

CITY OF  
WOLVERHAMPTON  
COUNCIL

# Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Panel

14 October 2021

**Time** 6.00 pm **Public Meeting?** YES **Type of meeting** Scrutiny

**Venue** Council Chamber - 4th Floor - Civic Centre

## Membership

**Chair** Cllr Jacqueline Sweetman (Lab)

**Vice-chair** Cllr Christopher Haynes (Con)

### Labour

Cllr Philip Bateman MBE  
Cllr Dr Paul John Birch J.P.  
Cllr Craig Collingswood  
Cllr Claire Darke  
Cllr Keith Inston  
Cllr Rupinderjit Kaur  
Cllr Barbara McGarrity QN  
Cllr Gillian Wildman

### Conservative

Cllr Adam Collinge  
Cllr Jonathan Yardley

Quorum for this meeting is three Councillors.

## Information for the Public

If you have any queries about this meeting, please contact the Democratic Services team:

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# Agenda

## Part 1 – items open to the press and public

- | <i>Item No.</i> | <i>Title</i>                                      |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| 1               | <b>Apologies</b>                                  |
| 2               | <b>Declarations of interest</b>                   |
| 3               | <b>Minutes of previous meeting</b> (Pages 3 - 12) |

### DISCUSSION ITEMS

- |   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4 | <b>Update on key emerging work within Culture, Creative and Visitor Economy</b><br>(Pages 13 - 24)<br>[To receive an update from Richard Lawrence, Director of Regeneration, Isobel Woods, Head of Enterprise and Liam Davies, Head of City Development.] |
| 5 | <b>Draft Work Programme</b><br>[To consider the draft work programme for the panel.]                                                                                                                                                                      |

## Attendance

### Members of the Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Panel

Cllr Philip Bateman MBE  
Cllr Dr Paul John Birch J.P.  
Cllr Adam Collinge  
Cllr Craig Collingswood  
Cllr Claire Darke  
Cllr Christopher Haynes (Vice-Chair)  
Cllr Keith Inston  
Cllr Barbara McGarrity QN  
Cllr Jacqueline Sweetman (Chair)  
Cllr Gillian Wildman  
Cllr Jonathan Yardley

### In Attendance

Cllr Stephen Simkins (Cabinet Member for Inclusive City Economy)

### Employees

Martin Stevens DL (Scrutiny Officer)  
Richard Lawrence (Director of Regeneration)  
Christopher Kirkland (Head of City Investment)  
Julia Cleary (Scrutiny and Systems Manager)

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## Part 1 – items open to the press and public

*Item No.*     *Title*

1            **Apologies and Substitutions**

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Rupinderjit Kaur.

2            **Declarations of interest**

The Portfolio Holder for Inclusive City Economy, Cllr Stephen Simkins, declared a non-pecuniary interest for in the event of the Canal Side Quarter Development being discussed and the Bradley arm canal restoration.

Cllr Phil Bateman MBE declared a non-pecuniary interest for in the event of the Canal Side Quarter Development being discussed as he sat as a Director on the Advisory Board for the Canal and River Trust West Midlands.

### 3 **Minutes of previous meeting**

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Panel held on the 18 March 2021 be approved as a correct record.

### 4 **Inward Investment and the Green Sector**

The Chair welcomed Christopher Kirkland to his new role as the Head of City Investment and wished him well in the role.

The Portfolio Holder for Inclusive City Economy formally welcomed Cllr Sweetman back as the Chair of the Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Panel. He also welcomed the new Members of the Panel and commented that he looked forward to working with them.

The Portfolio Holder for Inclusive City Economy stated that inward investment was key for the City of Wolverhampton. The City needed to attract as much inward investment as it could, and this included from Central Government for the large redevelopment projects. Inward investment needed to be attracted for many aspects of the Wolverhampton economy such as leisure and the late-night entertainment economy.

The Head of City Investment gave a presentation on inward investment. The Council had data on inward investment from 2017 – 2020. He was conscious that the Chair had requested data from the last ten years, but this was unfortunately not available. They were missing data from the last twelve months which he put down to the Covid-19 pandemic and the resources of Officers, his post had been vacant for some time. The table he showed was of assisted investment, that being where the Local Authority had helped obtain the investment. He wanted to capture non-assisted investment moving forwards. He thought this was useful information in determining how investable Wolverhampton was as a City. The tables did also not show the investment from Central Government and investment in residential.

The Head of City Investment stated that in 2017-2018 the data for assisted investment was, 5 projects and 440 jobs created (3-year projection). In 2018-2019 there had been 13 projects with a 3-year projection of 1,358 jobs. In the following year 2019-2020, there were 7 projects with a 3-year projection of 490 jobs created. Taking out some of the larger investments, they were averaging about 750 jobs a year, that the Council had directly supported as an investment team. Due to there not being data from March 2020 – March 2021 it was difficult to draw any conclusions on the impact of the pandemic. It was however obvious that some sectors had been impacted and in particular the hospitality and leisure sector. It was also true that in the last 18 Months, Wolverhampton had seen a lot of successful investment despite the pandemic. There had been growth in the distribution and logistics sector, he cited the example of the industrial estate Pantheon Park, which was now fully occupied.

The Head of City Investment remarked that in the period 2020/2021 the UK attracted 1,538 new inward investment projects and 55,319 new jobs. This was a reduction of 17% and 1% respectively on 2019/2020. In the Black Country LEP area there were 8 successful FDI projects and 93 new jobs created, with a further 3 jobs

safeguarded. That compared to 17 projects and well over 500 jobs in the previous year. He cited the recent investment successes as follows: -

- MHCLG
- i54 Western Extension
- Interchange
- i9
- National Brownfield Institute
- Town's Fund
- Future High Streets Fund
- Pantheon Park

The Head of City Investment provided a summary of the residential development investment progress as follows: -

- Telecom House / Renamed Churchside (Empire Properties) in construction 144 units
- Crown House (Rise Homes) in construction 95 units
- Horsley Fields (Place First) – Planning consent granted / out to construction tender 370 units
- Beatties (Axiom Stone) – Planning granted / out to construction tender 300 units
- Brewers Yard (Court Collaboration) – Phase 1 funding secured (780 units)

The Head of City Investment commented that his role was to generate leads and bring in investment. This started with the awareness and marketing stage and went through to the investment, rendition and growth stages. One of the areas they needed to do was to challenge themselves as to why people did not invest. He described the funnel model of, awareness, interest, evaluation, action and retention. It was notoriously difficult to find out why interest was not converted into investment from potential investors. Understanding the demand and where the supply was needed was important moving forward.

