

Briefing Note

Title: City Marketing Strategy Development

Date: 28 January 2020

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Job Title: Director of Communications /
Head of Enterprise

**Intended
Audience:**

Internal

Partner organisation

Public

Confidential

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Panel is recommended to note:

1. Progress on developing an outcome-based, audience-focused city marketing strategy for the city council.
2. That to fully realise the strategy and the potential opportunities contained within will require the realignment of existing internal and external resources.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an update to the Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Panel on progress to date in developing a coordinated, outcome-focused city marketing strategy.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Although, City of Wolverhampton Council faces an unprecedented financial challenge, increased investment in the city, economic growth and greater opportunity are beginning to stimulate, not only physical changes, but perception changes too.
- 2.3 This 'convergence' of opportunity, with £4.4 billion investment in the city on site or planned, major regeneration in the heart of the city underway, increasing private sector investment in key sectors, an international 'brand' profile from the success of the city's football club, Wolverhampton Wanderers and growing regional confidence with developments such as the Commonwealth Games, means that the council/city needs a coordinated marketing plan to ensure maximum benefit is derived.
- 2.4 Marketing is defined by the UK's professional body for the sector as: "*the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably*". One of the leading thinkers in the sector, Philip Kotler, defines marketing as satisfying needs and wants through an exchange process that delivers value.

- 2.5 The draft proposals set out in this city marketing strategy are underpinned by this thinking. The areas specified within the plan are based on research. This has identified key sectors where the city could derive significant benefit, develop a stronger offer / proposition and deliver value to key customers/stakeholders.
- 2.6 The draft plan has been developed by the City Marketing Board, chaired by the Director of Communications and External Relations. This includes representatives from across the council: city development, city enterprise, events, culture/arts, strategy, economic development, public health and city investment.
- 2.7 One of the challenges for the Board has been to review and pull together existing work to ensure that there is both a consistent proposition, consistent branding and a joined up operational approach to implementation.
- 2.8 There is a significant amount of good work being delivered across the council but the plan moving forward is to ensure that this is delivered within a consistent professional framework which recognises interdependencies and opportunities and avoids inconsistency and duplication.
- 2.9 Resources across the council for 'marketing' activities have been historically dispersed and this report proposes that they are brought together in a single hub.

3.0 Current position

- 3.1 The West Midlands Growth Company (WMGC) is carrying out a place marketing audit for City of Wolverhampton Council to draw out key insights from activity to date and to identify gaps.
- 3.2 This work will leverage the regional work, funded by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) on behalf of the seven metropolitan councils in the region. It includes reviewing key, existing council activity and research evidence from the regional perceptions study. A draft report will be completed by WMGC by the end of February 2020 summarising work to date and making recommendation on how to take this forward.
- 3.3 This work will recommend a number of key 'overarching' brand pillars that underpin our marketing narrative and approach. These will need to be different enough to set out a unique selling proposition (USP) for the city, whilst recognising the benefits of complimentary alignment with a regional narrative and approach.
- 3.3 In the meantime, the Board has developed a draft audience-based, outcome-focused city Marketing strategy framework. This sets out 12 priority delivery plan areas which are set out in diagram one below. Some of these areas are more advanced than others but they provide a framework for prioritising future focus.

Diagram one: Draft City Marketing Strategy Framework



3.4 The sections below provide an update on each of the 12 strands identifying progress, next steps and broad timescales.

4 Strategic outcome one: more residents feel pride in the city

4.1 Embedding a strong city brand identity

4.1.1 Since it was launched two years ago, the city visual identity has been increasingly used across a number of the key outcome areas. Most recently, high profile city events and our national and international inward investment strategy.

4.1.2 The city identity was developed by the city’s Economic Growth Board (EGB), a partnership of business and public sector organisations. All partners agree to use it in a manner consistent with the visual identity guidelines developed.

4.1.3 The visual identity is managed by the City of Wolverhampton Council’s Corporate Communications team who are in the process of ensuring that it compliments and/or integrates with other ‘brands / logos’ that have been developed and that there is a clear hierarchy. Diagram two below is an advert used in the Express and Star’s January 2020 ‘Regeneration Supplement’. It shows how the city visual identity and the Invest identity have been integrated to create a more consistent approach moving forward.

