

OUR VISION AND 2026-2028 DELIVERY PLAN

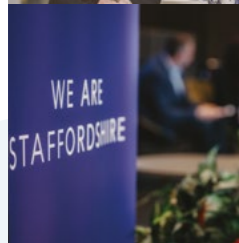



We Are
Staffordshire

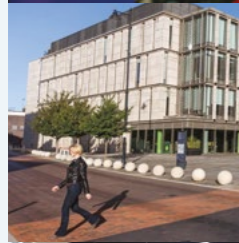
CONTENTS



02
FOREWORD



04
INDEPENDENT REVIEW



08
CORE PRIORITIES AND
OUR VISION TO 2030



14
2026-2028
DELIVERY PLAN



26
CLOSING STATEMENT

FOREWORD

As I reflect on my five years as Chair of the We Are Staffordshire Place Board, I am immensely proud of what we have achieved together. We have built a strong and confident place brand, forged deep partnerships across our sectors, and ensured Staffordshire's story is being told with clarity, pride and purpose. The independent review reaffirmed what we see through our work every day: our collaborative model is effective, our narrative is compelling, and our approach has real impact.

But as proud as I am of what has been achieved, I am even more excited about what comes next.

As we move towards Local Government Reorganisation, We Are Staffordshire will play a vital role in providing stability, continuity and a united voice for the county. At a time of change, our shared identity and ambition must shine brighter than ever. We enter this new chapter with strong foundations, strong partnerships and a clear sense of who we are.

Our new two year delivery plan sets the direction for this next phase. It is a bold and outward looking agenda focused on taking Staffordshire onto a bigger stage

— raising our national profile, showcasing our economic strengths, and making sure Staffordshire is firmly on the map for investors, talent, visitors and government. From promoting our major opportunities to championing the energy and innovation of our people, we will continue to tell Staffordshire's story with confidence and consistency.

At the heart of all this sits a simple truth: Staffordshire is the beating heart of the country. A place shaped by collaboration, powered by ambition and defined by the pride of its people.

To everyone who contributes to this partnership — our board members, ambassadors, businesses, local leaders and wider networks — thank you. Your dedication and belief have brought us this far. Together, we are ready for the next chapter. We Are Staffordshire: we are a place of opportunity.



Hannah Ault DL
Chair, We Are Staffordshire
Place Board

OUR IMPACT



Secured over
£250K
of private and
partnership investment
to market Staffordshire
on the national stage



Launched Screen Staffordshire
film office, unlocking
**£1M WIDER
ECONOMIC BENEFIT**
in its first year



**50+
SCHOOLS**
engaged in
civic pride programmes



**15+ NATIONAL
ROUNDTABLES**
held, lobbying on key
priorities and issues



Over **350**
ambassadors

Shortlisted for
**3 INTERNATIONAL
AWARDS**
including Place Brand of the Year



OUR INDEPENDENT REVIEW

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

In 2025, We Are Staffordshire commissioned an independent review to analyse its achievements over its first five years, and make recommendations for the future. Read on for a summary of its findings.

OUR REVIEW PROCESS

Our independent review was carried out by place branding and marketing company INSTID (Institute for Identity). It took place during summer and autumn 2025 through a mixture of interviews, workshops and observations within Staffordshire and with 'target' organisations outside the county, together with a user survey. To make their recommendations, they also analysed policy documents that affect the way we operate.

OUR IMPACT TO DATE

The review found that partners value the role we play in bringing together separate entities and the platform we create to showcase both organisations and Staffordshire's priorities - creating a unified voice for the county across sectors.

The report outlined significant progress we've achieved in four key areas:

BUILDING THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE STAFFORDSHIRE STORY

through widely-adopted collateral, toolkits, films, photos and messaging, establishing our 'brand' and presenting a consistent image of the county.

GROWING REACH AND ADVOCACY

with a network of public and private sector partners and 300+ Ambassadors, raising the county's profile through events and initiatives and bringing together previously disjointed networks to promote the region.

DRIVING IMPACT

by directly contributing to investment attraction and feeding into investment events, initiatives and materials, underpinning major funding bids and supporting the visitor economy recovery in the aftermath of COVID.

