

# Briefing Note

**Title: City Identity and Marketing**

**Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2019**

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**Job Title: Head of Enterprise**

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

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## **Purpose**

To share with Members the work that is underway to improve the identity of the City of Wolverhampton to key audiences and seek support for the approach. The focus, to build a strong brand for the city, reflecting the positive attributes and ambitious regeneration activities that are improving the communities, businesses and the place, of Wolverhampton.

## **Background**

Unfairly, the city sometimes suffers from a negative perception through national surveys and some media reporting. This has led to a number of audiences outside of the city feeling discouraged from visiting Wolverhampton and has also led to some communities feeling disheartened about the city's future.

We are working hard to address this and in 2016 the Economic Growth Board, a partnership of public organisations, private enterprises and strategic businesses, put forward a proposition to create a new positive identity for Wolverhampton. The aim, to raise the positive changes occurring in the city through the ambitious regeneration programme and bring these to the attention of audiences outside of Wolverhampton and importantly, engage and connect these with local residents and business already in the city.

An insight exercise was commissioned capturing views about the city from a wide range of stakeholders. This detailed piece of work identified a number of unique attributes about Wolverhampton, features which then needed to be brought together in to a city identity. A design company was commissioned to create an identity for the city, that represented the positive qualities which make Wolverhampton unique.

The identity was shared with the Economic Growth Board in early 2017 and has now started to appear on a number of campaigns. Momentum has slowly been building, recognising that in order to establish a qualitative, meaningful place brand it needs further buy-in from key partners and stakeholders who have an interest in the city.

## Insight research of Wolverhampton

The research identified a number of qualities and challenges which needed to be captured and addressed

- **City value** – the city portrays a warmth and friendliness from the people who live here. There is a history of honesty, endeavour, enterprise and evolution. A strong resilience as communities have taken on and responded to changes
- **Changes underway** – the city has engaging partnerships (university, businesses, communities), it has modern transport connections, strong art and cultural offer and significant investment in regeneration
- **Challenges** – views were often shared with some degree of cynicism, actions were sometimes uncaring and occasional we ‘self-harm’ the city’s identity.

The city needed to have an identity that moved the pride expressed in the past, into the present and the future. We want to be known as a city which is doing things for ‘us’, and not ‘them’ and one which has a narrative of ‘can do’, rather than ‘used to’

The findings were brought together, showing Wolverhampton is a city which has:

### ***The spirit of possibility***

*The people of Wolverhampton have a unique spirit that you won't find elsewhere. The city is open to new ideas and new thinking which unlocks and embraces collective potential as individuals, each with something new and valuable to give. The city thinks big but we keep our feet on the ground harnessing the spirit of possibility.*

Qualities are, **original, spirited, together**

Audiences and mindsets;

- a) Residents are advocated
- b) Businesses are innovators
- c) Students are free thinkers
- d) Visitors are explorers

## **Progress**

The next stage was to take these and educate, surprise, excite, sell, showcase, inform, welcome and build pride, with an ambition of building a positive reputation for the City of Wolverhampton.

An identity was needed to define and create awareness and understanding of what the City of Wolverhampton means, one that would bring value when used with or linked to other brand and organisations. It needed to be an umbrella brand.

## **Current position**

In order to establish the brand a number of key components were identified:

- An identity which represented the city's qualities
- Momentum to create focus and help prioritise it as an element we need to build a reputation for
- Clear communication plan to connect this with our audience.

To ensure the application of the identity is consistent and in line with the principles, brand guidelines have been produced.

A soft launch was undertaken during the Visitor Conference programme in 2017 with the promotional video shared at the 2017 Business Breakfast. The brand has continued to be a feature in the city's wider conference programme across Residents, Visitor and Business in 2018, and now in 2019.

## **Marketing Strategy**

To date the focus has been to embed the brand in a number of key activities, events and campaigns which the council has led on. A sample of these have been attached, further examples will be shared in the presentation at the board.

We aim to reach a range of target audiences including:

- Residents
- Visitors
- Students
- Businesses
- Investors
- Government
- Media
- Opinion formers

Our short-term objective is to communicate key brand messages to increase awareness and shape perception. In the longer term, by helping to generate strategic, real life activity and events that deliver coherent long-term brand experience, it will strengthen the city's positive brand.

Over the coming months the identity needs to be embedded by key stakeholders and interested partners. This will involve targeted engagement, management and support, and awareness of activities. Current resources and capacity within the council are being reviewed to understand how this will be actioned.