The Head of City Investment presented a slide on the subject of intelligence. Intelligence was an area that he had identified which he believed required more development at the Council. Building intelligence on the key sectors within Wolverhampton and identifying the City's USPs (Unique Selling Points) was key. As an example of a USP he cited, being a leader in the circular economy and sustainable construction. In other sectors across the Board, the Council needed to articulate better where the City's strengths were and the opportunities for growth. Over the next twelve months he wanted to work with the Council's partners and stakeholders to gather information and complete research to develop the propositions. When they were talking to investors, they would then be very clear as to what the offer was and why they should invest in Wolverhampton.

The Head of City Investment presented a slide titled, The Future. A key part of his current role was working with the West Midlands Growth Company. The Commonwealth Games and the Business and Tourism Programme (BATP) were

areas which they wanted to benefit from. They currently had a City Centre Prospectus, which they were looking to develop, identifying what was the longer-term plan for the City going forward. Sector intelligence and propositions were key for the future. They were also looking to enhance the marketing and lead generation using the website and social media. He referred to local, regional events and international events. The future of some of these events such as MIPIM were unclear. It was important therefore to consider where the opportunities were moving forward so Wolverhampton could be in the mix.

The Head of City Investment spoke about City Marketing. They were hoping to achieve an integrated marketing approach. The Invest brand was being well used. There was a close alignment between the Investment Team and the Communications Team. Once they were clear on the unique selling points they would be using resources to inform people about them. He spoke about the Invest website, which they had recently added a commercial property search facility.

The Head of City Investment presented a slide on the Green City. There needed to be some work completed on sector research and proposition development. Getting the key messaging right was important. The City was home to the new National Brownfield Institute and the new MHCLG, £10 million modern methods of construction taskforce. The Council had set its own target of being net carbon neutral by 2028. It was also looking like Wolverhampton would have the UK's first City Centre solar farm, which would power the NHS.

The Head of City Investment spoke on the theme of barriers and opportunities. There were clearly opportunities in the following areas: -

- Collaboration with WMGC, WMCA, DIT (Department for International Trade), Business Champions and 3 Cities.
- Opportunities around further public sector relocations
- Circular economy
- Enhanced marketing and lead generation
- Increased focus on supporting indigenous businesses and key account management
- Supporting the Relighting Our City priorities of Jobs and Skills, Grow our Vital Local Businesses, Vibrant High Streets and Communities.

He identified a potential barrier around the availability of sites and property and financial incentives for business.

On conclusion of the presentation, the Chair asked for questions. A Panel Member asked about the future of the new normal with regards to the use of Office space. The Cabinet Member for Inclusive City Economy responded that this was a matter which had been discussed widely. The City encouraged people to work from home and to have a good work and life balance, but this did take potential customers away from the City's centres. A careful balance needed to be struck, there were some advantages to having people in one building such as the Civic Centre, rather than people being dispersed in their own homes across the region. The Head of City Investment added that the i9 building was now fully let, which demonstrated that there was still a demand for Office space despite the increase in home working because of the pandemic.

A Panel Member referred to the figure of £4.4 billion investment in the City now or planned, which was on slide 6 of the presentation. He asked if there was a schedule which broke down what the projects were, when were they going ahead and if the contracts had been signed. In addition, he asked for more information on the 50,000 job ready students referred to in the slides. He commented that Wolverhampton, as of June 2021, had the sixth highest unemployment rate in the country at 9.9%. He asked if the planned investments would help improve the rate of unemployment.

The Director of Regeneration responded that there was a schedule of investments, which could be distributed to Members. The figure of 50,000 job ready students had been given to them by the University of Wolverhampton. He was happy to provide further evidence of the 50,000 job ready statement. On the question of whether the investments would help the unemployment rate in Wolverhampton, he expressed that this was certainly the intention. Clearly the pandemic had caused a detrimental effect on the economy as a whole, which they were acutely aware. But with a drive on investments and looking to bring the projects forward he hoped there would be a positive impact on the unemployment rate.

A Panel Member on the point of FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) asked what were the destination countries for the 8 companies and did they know what the drivers were for them to invest in those countries. In addition, he asked how they were recorded. He also asked what the plan was for the Council to get in front of investors. He was aware that Wolverhampton in terms of employment in the Black Country area came last in construction, wholesale, retail and manufacturing. He asked how Officers could account for this and what their intentions were to improve the situation.

The Head of City Investment promised to send the information on FDI to Panel Members. He knew one of them was the Flint Group in Wolverhampton. The Panel Member asked for clarification on what the Officer defined as FDI because his view was that FDI referred to export rather than inward investment. The Head of City Investment said he was using the expression of FDI to mean inward investment. The figures referred to in the slides from DIT (Department for International Trade) were inward investment only. The Chair welcomed the discussion because it highlighted the opportunities for businesses in Wolverhampton to export. It also highlighted the need to build up intelligence and dedicate resources for this aim. The Chair asked the Head of City Investment for the answers to the Panel Members questions to be provided within two weeks.

The Cabinet Member for Inclusive City Economy stated that the next stage for the department was to assess how the City exported. He stressed the importance of building resilience in the City. He also stressed the importance of education for Wolverhampton residents so they could obtain the jobs created in the City. He wanted the Council to be more collaborative with the University and expand on the green economy.

A Panel Member commented that it was a strong paper with a hint of realism about the issues in Wolverhampton. He referred to the competitive nature of cities within the UK economy. He raised a concern about climate change particularly given the recent news of serious flooding in parts of Germany and Belgium. In Canada there was currently 50 degrees Celsius heat on the West Coast. He raised the

importance of investing in flood prevention schemes, such as proper drainage infrastructure.