LEADING AND INFLUENCING

by acting as a 'door opener', securing national platforms and drawing in external partners, growing a 'black book' of influencers, investors and stakeholders and becoming the go-to countywide convenor.

WHAT WE ARE STAFFORDSHIRE DOES WELL

- Sustains story and keeps momentum during potential administrative changes from LGR through being arms-length from governance reforms
- Gives open-access voice to business and community, as the 'glue' and connector for/between private and public sectors
- Opens doors locally, regionally and nationally as the external face of Staffordshire
- Supplies consistent content for everything representing Staffordshire
- Provides strategic oversight of place-brand activities

A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

In the last five years, several changes have taken place that will affect our role in future, in particular the impending Local Government Reform that may have an impact on the county's delivery of core services.

Furthermore, against a backdrop of intensified national and international competition for investment and talent, We Are Staffordshire needs to redefine itself and its objectives to set itself up for long term success, and as we collectively look to establish a foundation strategic authority in the future.

WHAT THE REVIEW FOUND -

A SUMMARY



A CLEAR PRESENCE REGIONALLY AND NATIONALLY giving energetic support for those looking for wider recognition as part of Staffordshire



HIGH LEVELS OF TRUST AND COMMITMENT earned through personal support and relationships



ENVIABLE 'BLACK BOOK' AND AMBASSADOR NETWORK



LACK OF CLARITY both in responsibilities between WAS, Invest and Visit, and in our wider role



GROUND-BREAKING WORK especially in rallying the business community behind the regional brand



STRONG PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS behind much of the engagement with WAS



TEAM PERSONALITIES AND CONVENING SKILLS remembered, rather than a distinctive Staffordshire story

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Our independent review outlined several changes we could make to ensure we work even more effectively:

- Clarify our role and those of our delivery partners, delineating the responsibilities between We Are Staffordshire, Visit Staffordshire and Invest Staffordshire to show what each does and doesn't do
- Bring the different teams together into a single structure, aligned under a single brand with shared responsibility for Staffordshire's objectives
- Reposition We Are Staffordshire as the convening body of the county
- Strengthen the Place Board to include visitor economy, talent and cultural voices
- Retain WAS's apolitical structure and stance to remain independent
- Stabilise core funding streams and leverage blended funding model to build resource and stability longer term as an arms-length organisation
- Work to clearer deliverables and sharpen metrics around outcomes





CORE PRIORITIES AND OUR VISION TO 2030

While our first five years have been about building a trusted network and delivering material impact, as we mature as an organisation, and prepare the ground to be ready to take advantage of a possible devolved administration in the future, we need clearer objectives and a sharper strategy.

We Are Staffordshire is now looking to the future with a new Vision ahead to 2030, plus a core delivery plan of key outcomes and impact between 2026-2028 when local government reorganisation is embedded in Staffordshire.

OUR 2030 VISION

HOW WE DEFINE WE ARE STAFFORDSHIRE'S ROLE

We are the county's place marketing brand, harnessing Staffordshire's collective voices and its stories to create opportunities to attract economic growth, change perceptions and enhance civic pride.

OUR VISION:

WE AIM TO IMPROVE ECONOMIC OUTCOMES. RAISE QUALITY OF LIFE. STRENGTHEN SOFT POWER. INFORM STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND EXPENDITURE AND SOLVE SOCIAL PROBLEMS – AND WE'LL DO THAT BY SHOWCASING STAFFORDSHIRE WITH STRATEGIC AUDIENCES REGIONALLY AND NATIONALLY AS A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE AND LEARN, VISIT AND INVEST; A PLACE THAT SUPPORTS PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS TO GROW AND THRIVE.



OUR OBJECTIVES



01 DRIVE GROWTH THROUGH VISIBILITY AND INFLUENCE

Strengthen Staffordshire's economic and reputational standing by increasing strategic visibility, shaping perceptions and opening doors for investment, talent and tourism.



02 UNITE STAFFORDSHIRE BEHIND A SINGLE, POWERFUL STORY

Champion a shared narrative that inspires belonging, consistency, distinction and belief, ensuring the story of Staffordshire is told with one confident voice to the audiences who matter.



