



# Enterprise and Business Scrutiny Panel

## Minutes - 15 July 2014

### Attendance

#### Members of the Enterprise and Business Scrutiny Panel

Cllr Harbans Bagri  
Cllr Philip Bateman  
Cllr Craig Collingswood  
Cllr Val Evans  
Cllr John Rowley (Chair)  
Cllr Tersaim Singh  
Cllr Martin Waite  
Cllr Jonathan Yardley (Vice-Chair)

#### Employees

Tim Johnson	Strategic Director, Education and Enterprise
Keren Jones	Assistant Director, Partnerships, Economy and Culture
Earl Piggott-Smith	Scrutiny Officer

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

*Item No.*    *Title*

1            **Apologies**

Apologies were received from the following Councillors

Cllr Jacqueline Sweetman  
Cllr Payal Bedi  
Cllr Zahid Shah

2            **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received

3            **Minutes of the previous meeting (4.3.14)**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 4.3.14 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4            **Matters arising**

Cllr Bateman commented on previous concerns raised about the impact of derelict sites along the railway corridor into the City and the poor impression given to rail users and visitors to the City.

Tim Johnson advised the panel that his presentation would set out plans for the regeneration of the City that would respond to the concerns.

Cllr Bateman commented on the difficulty in redeveloping sites to make them attractive to developers and suggested consideration be given to changing the planning designation to encourage their development. Cllr Rowley commented on the need for the Council to be flexible when considering changes from employment to residential use.

Tim Johnson advised the panel that while there is a lot of available land in the City, there was insufficient demand. As a result current efforts were focused on bringing packages of land together that could be made attractive to developers, but accepted that this was a challenge. Tim Johnson commented that the Council has limited resources and it was therefore important to invest in regenerating those areas that were expected to deliver an economic return for the City and make marginal areas more financially viable.

## 5 **Black Country Working**

Keren Jones presented a report on the development and delivery of the Black Country Strategic Economic Plan and supporting Growth Fund opportunities. Keren Jones outlined the aims of the strategy and the role of Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) in supporting the delivery of projects across the region. Keren briefly outlined the funded resources managed by the LEP and how they were being used.

Keren Jones outlined the success of the Black Country Growth Deal bid to deliver a programme of projects and deliver new ways of working. Wolverhampton had been very successful in securing funding for the city within this context. The Black Country LEP has also secured flexibility about how the resources will be used. Keren Jones explained the spending plans for 2015/16.

Cllr Bateman commented on the potential benefits of developing the canal side area of the City and making improvements to the towpath area to make it more attractive and generate positive headlines. Cllr Bateman welcomed the report and the successful funding bids.

Keren Jones explained that it was a competitive process and that some of the funding would provide an opportunity to improve the green infrastructure and access corridors into the City.

Cllr Rowley commented that not enough done to unlock the potential of the open space and the opportunity to improve cycling and walking routes.

Keren Jones commented on the work being done with the Canal and River Trust to develop this area of work. Keren Jones commented on the development of a cycle lane from Tettenhall to the i54.

Keren Jones explained that the first round of Growth Deal funding was for capital projects, and included opportunity to make employment, housing and mixed use sites more attractive for inward investment and development.

Cllr Martin Waite commented on the concern about whether local people will have the necessary skills to take advantage of the job opportunities as result of the investment.

Tim Johnson commented on the challenge in equipping local people with the skills needed. Tim Johnson commented on the issue of employability and the need to help people with low skills. The current focus is on how to equip people with the skills needed to help them take advantage of job opportunities linked to planned developments.

Cllr Yardley commented on the funding figures quoted in the Express and Star which suggested that Wolverhampton had not been very successful in its bids. Keren Jones explained that Wolverhampton had done much better than the headlines would suggest, as some of the projects the City will benefit from are cross cutting, which benefit the whole of the Black Country.

Keren Jones commented that it has taken time to understand the figures because of how the funding has been calculated.

Resolved.

1. That the report and the presentation be received.
2. That the panel welcome the progress made to bring forward development projects in Wolverhampton.

## 6 **Education and Enterprise - regeneration priorities and current position**

Tim Johnson gave an overview of the key strategic regeneration areas of the Wolverhampton, current and future development work, and the overall vision for the future of the City. Tim Johnson commented in detail on the work being done in the following areas during the presentation:

- J2/i54
- City centre
- Bilston

Tim Johnson commented that the three areas offered the best opportunity to regenerate the City.

Tim Johnson commented on the opportunity to develop Council owned land on the site of i54 which could support its future expansion and encourage developers to the area. Tim Johnson commented on the enquiries received from developers who have expressed an interest in moving to the site and the work being done to improve transport links to the area.

Tim Johnson commented that the new Sainsbury store was open in the City centre and that the new Tesco site was expected to open in early 2015. Tim Johnson commented on the work being done to regenerate the City centre and specifically the plans for the Westside and Southside developments. Tim Johnson commented on the work being done to also retain existing businesses in the area.

Tim Johnson commented that there are discussions about the future plans for the indoor market, but nothing has been decided. Tim Johnson commented that no new indoor markets had been developed in the last 30 years in the UK, which is a sign of the change in shopping patterns. The current market offer needs to be developed as part of the overall City centre offer.

Tim Johnson commented about discussions with the Department of Transport about the interchange project and the development of a new car park. Tim Johnson commented on developer interest on the 'block 10' site near the station.

Tim commented on the Canalside quarter development and the plans for the redevelopment of the Springfield Brewery site. Tim Johnson commented that discussions ongoing about redeveloping the site as a national centre to provide training on construction and education for young people. Tim Johnson also commented on the plans for the redevelopment of the former Sunbeam factory site.

Cllr Rowley welcomed the plans to redevelop both sites which have been empty for many years.

Tim Johnson commented on the importance of the cultural and entertainment offer in helping to regenerate the City centre.

Tim Johnson commented on the local growth fund bids that will be used to redevelop the Civic Halls and the Grand Theatre and increase its capacity. Tim Johnson commented on the importance of the investment of the University in the city. Tim Johnson commented on the work being done with Wolverhampton College which had missed out on past investment opportunities.

Tim Johnson commented on the vision for the future of the Bilston and the work being done to bring forward developments

Cllr Bateman commented on the need to consider how funding can be used to also support the development of other areas of the City and would like all areas to benefit from the planned investment.

Tim Johnson commented on the importance of focus on regenerating key areas of the city and unlocking their potential of those sites which have been derelict for some time. The regeneration of these areas was considered to be key to the work being done to improve the City, but it will take time to deliver the changes.

Resolved

1. The Panel agreed to receive the presentation.
2. The Panel welcomed the presentation and supported the work being done to regenerate the City.

The meeting ended at 8pm.