The Cabinet Member for Inclusive City Economy stated that the pandemic had showed the need for flexibility. He was proud of the response the Council had made. He stressed the importance of a zero carbon target applying to the world.

The Chair expressed concern about how the economy would be scrutinised next municipal year due to the proposed changes in Scrutiny Panel structures. One of the areas she recommended for detailed scrutiny was on what a green economy could look like in Wolverhampton and the Black Country. She believed the future was green. She referred to Finland that had been investing in the Green economy for twenty years. Most of the wind turbines in Britain had arrived from Finland. She also referred to the movement, UK 100 that brought together leaders and policy formers at an international level. There were currently no representatives from West Midlands Local Authorities, she wanted to see Wolverhampton as part of the group.

A Panel Member asked about business start-ups, the total amount of businesses in the City, increases in job numbers and ultimately increase in wages. He asked what were the metrics and what were the businesses studies and modelling the Council had to suggest what the City could expect from the funding and investment coming into the City. It was important not just to scrutinise by comparing previous years. He felt there was a role for the Council's Audit Committee to make sure delivery of schemes were progressed as quickly as possible. He highlighted the damage of not having the Civic Halls open for many years. His personal view on the use of Offices, was a move towards a permanent hybrid model. When he considered the City Centre of Wolverhampton, he was aware that the Council was one of the Cities biggest employers. Therefore, if the Council Offices were not open the businesses in the City Centre, such as Cafes would suffer.

A Panel Member commented that the Council needed to be careful about travel arrangements within the City. How the car was treated was important, as most people in Wolverhampton relied on their cars. Wolverhampton residents were travelling out of the City to places like Dudley and Telford to access services, shopping areas and their economies in general. The need to ensure good footfall in the City was very important to local businesses. Wolverhampton residents staying local and shopping local would help with the environment and climate change.

The Cabinet Member for Inclusive City Economy responded that all through the Covid-19 pandemic the Council had run a campaign of shop local and develop the Wolverhampton Pound. It was true that Central Government and Local Government were often slow to deliver projects.

The Director for Regeneration gave an update on the Directorate. The Council had been awarded £15.7m as part of the Government's Future High Street Fund. Delivery was now underway and the Council had received an annual payment of £10m. The Council had been rewarded with £25m from the major bid into the Towns Fund to support ten shortlisted schemes. They had been required to submit a Town Investment Plan to Government to demonstrate growth plans across three centres.

The Director for Regeneration referred to the Levelling Up Fund. This was a £4 billion national competitive scheme administered by the Treasury, Department for



International Trade and the MHCLG (Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government) covering England for the next four years up to 2024-2025. The Council had submitted a Tranche 1 Bid for £20m on 17 June 2021 for Wolverhampton South West Constituency. This bid focused on the City Learning Quarter Project and was endorsed by Mr Stuart Anderson MP.

The Director for Regeneration spoke on the Community Renewal Fund. £220 million additional funding was available to help places across the UK prepare for the introduction of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. It was a competitive fund being administered by the WMCA (West Midlands Combined Authority) on behalf of the West Midlands.

The Director for Regeneration gave some more detail on the Future High Streets Fund. He outlined four major elements, the Civic Halls Public realm, Victoria Street Public realm, Cleveland Parade and Box Park in Bell Street. Box Park would be a pop-up facility providing food and beverage. They were talking with a number of providers about the Box Park scheme.

The Director for Regeneration gave some more detail on the Town's Fund. They had originally submitted a bid for £48.3 million, they were awarded £25 million. The Town's Fund Board was looking at how to deliver the business cases for a number of the schemes. Funding was expected to start flowing from September 2021. There were eleven projects going forward focusing on three key areas of the City, City Centre sites, Wednesfield and Bilston. The business cases were being developed which would then require sign off from Central Government.

The Director for Regeneration added some more detail about the Levelling Up Fund. For Round 2, for the MP Area Wolverhampton South East, there was a proposal to focus on Bilston by building on Towns Fund work to potentially include wider improvements to the metro and bus interchange linked to the Pipe Hall and Market Projects. The second scheme in Round 2 was for the MP area of Wolverhampton North East, this proposal was under development.

The Director for Regeneration on the subject of the Community Renewal Fund spoke about a Council bid they had entered titled, iGNITE (innovate, Grow, Navigate, Ideas, Technology, Entrepreneurship). The bid proposed a business and enterprise hub at a vacant retail unit in the i10 building. Funding had already been secured for a two year lease, fit-out and project management. They had not yet heard from the West Midlands Combined Authority as to which schemes had been awarded funding. They were however keen to develop the project regardless, working in partnership with the University of Wolverhampton and the Black Country Chamber of Commerce. He saw it as a very important scheme for developing skills and business within Wolverhampton.

The Director for Regeneration presented a slide on Covid Business Grant Support. Through the Government's national scheme over 5,800 grants had been approved, a total value of just under £23 million. Through the discretionary funded scheme the Council had delivered over 3,800 grants, a total value of just over £15.3 million.

A Member of the Panel with reference to the £15.7 million Future High Street Funding award, asked whether this would result in any permanent building construction in the City. The Director responded that the funding was primarily for

the environmental enhancements, which would help link key parts of the City together. Whilst there would be no new permeant buildings it would certainly unlock future development sites, particularly in Cleveland Parade and Bell Street.

The Member responded that he was aware of other authorities who were constructing permeant buildings using Future High Street Funding, such as business start-up incubation units. He asked whether the pedestrianisation of Victoria Street and Lichfield Street was intended to draw people down to Westside and if this was the case, when would the Westside project be going ahead. The Director stated the scheme was able to drive vibrancy into areas adjacent to the High Street. Victoria Street was key because they knew of potential investment around the former Beatties building and the Mander Centre. It also helped with the links to other sites the Council were looking forward to bringing to future development, which did include the Westside area. It was having to be rephased as a consequence of the results of the pandemic. They were progressing with the proposal to secure a new Hotel for the City. He would come back to Members with more information in due course.