03 AMPLIFY PARTNERSHIPS, AND ADVOCACY

Be the county's showcase, megaphone and advocate, bringing residents and partners together to amplify what makes Staffordshire special and demonstrate its strengths through collective action.

HOW WE'LL ACHIEVE THOSE OBJECTIVES



Deliver strategic activities that showcase Staffordshire as the primary place to live, learn, visit and invest with key audiences, such as MPs in Parliament, key investors at UKREiiF or film producers.



Develop and secure funding for pilot programmes such as Screen Staffordshire, which aim to bring economic benefits into the county, whilst raising the profile and perceptions of Staffordshire.



Connect businesses across a large county area and raise civic pride through the Staffordshire Ambassador Network.



Improve Staffordshire's 'soft power' on the national stage through the creation of a Staffordshire Toolkit of key assets, films, images and collateral that tell the Staffordshire Story; and measure perceptions of our place with key audiences/geographies.



Connect young people to Staffordshire, future opportunities and raise civic pride around our unique story through a programme of events, led by an Advisory Group of young Staffordshire leaders.



OUR CORE FOCUS AND DELIVERY PILLARS

The political and economic landscape in which we work, navigating devolution and reduced local authority budgets, is ever-changing. As a result, it's critical that we remain focused on driving economic growth for Staffordshire by telling our story and what we offer to the right audiences who can affect change. In turn, this is what guides our core priorities set out here, and which are behind our roadmap for the next five years and the corresponding delivery plan.



PLACE BRAND GOVERNANCE, FUNDING AND IMPACT

One brand vision, one collective endeavour



EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT & MAJOR PROJECTS

Marketing our economic priorities; strategic external engagement and public affairs



STAFFORDSHIRE ADVOCACY

Internal Advocacy, Staffordshire PR and profile



COLLABORATION

Supporting partnership endeavours

OUR ROADMAP TO 2030

YEARS 1-2

(2026-27)

- Refresh brand strategy through collaborative process
- Establish clear board framework and reset Place Board remit
- Define KPIs and embed affordable evaluation mechanisms
- Expand Ambassador network as a core advocacy engine, with tiers of engagement and clear asks
- Lead on external profile-raising through national campaigns, parliamentary engagement, UKREiiF and flagship initiatives & special projects
- Pilot new impact measurement tools

YEARS 2-3

(2028-29)

- Consolidate Staffordshire's position as a well-recognised, competitive regional brand
- Embed WAS as the enduring, resilient brand guardian through local government reform
- 'Foundation Strategic Authority' key place marketing pillar

YEARS 4-5

(2029-30)

- Scale external campaigns to international markets, where they are aligned with Invest and Visit priorities
- Demonstrate impact against KPIs to secure long-term funding and partner buy-in

OUR 2026-2028 DELIVERY PLAN

Our core delivery plan sets out how we will support economic growth outcomes and enhance civic pride between April 2026 – April 2028, in line with partner activity within our Screen Staffordshire, Invest Staffordshire and Visit Staffordshire brands.

INVEST
STAFFORDSHIRE



SCREEN
Staffordshire



CORE PRIORITY 1

PLACE BRAND GOVERNANCE, FUNDING AND IMPACT

One brand vision, one collective endeavour

COMMERCIAL MODEL

Present one collaborative commercial offer that supports the place brand and core economic growth pillars

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Evolve established governance model to bolster Investment, Talent and Culture strands of the economic growth programme with a new Terms of Reference

MEASURING OUTCOMES

Develop clear measures of impact that permeate and align across all economic growth strands

Other Key Activities:

- Develop and agree a refreshed model that positions WAS as the 'place marketing convenor' for key place pillars Invest, Visit, Culture and Talent
- Creation of brand markers for Culture and Talent in collaboration with teams delivering those services
- Measure stakeholder sentiment with key strategic audiences internally and externally



KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Outcome:

Staffordshire is equipped with governance models, commercial structures and one shared vision for marketing Staffordshire for economic growth

Place Board, LVEP and governance structures approve governance model and Terms of Reference

Collaborative commercial offer supporting place brand and core economic growth pillars developed

