities and actions to deliver continuous improvement which will be measured again in two years' time.

Next steps in 2022

**Implementation of the refreshed
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Our capacity to deliver is strengthened by our joint workforce across all services, our shared priorities, and our shared values.

The process of developing a set of shared core values - created and owned by all levels of the workforce - began in 2015 and concluded a year later following a series of staff engagement activities held across the Alliance, including 12 hearts and minds workshops. The result was CHOICE - six values created, owned and lived by our workforce. These values are reinforced through the PEP process, staff ideas scheme criteria and are being developed further through a commercial competency framework, which will be rolled out via our new OD Strategy due in 2022. The emerging priorities for the focus of the strategy are as follows:

Building strong leadership and management - developing a new leadership team, improving the interface with elected members (including their relationship with communities), Management and Member development

Sustaining and improving a skilled, flexible and motivated workforce - skills gap assessment, structured training plans that link to corporate priorities, ICT skills, apprenticeships and graduate recruitment, cultural change – commercial focus / competencies review, flexible working including remote / home working, pay and conditions review – incremental progression issue

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Improving customer focus - refreshing the interface with customers, responding to digital exclusion, communications skills including social media channels

Improving value for money - getting more output from our workforce through smarter working including systematic process review

Driving transformational change and innovation - encouraging innovation, supporting the wider transformation programme

Promoting equality and diversity - responding effectively to our responsibilities in this area

Our small but dynamic workforce is at the heart of each council's ambitious plans and we have a reputation for punching above our weight; with proud histories as beacon councils and former council of the year winners. Central to achieving this discretionary effort is a programme of employee engagement. Across the Alliance this takes many forms; including effective internal communication, investment in employee training and development, and opportunities for recognition and reward.

Internal communication across the Alliance is lateral and vertical with key corporate messages flowing from AMT through monthly issues of Team Talk and fortnightly joint member-officer ebulletins via Keeping You Informed. Colleagues from across the organisation can contribute news and information to both publications. We also run special editions of Keeping You

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Informed that allow us to focus on celebrating success or communicating key operational changes such as AES. All teams come together monthly for a structured Team Brief, which follows on from AMT and all senior staff are encouraged to hold regular one-to-one's with their direct reports.

Investing in our workforce through training and development opportunities is a core commitment for both councils and even during the lockdown year our gross training spend per employee was £212 and was previously significantly higher than the national average. Training needs are identified and captured through the PEP process, in order to align development to performance objectives. We also use our online training platform Alliance E-ssentials to keep our workforce up to date on key statutory frameworks and regulatory updates.

Sustaining and improving a skilled and motivated workforce



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Our partnerships with local colleges have enabled us to offer five apprenticeships across a range of service areas last year and in the past most have either gained permanent employment with us or have gone onto study for a higher apprenticeship. Our record on nurturing our home grown talent is testified to by the fact that last year we promoted four members of staff and offered development opportunities to another 11 through secondment placings; whilst also having a natural turnover rate of 10% in line with national averages.

Recognising and rewarding staff loyalty, innovation and excellence is an area that we want to consolidate and we are reviewing the options. Following on from Alliance-wide service reviews in 2014/15 a series of Job Families was created, based on national NJC pay scales but in response to financial challenges advancement has

been frozen at the progression bar. With the agreement of Trade Unions, a review of pay scales commenced in 2020, which will include the removal of progression bars in any new agreement.

Sickness absence rates across the Alliance dropped to 4.6 days in 2020/21 during lockdown and had previously been in line with the national mean for English Districts. Employees are able to access counselling services and occupational health appointments as part of our absence policy. There are quarterly joint meetings with Trade Union representatives, senior managers and councillors; with good lines of communication and effective working relationships.

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Both councils believe in the benefits of shared learning across the wider local government family and have long histories of playing their part in local government improvement programmes; from beacon councils, to peer reviews and best practice groups. Benchmarking is carried out across services using the LG Inform benchmarking club, East Midlands Performance Network, near neighbour groups and use of data from CFOinsights and Place Analytics. The Information Team are active members of Knowledge Hub and have shared good practice with other councils and public sector bodies around employee appraisals, risk and performance management and regularly access the LGA's Improvement and Innovation Bulletin.

The Alliance between High Peak and Staffordshire Moorlands entered a new phase following the transfer of direct services to AES Ltd, our joint venture company with Cheshire East, as we move towards a commercial commissioning model. The residual workforce now stands at around 330 across the Alliance, down 49% from 650 employees in May 2008.

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Spotlight on AES Joint Venture:

Following the expiry of High Peak's waste contract with Veolia in 2017, both councils looked at the options around joint service delivery and after a comprehensive review the preferred option was to create a joint venture partnership between our two councils and Ansa Ltd (a wholly owned subsidiary of Cheshire East Council). And so, Alliance Environmental Services Ltd (AES) was created under "Teckal" rules, which provide for certain exemptions from public procurement regulations.