A Panel Member asked about the whole City Economy at a local level, which he noted had also been referred to at the previous meeting of the Panel. He was aware of big disparities between different wards with regard to deprivation and unemployment. He asked what scope there was for the team to help local areas with things such as grants. The Cabinet Member for Inclusive City Economy stressed the importance of attracting new hotels to the City, which would help stimulate the night-time economy and the visitor and leisure offer. He spoke on the excellent leisure offer Leeds had developed and wanted Wolverhampton to have something comparable. He commented that each Ward in Wolverhampton had barriers to employment but also opportunities for employment. The Scrutiny Panel could initiate some scoping work on a ward by ward level on this subject. Employment would help lift some people out of poverty. He stressed the difficulty in having to match government criteria for funding bids.

A Panel Member referred to the £220 million Community Renewal Fund which was replacing the European Regional Development Fund (EDRF) and the European Social Fund. To add some context he cited that between 2014 and 2020, the EU allocated over 350 billion Euros (32.5% of overall EU budget) for the EDRF. For the European Social Fund it allocated a further 3.1 billion Euros per year. The UK GDP (Gross Domestic Product) was £2 Trillion and so £220 million was only a very small fraction of the UK's overall GDP, compared to the 32.5% of the EU budget the European Union had previously dedicated to the EDRF.

**Resolved:** That the presentation paper on Inward Investment and the Green Sector be agreed.

5 **Work Programme**

The Chair stressed the importance of thinking about the long-term future when developing the Work Programme. She was happy for Members to contact her outside of the meeting with ideas. She commented that the Panel could invite some witnesses to future Panel Members such as business champions or representatives. How champions were used she felt was an important topic for discussion. The Cabinet Member for Inclusive City Economy said he would welcome such witnesses at future Scrutiny meetings.

**Resolved:** That the Work Programme for the Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Panel be agreed.

6 **Public Realm Member Reference Group Membership**

**Resolved:** That the Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Panel ratifies, Cllr Gillian Wildman, Membership on the Public Realm Member Reference Group.

The Chair thanked Members and Officers for their contributions to the meeting.

The Cabinet Member thanked the Chair for Chairing an excellent meeting and Panel Members for their contributions.

The meeting ended at 7:45pm.

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# Briefing Note

**Title:** Update on key emerging work within Culture, Creative and Visitor Economy

**Date:** 5 October 2021

**Prepared by:** Richard Lawrence

**Job Title:** Director of Regeneration

**Intended Audience:** Internal  Partner organisation  Public  Confidential

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## 1.0 Purpose

To provide an overview of the key work emerging within Culture, Creative and Visitor Economy incorporated within the themes of ***Play, Live and Work***.

## 2.0 Background

- 2.1 In 2016 BOP were commissioned to carry out a rapid piece of strategic planning for culture and the creative industries in Wolverhampton. The aim was to support the case for economic investment in culture and the creative industries in Wolverhampton and to understand the overall pattern for development of culture in the city.
- 2.2 At the time, the report noted the strengths that the city has in terms of physical cultural assets and potential to convert former industrial spaces for creative use, geographical position and the City of Wolverhampton Council's coordinated approach to regeneration, emphasising public realm and cultural vibrancy. It also highlighted that the city suffers from the lack of recognition of this cultural offer, weak hospitality and night-time economy offer, as well as loss of retail spending to Birmingham, Telford and other neighbouring cities. It was noted that a number of key regeneration programmes were underway including the railway station, which would help to address those issues.
- 2.3 The report recommended 5 priorities for development:
1. Investment in cultural venues to improve the customer experience
  2. Developing the skills and learning offer including the Grand Post House Creative Industries Hub and the City Learning Quarter. This should be done in partnership with education providers.
  3. Effective placemaking, including a bold, imaginative public realm particularly around the cultural quarter and Lichfield St.

4. Supporting creative businesses to flourish by offering creative workspace and working closely with the Black Country Growth Hub to facilitate business networks and signpost entrepreneurs to appropriate skills support and business development opportunities
5. Play a leading role in joining up efforts to ensure a strategic approach and partnerships to help unlock funding for the city.

### **3.0 Play**

3.1 Since the BOP report the City of Wolverhampton Council has been active in progressing a number of cultural projects for the city. In 2018, the city submitted an ambitious package of cultural activities and projects to the Arts Council Cultural Development Fund (CDF), totalling £6m. Although not successful, a second round of funding was announced earlier this year and city has submitted a revised expression of interest.

3.2 Some of the projects identified in the CDF proposal have successfully gone on to secure funds from alternative programmes such as Future High Streets and Towns Deal. Under the theme, 'Changing Perceptions' on the Towns Deal, the city has secured:

- Phase 1 City Arts Park has received a £1.5 m funding allocation from Towns Deal funding to deliver Grand Theatre Studio extension, a 200-seat flexible theatre /event space. It is hoped that this will be further supported and complemented through additional funding, sourced through the Cultural Development Fund, with an Expression of Interest (E.O.I) having been lodged successfully and preceding into the next funding rounds with a full application for funding to follow.
- Events City, a 5-year programme that will build on key events such as the British Art Show, supporting fringe events to showcase local talent and moving visitors across the city to help wards benefit from visitor spend. This has secured £0.5m from Towns Deal.