Aligned key metrics developed across all strands

CORE PRIORITY 2



EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT & MAJOR PROJECTS

Marketing our economic priorities; strategic external engagement and public affairs



EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

Lead up to 4 regional or nationally focused activities per annum around lobbying/awareness raising mission aligned to Economic Growth Plan

MAJOR EVENTS & CAMPAIGNS

Identify and deliver Staffordshire's attendance at up to 2 key national or international EXPOs & conferences events aligned to Staffordshire's collective Economic Growth Plan

For 2026-27: UKREiiF and Staffordshire Day 2026 House of Commons events represent 2 key deliverables.

MARKETING SCREEN STAFFORDSHIRE*

Showcase the rich cultural assets and destinations/screen tourism through the creation of marketing assets and deliver at least 1 stakeholder familiarisation trip per annum to showcase the county's locations

Other Key Activities:

Where key priorities or major projects are identified and where appropriate, we will lead the brand development, marketing communications proposition and wrap-around campaign activities in collaboration with relevant colleagues, external partners and stakeholders.

Possible projects include The Central Edge marketing proposition; Cultural Strategy external marketing campaign; Chasewater investment marketing and/or The Staffordshire Way physical wayfinding.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Outcome:

Brand narrative resonates & inspires action externally (beyond Staffordshire) (profile & visibility)

Mentions in local, regional and national media

WAS and private sector/key stakeholder presence at key industry events

Event/Conference feedback

Speaking opportunities secured

Parliamentary engagement

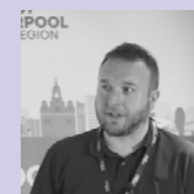
Share of voice vs. competitors – media sentiment

Social media reach/follower growth

Website visits and dwell time

External perception testing

Tailored KPIs depending on major projects listed above



We Are Staffordshire are probably the stand out example over the past five years of how a local authority brand has been transformed from a provincial region which may have unfairly been in the shadows of some of its better resourced peers into a national player, rubbing shoulders with the biggest metropolitan areas and competing with them for investment. It just shows what happens when you have the perfect mix of superb team members, a coherent strategy and buy in from across the political spectrum and private sector!

Matt Christie

Director – External Relations and Event Programme UKREiiF



*Please also see Screen Staffordshire details on page 22



CORE PRIORITY 3

STAFFORDSHIRE ADVOCACY

Internal Advocacy, Staffordshire PR and profile

AMBASSADOR NETWORK

Harness the Staffordshire Ambassador Network to connect advocates and organisations

POSITION STAFFORDSHIRE AS THE BEATING HEART

A programme of digital and traditional communications campaigns that supports advocacy and improved place confidence, using the voices of champion ambassadors

MARKETING ASSETS

Help Ambassadors tell our unique story around investment, tourism, culture and learning through high quality assets and toolkits

Other Key Activities:

- Showcase the work and impact of Screen Staffordshire to the businesses/venues/ locations who may benefit from filming production here in the county to demonstrate its impact on the county's culture and economic growth
- Engage and empower the county's young people - helping them learn, retain local talent, and connect to employment opportunities; grow the Young Advisory Group and deliver 1 campaign activity per year that engages with school-age children
- Raise civic pride in Staffordshire and drive changed perceptions of the place through Staffordshire Day activity



KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Outcome:

Brand narrative resonates & inspires action externally (beyond Staffordshire) (profile & visibility)

Licencees of the brand (April 2025 onwards)
ambassador sponsors using the logo

Toolkit users/downloads

Engagement with brand education session (pre-recorded video) or drop in training/connection session



I'm proud to support the work of We Are Staffordshire. Over the past five years, WAS has played a key role in raising the county's profile regionally and nationally, helping to showcase the strength, ambition and distinct identity of Staffordshire. The platform, materials and collaborative approach have helped connect partners and present a clear, confident narrative about our place. We have seen this first hand through their showcasing of Woolcool.

There is real momentum in this county right now and We Are Staffordshire is the driving force!