The original aspiration for AES was that it would carry out waste collection and street cleansing services across the Alliance with the potential for the scope of the services to be widened to include grounds maintenance and fleet management.



This has been realised and with it £838,000 of savings during the first four years of the partnership.

Our AES Case Study has more information.

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Our Service Commissioning Team lead on the contract management arrangements for both AES and Parkwood Leisure and are supported by a team of commissioning officers, led by the Head of Service.

The successful development and implementation of AES has provided a 'blueprint' for the development of similar arrangements for the provision of the Councils' facilities management and housing repairs functions. Through discussions with the Norse Group, the opportunity has emerged for the Councils to develop a joint venture company for the delivery of their facilities management and housing repairs services. There is also an opportunity to deliver the asset related projects contained within the general fund and HRA capital programmes through the company. In effect the new company would be structured in the same way as AES, with Norse providing the management

role in the same way as ANSA does for AES. Norse is a wholly owned subsidiary of Norfolk County Council which provides the opportunity for a similar 'Teckal' company arrangement.

The High Peak and Staffordshire Moorlands Annual Reports give an insight into the alignment of our resources to our corporate priorities and illustrate how we compare regionally and nationally in terms of value for money services. The Reports are informed by data insights drawn from Grant Thornton's CFOi platform, which allows both councils to understand the relative cost and performance of key services. The Annual Report informs the reprioritisation of corporate plan actions for the following year and in turn influences the Transformation Programme.

Digital Journey - Our early channel shift programme, ICan do it online, delivered

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savings of over £300k which have helped deliver a balanced budget and fund investment in other priority areas. We took part in the Share Digital Conference for two years running, delivering a session to delegates wanting to hear about our digital journey. The necessity of moving to a remote IT solution during the 2020 lockdown has hastened our digital journey. During the last 12 months we have commissioned SOCITM Advisory Services to help the Alliance map out its future strategic direction in terms of the digital landscape, in order to build on the changes already made and to improve the customer and employee experience still further. The Digital Strategy will be published in early 2022 and is to be delivered via four key pillars:

Digital Services - Simple, proactive, effective and secure public services

that are designed and delivered in partnership with our communities

Digital Skills and Inclusion - Giving our communities the skills, tools, access and confidence to engage digitally with us, whilst improving our non-digital experiences to match digital experiences

Digital Collaboration and Connectivity - Maximising the opportunities for digital, data and technology to enhance collaborative working, the local economy, individual opportunity and our residents quality of life

Data and Intelligence - Optimised data and intelligence is central to the way we configure, reconfigure, deliver and continuously improve our services

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Levering external capacity

Both councils have been able to punch above their weight because they have harnessed external capacity in the form of private sector investment and expertise; effective partnerships with public sector bodies around health and growth; and engaging with the local community on local priorities.

Community Capacity - support from the local community in keeping their locality litter free has increased dramatically in 2020-21 despite the pandemic. The Alliance supplies high visibility vests, litter picking sticks and refuse sacks to local community groups and individuals who wish to undertake a community clean up event. In 2020-21 the amount of community events reached 130 in the High Peak and 160 in SMDC. In comparison in 2019-20, the number of events was only 82 in the High

Community clean-up in Haregate



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Peak and 67 in the Moorlands. In gaining the support of such groups our reach and ability to keep the Alliance area litter free is extended dramatically, increasing our capacity and resources to focus on other services such as fly tipping.

We work extensively with Friends of the Parks groups across the Moorlands and High Peak to enhance our parks and open spaces. Over the past year and despite the challenges linked to the pandemic, which restricted outdoor access and activities, our most active Friends of Groups, which support three of our 12 countryside sites in the Moorlands have undertaken 614 hours of community volunteer work to date in 2021. This volunteer support is critical in providing additional capacity for repair and maintenance works, developing and supporting the creation and monitoring of new habitats to attract wildlife and raising funds to support such works.

Community group management of parks and green spaces



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In the High Peak, Friends of the Parks groups have contributed significantly towards enhancing parks and open spaces with some notable funding raised towards improving play equipment for children at Bench Road in Buxton and Manor Park in Glossop. Junior Friends of Whaley Bridge Memorial Park also secured funding towards a new slide in the park and we have recently secured £16,000 towards enhancing the riding surface of the pump track in the park. We also installed two items of accessible equipment play equipment at Manor Park, working in partnership with the Friends Group, securing £10,000 from the Lottery Awards for All grant, the Friends raised £3,000 towards the equipment.