3.3 The Towns Fund Programme is currently scheduled for delivery to the end of 2026. The top three main projects within the "accelerated category" and already in progress include:

- Brewers Yard/Culwell depot, facilitates a depot relocation, additional jobs and transitions the council to renewable energy and supports the wider strategy to carbon reduction, the scheme also enables the development of the wider Brewers yard scheme, and new homes
- WM5G is the UK's first commercial 5G accelerator centre, enabling SME's to learn about 5G Technologies to grow and develop new products/services with suitable technical and business support the project will also upgrade masts to 5G across the West Midlands 9 of which will be in Wolverhampton. Question

handling any changes to Masts be subject to full planning permission. Huawei components are being actively phased out of the network

- The Events Programme will improve footfall significantly over a three-year period through 16 additional events, leading to increased local expenditure of circa £10m

- 3.4 In 2020 it was announced that the city had secured £15.5m Future High Streets fund. Wolverhampton Council successfully secured one of the largest funding awards in the country and – although the offer in principle is less than the original bid submitted –the council have adjusted plans accordingly in order to maximise the impact of the funding to deliver impactful schemes to help fulfil its ambitious city centre vision.
- 3.5 Preliminary works are underway which will see exemplar pedestrian routes and public realm interfaces paving the way for enabling further planned regeneration activities in our city centre, with the Civic Halls public realm scheduled for completion during 2022 and Victoria street public during the 2023/24 period. Innovative and contemporary projects, such as the Box Park initiative will be located on the existing Cleveland parade, bringing events space and a new eating / street food area that will support new and existing businesses to locate and create a destination for food, music and fashion. Works are due to commence during the period 2022/23.
- 3.6 In 2017 with Arts Council England (ACE) grant, the city’s iconic Art Gallery received capital funds to invest in its exhibition space and broaden its offer to attract more visitors and be more accessible and inclusive. Phase One completed in 2017 which created new exhibition space that successful attracted the World Wildlife Photography exhibition in 2018.
- 3.7 In early 2021 with support from council borrowing alongside grants from the ACE, Phase Two of this project started. The purpose, to give the gallery a fully accessible entrance for visitors via St Peters entrance. It was also agreed to relocate the café to the ground floor, creating a new affordable, exciting destination for the city. The venue will be able to cater for up to 80 covers with natural light coming from the stunning ground floor windows. The café and entrance are scheduled to be ready by December 2021, ahead of the British Art Show 9 which comes to the city January 2022.
- 3.8 Along with those which the council is leading / involved in there are also a number of private ventures in the city. The success of the football club in 2018 propelled the city’s profile and brought significant investment to the club. The club has ambitious plans which are more than just football matches. The club has launched an e-games team which has received global success and they recently announced their own record label, fitting in with their new moto ‘Wolves is Always On’. They are also looking at investment into the Stadium, creating a complementary conference offer for the city.
- 3.9 The city is, like many others, recovering from the impact of Covid 19. At the peak of Lockdown, Wolverhampton was facing significant challenges for those in the hospitality, arts and culture sector. Through strong partnership and collaboration with others in the West

Midlands region, officers across the council worked hard to ensure maximum support was secured for venues, businesses and those working in this sector. Many of our venues were able to secure Covid grants from the Arts Council, DCMS Cultural Recovery fund, furlough scheme as well as grants from the councils Covid response.

- 3.10 The city has built on the partnerships formed as a result of our response to Covid to secure future opportunities with Arts Council England, highlighted point 3.12
- 3.11 As the city and UK begins to reopen, we are seeing signs of recovery. Several new restaurants and eating venues have announced their opening in Wolverhampton, the latest is the Medicine café, which is to be based at the Lighthouse.
- 3.12 In summer 2021 Arts Council England launched their delivery plan underpinning how they will achieve the ambitions set out in Let's Create. Arts Council England published 'Let's Create' a 10- year strategy in March 2020, its focus is on three outcomes, Creative People, Cultural Communities and A Creative & Cultural Country.
- 3.13 As part of this national delivery plan Arts Council has recognised the opportunities and potential of Wolverhampton's arts and culture sector, by naming it as one of 50 priority places in the UK to further develop cultural engagement and investment, and increase engagement with local communities. Within this plan, one of the five themes are 'strengthening the place-based approach and supporting Levelling Up'. Arts Council will work with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to improve investment in priority places.

#### **4.0 Developing the Culture Offer**

- 4.1 Is it key that the city has a strong coordinated approach in place to maximise opportunities emerging at a national level and ensure local communities and residents are engaged and benefit from programmes and activities.
- 4.2 The city has begun work on a new Cultural Strategy based around the 5 strategic Ps (Partnerships, Productivity, Place-making, Participation, Pride). Each strand will form the basis of a key workstream, aligned to current cross-cutting city priorities and provide contents and direction for future funding bids. Future Prosperity and Levelling- up funds being amongst those which the City is looking to maximise benefit for the cultural sector.
- 4.3 The work around the strategy and those emerging with the city's Cultural Action Zones (identified locations across Wolverhampton), will be brought together with that which is underway through the city's Covid recovery strategy, Relighting Our City.
- 4.4 Aware that arts and culture has many touch points across economy, community, environment and place shaping, the city with funding from the Art Council established in 2020 Wolverhampton's first Cultural Compact, a board of key



stakeholders from cultural and non-cultural backgrounds. Through this board and a wider Cultural Stakeholder Group, officers have been developing the Arts and Culture offer for the city, connecting with regional and national programmes such as the Commonwealth Games Cultural Programme and Creative & Cultural Skills WM. The board also assisted with the city's recent bid to be City of Culture 2025.

- 4.5 Locally, opportunities are being developed to bring greater community participation and inclusion. The service is running a cultural programme aligned to Commonwealth Games, funded through Arts Council England. The main focus of this will be 'Black Country Beats' a music exhibition that will tie into the opening of the Civic Halls. We are also hosting one of the open-call commissions, focusing on the Black Art Group.
- 4.6 Engaging young people from the city is also an important area, and the service works closely with colleagues in Children and Young People and was an active partner over the summer months with the city's summer squad and #YES campaign, and is leading on the work with the Cultural Education Partnership.
- 4.7 Officers are working to bring all these strands together into a comprehensive strategy that will influence the shape of the city's offer going forward. Engaging and working with our partners (WMCA, Commonwealth Games, West Midlands Growth Company, Arts Council and Culture Central) is key to ensuring we maximise the approach and opportunities for our city. The outcome of this will be shared with members, communities and stakeholders later this year.
- 4.8 In 2021 the council announced that AEG Presents – part of the AEG global sports, entertainment and venue operator family – have secured a long-term deal to run the city's iconic Civic Halls. Through the AEG group the civic halls will offer a first-class customer experience for events and shows, along with food & beverage and other services.
- 4.9 AEG are now preparing their exciting and ambitious plans for the Civic Halls which include how local business can benefit, the creation of new jobs whilst also raising the city's national and international profile.