Josie Morris MBE
Chief Executive Officer, Woolcool

Outcome:

Brand narrative resonates & inspires action internally (Staffordshire) (profile & visibility)

Funding

Engaged Ambassadors (testimonials, speakers, social engagement)

Ambassador survey / wider Staffordshire stakeholder NPS

Local media coverage and sentiment

Social media coverage, sentiment and reach/ engagement within Staffordshire

Event attendance and feedback

Collaborative activities/requests

Tailored KPIs for specific campaigns (Staffordshire Day, Ambassador of the Year)



COLLABORATION

Supporting partnership endeavours

MAJOR EVENTS

We will work with and support our partners to explore opportunities for sustained collaborative investment in the county through bids for major events/cultural funds

POSITION STAFFORDSHIRE AS THE BEATING HEART

A programme of digital and traditional communications campaigns and pipeline of features and news stories, targeting features in national newspapers around Staffordshire's Invest, Visit, Culture and Talent offer

MADE IN STAFFORDSHIRE*

Provide wrap-around marketing and launch support for the Made in Staffordshire brand/quality mark

*key detail covered on page 24

Other Key Activities:

- We will support teams leading the Care Leavers Covenant work to raise the profile of Staffordshire's work in this space and leverage external opportunities to further our impact
- We will support and work collaboratively with the LVEP Board, Invest working group, Screen Staffordshire SteerCo and Cultural Project Board as/when new opportunities arise and will present opportunities for joint campaigns and funding bids to the Place Board as appropriate



KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Outcome:

Raising the profile and perception of Staffordshire and promoting economic benefits through targeted marketing campaigns that showcase our county as the primary place to live, learn, visit and invest; developing pilot programmes and events/bids

Funding/events/arts bids identified and supported

Number of external lobbying/profile events beyond Staffordshire's borders delivered in partnership

Evidence of joint campaigns delivered with partner services (Invest, Visit, Culture etc) together with outcomes



What a great thing We Are Staffordshire has been for us, it has jelled the economic growth drivers across the County and embedded cross border thinking and working – collectively we are so much better together. Taking the brand to local, regional and national platforms has helped showcase Staffordshire, where individual successes can be shared amongst us to raise the profile of the County as a whole. We genuinely cheer each other on and face outwards as one. We couldn't have done this without We Are Staffordshire.

Simon McEneny
Deputy Chief Executive,
Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council



SCREEN STAFFORDSHIRE SERVICE DELIVERY

Showcasing Staffordshire, raising profile and changing perceptions nationally and internationally; generating wider economic growth.



SERVICE REVENUE AND ECONOMIC BENEFIT

Delivering proactive and reactive solutions to UK Film and TV Sector, generating shoot days, income and wider economic benefit.

SHOWCASING STAFFORDSHIRE

We will showcase the rich cultural assets and destinations/screen tourism here in Staffordshire through a series of short film clips (up to 10), feeding into the Cabinet Office's GREAT Britain organisation's 'Starring Great Britain' campaign for its duration (or similar legacy projects), promoting these across social media and the Screen Staffordshire website.

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

Create opportunities for employment, whilst supporting career and educational development, brokering paid and work-experience led placements for young people in education, or unemployed/freelance creatives looking to gain access to careers in the sector.

Other Key Activities:

- The film office will attend or exhibit at relevant expos, trade shows and events, taking its name across the country in doing so
- Stakeholder Familiarisation - Screen Staffordshire will deliver at least 1 stakeholder familiarisation trip per annum to showcase the county's assets, unique locations and screen offer, combining/collaborating with LVEP colleagues and attractions where mutually appropriate
- Assets will continue to be catalogued and added to the Screen Staffordshire and Filming in England database to promote culturally significant/filming locations
- We will showcase locations used in production via behind-the-scenes videos
- Screen Staffordshire will formalise ties with its closest production hub and studio, Birmingham, principally via Production Central, as our closest base of a long-established sector with repeat business

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

At least £50k raised for SCC directly

At least £50k raised for district, city, borough and private sector partners

Over 200 locations/assets listed on Filming database

At least £1,000,000 wider economic benefit enabled by film office

At least 4x local companies / freelancers / services / local students, young people and unemployed employed or provided with work experience on Staffordshire production projects