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Working closely in partnership with the Residents and Fairfield Association and Derbyshire County Council we have been able to provide additional open space for the community to use in Fairfield which has enabled the community to run activities and events. This was a complex project that was identified by the community via the place based work being undertaken on the estate and required statutory bodies to work in different ways in order to deliver what the community desired.

Use of s106 monies – the Service Commissioning team ensures that any obligation sought towards outdoor sport and recreation, play and open space is based on a tailored approach relevant to each development site; related and proportionate in scale and kind. The approach includes a review of any planning application in relation to the action plans within the playing pitch strategies

New play equipment at Bankswood Park



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and other strategic documents such as Local Football Facilities Plans 2018; use of local insight, and conversations with stakeholders such as Parish and Town Councils and community groups, to assess deliverability. The calculation is formula based and a monetary figure per dwelling is used for each typology in the High Peak, and for Staffordshire Moorlands a figure per bedroom. We refurbished the play area in Tintwistle with the help of the Friends of Conduit Street Park, allocating £10,000 in s106 monies from a development in the area, with an external funding bid for £40,000 secured from Veolia, and the Friends group raised £10,000, totalling a £60,000 refurbishment project. In Glossop, working with a local cycling group, young people and their parents/ guardians, we secured £85,000 to install a new pump track in Bankswood Park with £35,000 provided by the British Cycling

‘Places to Ride’ Programme and £50,000 from s106 funding. S106 funds have also contributed to play area improvements across the Borough, working with Town and Parish Councils to provide added value in Chapel-en-le-Frith, Chinley and environmental improvements in New Mills, totalling £145,000.

We have also allocated £25,000 of S106 funds to Werrington PC to develop a new pump track facility in the village, along with assisting them with a successful funding application to the British Cycling places to ride fund, for which they were awarded £30k to be able to complete the £55k project. The use of s106 monies is overseen through the Transformation Board to ensure both councils manage the allocations in a timely and effective manner.

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The Council has recently invested £30k from an outdoor sports capital budget to support grounds maintenance projects in Waterhouses and a play development project in Whiston. In Leek, the Council has recently invested £100,000 to help develop a new stadia 3G pitch at Leek Town FC which cost in the region of £660k. This contribution from SMDC helped secure a grant of approximately £550k from the Football Foundation to be able to complete the project, along with a contribution from the Club. The new facility has already extended the reach of the club into the community and a new engagement worker employed by the club to manage the facility has already established new sessions using the pitch, including walking football.



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In the High Peak we invested the £100,000 capital outdoor sports fund into 7 projects, which in turn have helped lever approximately £2 million external funding into the Borough.

Across both authorities, we have very much developed a place based approach to our work around physical activity and ‘moving more’ and as a result have been able to commission and support additional capacity in our priority places. This has been through the development of ‘Community Engagement Worker’ roles and we now have 5 of these based in Glossop, New Mills, Fairfield (Buxton), Leek and Biddulph. These roles work at grass roots level within each of these communities and play a key role in understanding community needs and linking this back to the work of the council and wider partners. Both Councils invest proportionately more funding into these roles which has also

attracted further investment from DCC Public Health and Active Derbyshire to increase the number of hours some of the engagement workers are employed for. We have recently established a ‘place based network’ where these roles come together to share insight and learning between each other and feed this into wider plans and strategies.

Capacity for responding to climate change

Both councils have backed up their commitment to achieving net zero by 2030 by investing in additional internal and external capacity to make this a reality, supported by a dedicated Portfolio within both the Cabinet and the Executive. We have created a new Climate Change and Biodiversity officer post and have commissioned Anthesis to work with us in finding the right pathways to carbon

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reduction both within the councils' own operations and within each area, working collaboratively with local partners. We also sought academic advice from Keele University who are acknowledged as pioneers of sustainability and they have delivered climate related training sessions for councillors and officers.

Next Steps: Levelling Up

Both authorities have been designated as category 1 areas in terms of the government's new Levelling Up funds. We have been working on Visioning exercises with external support to develop our theory of change models for Leek and Glossop under a potential Round 2 bid of up to £20m at each council.

In Leek we are looking at possible council-led interventions designed to release private sector investment and to address

the following market failures that are affecting the vibrancy of the town centre:

Poor accessibility constraining town centre growth potential

Viability gap (low house prices) blocking adequate housing development to attract / retain a mixed population

Lack of suitable business premises limiting start-up activity and leading to leakage of business growth

Highly dependent tourism economy as a result of lack of cultural / tourism assets

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Whilst in Glossop the council-led interventions under discussion are designed to address a different set of market failures that are affecting the economic vibrancy and connectedness of the town:

Distorted market for housing and business premises due to proximity to Manchester

Lack of transport links and limited demand is undermining business viability

Cultural assets are under exploited undermining civic pride and an active community

Facts and figures at your fingertips