## **5.0 Live and Work**

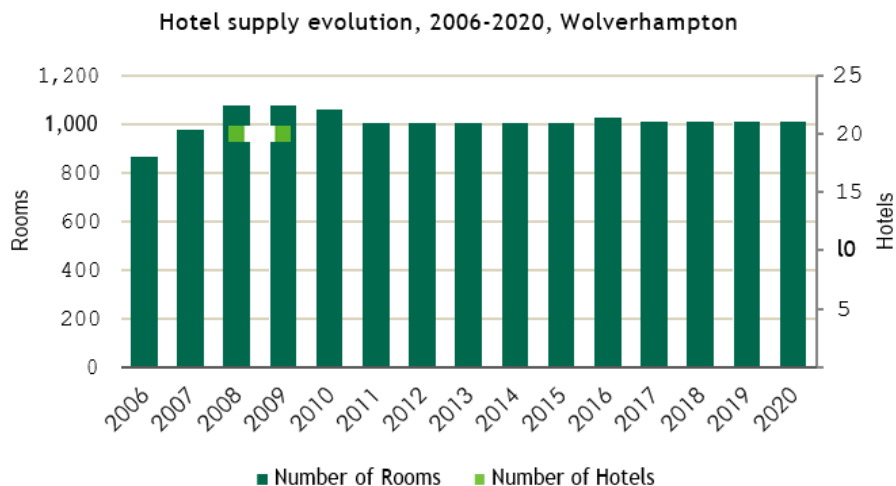
- 5.1 Key to the regeneration programme of the City is to address the undersupply of good quality hotel provision within the City Centre, which will help support the business and leisure economy post COVID. The delivery of good quality hotel space has been part of the regeneration plans for the City for a significant period of time, dating back to 2011/2012 when the City Centre Prospectus was launched which included various regeneration opportunities, including hotel use. The principle is also enshrined in

planning policy (AAP) and hotel proposals have emerged for various sites across the City but have unfortunately not come to fruition.

## 5.2 Some key facts:

- There are currently 16 hotels, accounting for 1,101 bedrooms in the Wolverhampton market.
- In the last 14 years, only 2 hotels have opened (209 bedrooms), the Redwings Lodge Wolverhampton Central (opened 2008 and rebranded from Travelodge in 2015) and the Premier Inn Wolverhampton City Centre Bluebricks (opened in 2007).
- In the last 10 years, total room supply has declined by 4.5% due to the closure of 4 small independent hotels. By comparison, over the last decade, hotel room supply has increased by 10.5% and 11.2% in the UK and West Midlands respectively.

5.3 The Council understands that it will have to intervene in order to ensure a new supply of quality hotel and offer is provided in the city, as hotel brands do not tend to fund and develop their own hotels developments and brands such as Marriot, Hilton, Ramada now operating predominantly on a franchise model basis.

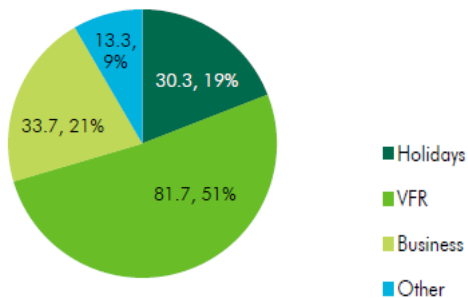


Existing hotel supply by class, Wolverhampton



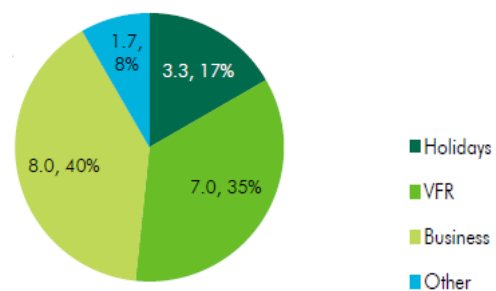
- 5.4 There are a number of examples both regionally and nationally where local authorities have made possible the supply of new quality hotel provision to support wider objectives such as supporting the visitor economy (e.g. Stockton, Coventry, Stockport, Rochdale, Liverpool). These projects have been implemented through the development of robust business cases that demonstrates good returns on investments and in doing so enabling wider regeneration, often through the establishment of Special Purpose Vehicles.
- 5.5 The below statistics demonstrate the lack of supply of hotel provision but also the opportunity that a quality provision will support.

Domestic Overnight Tourism Visits (000's)  
2017-19 annual average Wolverhampton  
Wolverhampton



GB Tourism Survey 2021

Domestic Overnight Tourism Spend (£GBP m) 2017-19 annual average



- 5.6 According to the GB Tourism Survey, there was an average of 159,000 overnight visits per annum to Wolverhampton by domestic travellers in the period 2017-2019. This compares to 62,200 in bound overnight visits per annum, meaning that international travel accounts for c.28.1% of total overnight visits to the city – across

the wider West Midlands region, overseas demand only accounts for c. 14.5% of total overnight tourism demand.

- 5.7 Wolverhampton's high exposure to domestic travel demand will support the recovery of the market following the pandemic, assuming that the recovery of domestic demand is relatively rapid.
- 5.8 However, in a regional context, the city's material and increasing appeal to the lucrative inbound travel market presents an opportunity on which it can capitalise and grow tourism receipts and wider expenditure across the city.
- 5.9 The Council has completed its soft marketing exercise via the e-tender portal, with national and international hotel brands and operators keen to have a presence in the city. Further due diligence is being concluded on business cases, investments scenarios, procurement routes and vehicles with a report to Cabinet detailing the preferred delivery route towards the end of the year.