At least 10x HETV Drama / Feature Film shoot days across County



MADE IN STAFFORDSHIRE SERVICE DELIVERY

Celebrating Staffordshire's producers, makers, creators and manufacturers; raising profile, driving economic identity, and supporting indigenous business growth:

- Deliver a countywide accreditation and quality mark - Manage the Made in Staffordshire Quality Mark across key sectors, with Trading Standards ensuring credibility and compliance.
- Create a centralised business directory and digital showcase - Provide an online hub on the We Are Staffordshire website to list and promote accredited businesses through coordinated digital activity.
- Raise the profile of Staffordshire's products and businesses - Showcase local makers and manufacturers at major events and through the Ambassador Network and key promotional moments.
- Provide tailored business support - Offer enhanced Trading Standards advice, FSB masterclasses and Growth Hub support such as Meet the Buyer events.
- Strengthen collaboration and business led governance - Deliver the programme with partners including Chambers, FSB, Trading Standards and Screen Staffordshire, guided by a dedicated Steering Group.



SERVICE REVENUE AND ECONOMIC BENEFIT

Made in Staffordshire supports economic growth by promoting locally made products, strengthening supply chains and increasing the visibility of Staffordshire businesses. It enhances the county's economic identity by showcasing its substantial manufacturing base and vibrant creative industries, while also encouraging local sourcing, building civic pride and helping to grow stronger, more resilient domestic markets.

SHOWCASING STAFFORDSHIRE

We will showcase Staffordshire's makers, creators and producers through coordinated campaigns across We Are Staffordshire's digital channels, using seasonal features, case studies, pop up activity and event presence to highlight their work. This will include a strong presence at countywide festivals and major shows such as the County Show soft launch in 2026, supported by multi channel storytelling that celebrates local products, manufacturing strengths and the breadth of creative businesses across the county.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT & FAMILIARISATION

We will deliver at least one annual stakeholder 'Made in Staffordshire' engagement activity that brings together businesses, partners and ambassadors to showcase members and share product stories. This will be supported by close collaboration with the Chambers of Commerce, FSB, Growth Hub and local authorities to broaden reach and grow membership across the county.

Other Key Activities:

- Coordinate with We Are Staffordshire for joint promotional campaigns including social media, newsletters, PR and external engagement opportunities.
- Support business development through masterclasses, workshops, and sector specific showcases.
- Align with cultural, economic and skills priorities across Invest Staffordshire, LVEP and Screen Staffordshire for cross promotion.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Membership Growth - Number of accredited Made in Staffordshire members (Target: 50 in 2026/27; 100 in 2027/28).

Digital Engagement - Website metrics: page visits, dwell time, business profile views.

Event & Festival Engagement - Number of events attended; interactions, and participation in County Show, festivals and business workshops.

Brand Reach & Visibility - Social media reach, campaign engagement and media mentions for Made in Staffordshire branded content.



CLOSING STATEMENT

As we set out this two year delivery plan, we do so with a clear and shared belief in what Staffordshire is today and what it will become when the ambitions of everyday, hardworking people is matched by action. Staffordshire has a proud heritage, world class employers, strong communities and a will to succeed.

We Are Staffordshire is a fantastic initiative, standing up for and promoting this county with confidence and clarity. Over the next two years, our mission is straightforward: to elevate Staffordshire's voice, promoting its opportunities with pride and a real sense of who we are. We will work directly with partners, investors and residents to deliver growth that makes a real difference in every community.

We will work to regenerate our town centres and strengthen our key economic corridors.

Staffordshire is moving forward with a focus on what matters to the people. By focusing on their ambitions, we will move forward as a county that is more prosperous, better connected, and works for the people of Staffordshire.

So, our message is simple and confident: Staffordshire is the beating heart of the country – a place where heritage supports enterprise, where ambition attracts investment and where practical partnership turns potential into progress. The people of Staffordshire are the very blood that keeps that heart pumping of our country, and through We Are Staffordshire, we are determined to prioritise them.

Thank you to everyone playing a part in this effort. Together, we will continue to shape a county that leads with pride, delivers with purpose and is ready to seize the opportunities ahead.



Councillor Martin Murray
Leader of Staffordshire
County Council