#### **5.10 Canalside South**

- 5.11 The Council through its delivery partnership with Canal & River Trust has assembled the site, which is being marketed as Canalside South for the development of a residential community that will see hundreds of new homes along one of the most historic stretches of canal in the country.
- 5.12 The 17-acre waterfront development opportunity – which equates to the size of approximately 30 football pitches - sits on the eastern edge of the city centre and is made up of the former Crane Foundry site, former British Steel site and land off Qualcast Road.
- 5.13 The vision for Canalside South is the delivery of around 1,000 homes to meet both the city and wider region's housing needs. It will also see the provision of a mix of complementary retail, leisure and commercial uses as part of the comprehensive development of the site.
- 5.14 Located minutes away from the city centre and the award-winning £150million transport Interchange, it provides easy access to the tram, road, rail and canal network. Commercial partners Avison Young are supporting the marketing of the site.

#### **5.15 Business engagement**

- 5.16 For over 18 months, officers across the council have been heavily involved in the distribution of a number of grants and interventions schemes to support businesses across the city, during Covid restrictive measures.
- 5.17 Over the summer the city has seen businesses and organisation begin to reopen as Covid measures relax. It is still key for businesses in the city to have protection against infection of Covid, however the city can now start to focus its attention both on the immediate and longer-term recovery of the city's economy.

5.18 The aim, to rebuild and become even more ambitious for the city, and to perform above the national average on a number of key metric economic performance. To help achieve this it is important that the council has clear oversight of our businesses, their issues and requirement, market sectors, our role and what impact this has.

5.19 As a result of the city's response to supporting businesses during the pandemic the council has a rich set of data and intelligence on business across the city, of difference size and sector. Officers are drawing on this intelligence and reviewing actions delivered during the past 18 months to shape a targeted approach to business engagement, one which is intelligence led.

## **5.20 Business support**

5.21 Alongside a number of targeted business support programmes, officers are frequently approached by businesses for varying requests of support and assistance. Aware that our current programmes which are funded by EU conclude in March 2022, officers have started to review and assess the future of business support for the city.

5.22 To help undertake this work the council has appointed an external company who are working with businesses and intermediaries across the city, to understand needs and ambitions of companies in Wolverhampton. Their work will give the city an evidence-based approach to business support that responds to the needs/ wants of business and that delivers key priorities for the city. This is due to conclude later this year and will be shared with members for consideration.

5.23 The past year has highlighted the demands for businesses to be more digitalised. Businesses are having to respond to changes in consumer behaviour in the way they buy and their demands for goods and service, alongside a more agile flexible way of working. Scrutiny have received a number of presentations around this agenda and how the pandemic has highlighted the challenges and opportunities with digital.

5.24 In 2018 the city council became the first UK local authority to partner with the global online platform eBay, on their retail revival scheme. The scheme offered over 60 businesses in the city dedicated support and training to trade on eBays platform and saw the first ever pop-up eBay shop, giving businesses on the programme an opportunity to meet with customers, in person.

5.25 The city continued discussions with eBay after the programme had closed to identify further opportunities for joint working. Ebay were very complimentary of the partnership working and even though they viewed the scheme as being a success the company chose to take a different direction. The focus shifted to the wellbeing benefits individuals saw from selling on the platform rather than the economic

benefits which had been the key metrics in the Wolverhampton scheme. The company also stepped away from having a place based identity and focused on national campaigns.

- 5.26 **City Investment** despite the challenges caused by the pandemic the city has been able to secure a number of key inward investments to the city. Among which has been the well published i9 scheme which has fully let the office space. The new office part of the city's Interchange and Commercial district will be home to the West Midlands Pension company, LGPS Central Ltd and the new headquarters of Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (formally MHCLG, who are bringing over 300 new jobs to the city).
- 5.27 The National Centre for Sustainable Construction and Circular Economy (NCSCCE), which incorporates the National Brownfield Institute (NBI) is located at the University of Wolverhampton's Springfield Campus. The centre presents a unique opportunity for a place-based strategy for the city, with the Springfield Campus at its core acting an Innovation District where leading-edge anchor institutions and companies cluster and connect with start-ups, business incubators and accelerators and linkages with assets in the wider Black Country and West Midlands
- 5.28 Sustainable construction and the circular economy is a crucial element in the built environment sectors efforts to address carbon pollution and climate control. The NCSCCE alongside the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities £10m MMC taskforce (Modern Methods of Construction) which is located at their HQ at i9 and the potential for modular housing production facility within Wolverhampton means that the city could be the national leaders in promoting and developing this sector.

## 6.0 Summary

- 6.1 The report gives a brief overview of some of the many regeneration programmes and projects, happening or coming to the city. It also highlights the approach we have to move forward, as we continue to build and grow the city's economy.
- 6.2 it is vital that all regeneration activities generate opportunities for local people and local businesses. Wolves@work has been active throughout the pandemic and has identified over 600 jobs in the past 6 months. Funding has been secured for a further 5 years and officers and partners including DWP are continuing to identify and support recruitment and importantly working with sectors to help prepare people with training and skills. It is key that we engage and help prepare people and young residents of the city, linked with our Adult Education Service and other local providers, to be ready to access opportunities that these projects and the businesses in the city are creating.

- 6.3 The work which is underway looking at the future of business support will help give the city its direction and focus on how, and what we need in place to enable businesses to access and benefit from regeneration and recovery of the city.
- 6.4 Throughout all of this it is important that members note we continue to be ambitious in our plans, however we face incredibly competitive funding programmes. It is key that we build on the partnerships we have developed to demonstrate that projects and programmes have strong collaboration in place, that our stakeholders, local communities, private sectors, and regional partners WMCA are on board.

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**Scrutiny Work Programme (draft)**  
**Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Panel 2021-2022**

**Relighting our City**

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## Scrutiny – A New Approach

1. **Roles and expectations** have been defined for the Chairs of Scrutiny Panels, Strategic Executive Board (SEB) leads and Scrutiny Officers; creating a collective understanding of scrutiny's role within the Council. These can be seen in Appendix A.
2. Effective **work planning and agenda setting** will take place to produce **jointly owned work plans**.
3. Regular briefings will be arranged with the Scrutiny Panel Chair, Vice Chair, SEB lead and scrutiny officer to enable a shared understanding of priorities and reviews of progress and recommendations.
4. **Improved communication:** 'You said we did' updates and publicity (including social media)
5. Creation of a **strong organisational culture** that supports scrutiny work that **adds real value** and **evidences impact**.

## **Work Programme considerations:**

- 1. Is the issue in the public interest?**
- 2. How can scrutiny add value by looking at it?**
- 3. Where is the evidence to support looking at this issue?**
- 4. Can we evidence impact?**
- 5. Is there a change to National Policy?**
- 6. Does it affect citizens across the City?**
- 7. Are there performance concerns?**
- 8. Is it a safety issue?**

## Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Panel

Chair: Cllr Jacqueline Sweetman	Vice Chair: Cllr Christopher Haynes	SEB Lead: Richard Lawrence	Scrutiny Lead: Martin Stevens
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Date of Meeting	Agenda Publication	Item Description	Lead Report Author	Notes
15 July 2021	7 July 2021	<b>Inward Investment and the Green Sector</b>	Christopher Kirkland (Head of City Investment) / Richard Lawrence (Director of Regeneration)	<p>Item to include Town's Fund, Levelling Up Fund, Future High Street Fund, Cultural Development Fund (Phase 2), Community Renewal Fund (WMCA), Structural Funds (from March next year) and Covid-19 funds. Aspirations for the City moving forward to be included. Christopher Kirkland Investment Team information to be outlined. Three Cities work with Birmingham and Coventry.</p> <p>A) How much inward investment has been attracted in the last ten years and what types?</p> <p>B) Has investment started to decline and if so why?</p> <p>C) What is it that we currently don't know which we need to know to make things better?</p>

				<p>D) What will we be doing moving forward?</p> <p>E) Where have we missed out on investment and why?</p> <p>F) How does inward investment link to the marketing of the City?</p> <p>G) What is the impact of the Green Sector activity on Wolverhampton?</p> <p>H) What are the barriers and opportunities for collaboration, where has it worked in the past, where has it failed and what have we learnt? Are we exploiting the opportunities and are the right people in place? How does the Wolverhampton Pound link into this?</p>
14 October 2021	6 October 2021	<b>Culture, Creative and Visitor Economy</b>	Richard Lawrence (Director of Regeneration) / Isobel Woods (Head of Enterprise)	<p>To include Hotels and Civic Halls.</p> <p>Marketing of the City.</p> <p>Commonwealth Games / Festival of Britain.</p> <p>Ebay</p>

17 February 2022	9 February 2022	<b>Place Level Economic Scrutiny</b>  <b>Jobs, Skills and Learning Opportunities</b>	Julie Obada (Head of Skills) / Joanne Keatley (Head of Adult Education)	To include Kick Start. Learning City Promotion.
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## Scrutiny Panel Remit & Functions

The scrutiny of policies to attract and retain new businesses and employment in the context of sustainable economic and environmental regeneration.

The Panel will have responsibility for scrutiny functions as they relate to:

- Enterprise and skills
- City Development
- Visitor Economy
- Adult and Cultural Learning
- Economic Inclusion
- Service Development



## **General Role of the Scrutiny Board and Scrutiny Panels**

### **Within the terms of reference set out in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, the Scrutiny Board will:**

1. Co-ordinate the work of the Scrutiny Panels and Scrutiny Review Groups.
2. Receive annual reports from the Councillor Champion and give consideration to the work undertaken and issues that the Councillor Champion wishes scrutiny to consider investigating further.
3. Maintain regular dialogue with the Cabinet on service improvement, performance management of cross-cutting issues, policy development and budgetary provision.
4. Oversee and ensure access to appropriate learning and development for scrutiny Councillors.
5. Discharge the call-in procedures relevant to its overarching role.

### **The Scrutiny Panels will:**

1. Maintain regular dialogue with the Cabinet, Scrutiny Board and Councillor Champions.
2. Ensure that members of the public and stakeholders are informed of and involved in issues within the remit of each Panel.
3. Discharge the call-in procedure relevant to their terms of reference.

## Appendix A: Roles and Responsibilities

### 1. Chair of Scrutiny Panel:

- To attend fortnightly meetings with the SEB lead and Scrutiny Officer
- To attend agenda setting meetings and other relevant briefings on a regular basis
- To contribute to the work planning for the panel and to bring forward relevant topics and issues for inclusion
- To chair meetings in a fair and open way and to encourage participation from panel members
- To attend Scrutiny Board (where appropriate) to provide feedback and updates on progress
- To prepare, when possible, questions in advance of a meeting to allow for healthy debate and to ensure that clear resolutions are made that add value and show impact
- To act as champion for scrutiny and to represent the best interests of the citizens of Wolverhampton

### 2. SEB Lead:

- Meet with the Chair, the Vice Chair and the Scrutiny Officer fortnightly to discuss upcoming issues, updates from previous meetings, workplans and any other relevant business as agreed by all parties.
- Recommend topics for inclusion on the workplan, working proactively with the Chair, Vice Chair and Scrutiny Officer to address any issues/opportunities/challenges that fit with the remit of the panel.
- To advise on the viability of any issues put forward by the panel for inclusion on the work plan.
- To attend relevant Scrutiny Panel meetings and provide an update at each meeting on any relevant issues within the remit of the panel. Also, attending Scrutiny Board (as appropriate) to provide feedback.
- To act as a champion for scrutiny in the Council and to encourage engagement with the scrutiny function and promote a healthy culture within which scrutiny can thrive

### 3. Scrutiny Officer:

- Provide support and guidance to the panel, its members, officers, partners and other stakeholders regarding the scrutiny function
- To ensure openness and transparency in the scrutiny function and to make sure that information is continuously shared and communicated between all relevant parties in a timely and suitable fashion
- To ensure that the appropriate persons are invited to meetings and that they are given adequate time to prepare and to provide guidance and support where appropriate
- To manage the administration of all relevant panels and meetings within statutory timescales
- To carry out research and information gathering exercises when required
- To provide advice on policy and legislation where appropriate
- To ensure that all resolutions are followed up and responses or actions fed back, monitored and recorded
- To act as liaison between the Chair and the SEB lead to ensure a shared understanding of priorities and work planning.
- To manage the agreed work plan and its outcomes to show impact and added value