Diagram two: embedding the city brand

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON

10 REASONS TO BE HERE



INVEST

City of Wolverhampton

 <p>1</p>	 <p>2</p>	 <p>3</p>	 <p>4</p>	 <p>5</p>
<p>£150M INVESTMENT CONNECTING YOU TO TRAINS, TRAMS AND BUSES An incredible new gateway for commuters, residents and visitors is progressing. Phase 1 of the new railway station will be open to the public early this year.</p>	<p>THOUSANDS OF JOBS ON THE WAY The new £15m IQ office development is the next step in building a thriving Commercial District at the heart of Wolverhampton's transport hub. It will bring high quality space for occupiers and city centre jobs for local people.</p>	<p>WORLD-CLASS LEISURE AND ENTERTAINMENT World-class music and comedy will return to the Civic Halls when its £38m revamp is complete. 2020 will also see building work start at the 50m Westside scheme, bringing a multi-screen cinema, restaurants and family leisure attractions to the city centre.</p>	<p>NEW CITY LEARNING QUARTER AND MORE OPPORTUNITIES The new City Learning Quarter will give people skills city employers need and £100m investment by the University of Wolverhampton at their Springfield Campus will create an International Centre for Urban Innovation and Construction Excellence.</p>	<p>THOUSANDS OF NEW HOMES New homes are injecting life into the city as part of our ambitious growth plans. Your employees will benefit from a great housing offer boosted by 1,200 new homes at Brewers Yard, 1,000 at Canalside and many more across the city.</p>
 <p>6</p>	 <p>7</p>	 <p>8</p>	 <p>9</p>	 <p>10</p>
<p>MORE SCHOOLS THAN EVER RATED GOOD OR OUTSTANDING Over 12,000 more pupils now attend Good or Outstanding-rated schools than they did five years ago, with the percentage of city schools rated in these categories soaring from 70% to 86%, including 94% of all primary schools.</p>	<p>TRANSFORMING THE WAY YOU LIVE, WORK AND TRAVEL Wolverhampton is the location for a £50m Government pilot scheme to create a 5G network, the first of its kind in the UK. 5G is bringing superfast, reliable connectivity and new opportunities across the public and private sectors.</p>	<p>£7M GROWTH IN ONLINE SALES FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES Businesses involved in the eBay Retail Revival programme have reached over £7m in sales in one year, with an average growth rate of 33% boosting local economic growth. The scheme has helped over 60 small businesses.</p>	<p>HOME TO VIBRANT CITY CENTRE EVENTS City centre events including the successful Festival of Food and Drink, Wolverhampton Literature Festival, Wolves Pride and Wolverhampton Livel are bringing record numbers of visitors year on year.</p>	<p>PREMIER LEAGUE FOOTBALL TEAM As the city rides high with Wolverhampton Wanderers FC in the Premier League and Europe, ambitious plans are being developed to connect the expanding Molineux stadium, city centre and University, creating opportunities for new commercial and leisure developments around a thriving Molineux Quarter.</p>

BE PART OF OUR SUCCESS STORY...
We'll support you with strong, consistent and innovative city leadership. So bring your business to the city of opportunity.

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4.1.4 Key steps moving forward: embedding the visual identity further and increasing use by other city partners and organisations.

4.2 Measuring perceptions and influence

4.2.1 We are working with the WMGC to better understand perceptions of the city amongst key audiences and as part of the proposition work referred to at 3.1 above. In 2019, WMGC commissioned national and international research to gauge perceptions of the local areas across the whole of the combined authority's footprint.

4.2.2 The data provides a useful benchmark on perceptions of the City of Wolverhampton across the regions of the UK. Clearly, higher awareness and perception levels make it much more likely that potential customers (eg event visitor or investor) will know about, and therefore be interested in, the city's offer / proposition. This in turn is more likely to lead to what Kotler would call a value exchange or transaction.

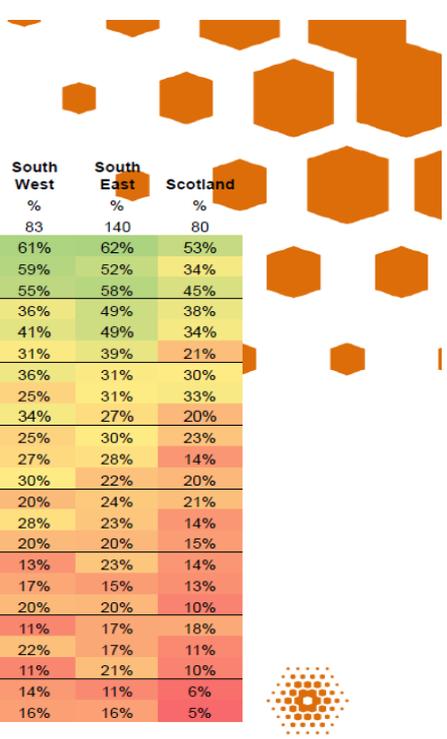
4.2.3 More detailed work is being done by the WMGC to understand the city's perception scores in comparison to the rest of the region. Using this data we can then formulate evidence-based action plans and propositions for customer segments.

4.2.4 Some of the early research suggests that perceptions of the city across the UK are solid but need to be improved in comparison to the other two cities in the West Midlands region. Of those respondents to the WMGC awareness survey who knew more than just the name of the place – across 11 regions of the UK – 38% knew more than the name Wolverhampton. This compares to 62% for Birmingham and

46% for Coventry. Within the Black Country awareness levels were lower than the city: Dudley 28%, Walsall 27%, Sandwell 16% (although West Bromwich was 31%). Diagram three below shows more:

Diagram three: Awareness levels of key West Midlands cities/towns across the wider UK

Places 'know more than just the name'



Know more than just the name	Total %	West Midlands %	East Midlands %	East of England %	North West %	London %	Wales %	Yorks / Humber %	North East %	South West %	South East %	Scotland %
Base	1000	89	74	86	114	131	50	85	42	83	140	80
Birmingham	62%	80%	72%	55%	68%	60%	64%	61%	50%	61%	62%	53%
West Midlands	58%	90%	76%	55%	56%	53%	58%	60%	52%	59%	52%	34%
Stratford-upon-Avon	57%	70%	58%	44%	66%	56%	64%	53%	60%	55%	58%	45%
Warwick	47%	65%	53%	41%	51%	45%	44%	47%	52%	36%	49%	38%
Coventry	46%	60%	57%	42%	48%	48%	38%	39%	52%	41%	49%	34%
Shropshire	39%	55%	45%	26%	51%	47%	42%	36%	33%	31%	39%	21%
Wolverhampton	38%	64%	46%	23%	46%	37%	40%	32%	43%	36%	31%	30%
Leamington Spa	34%	52%	45%	34%	28%	37%	34%	33%	24%	25%	31%	33%
Telford	33%	52%	42%	33%	40%	31%	40%	26%	26%	34%	27%	20%
Rugby	31%	46%	46%	21%	31%	38%	28%	25%	31%	25%	30%	23%
West Bromwich	31%	53%	42%	23%	34%	37%	36%	25%	29%	27%	28%	14%
Solihull	30%	65%	30%	24%	31%	31%	26%	21%	36%	30%	22%	20%
Dudley	28%	60%	31%	20%	30%	31%	30%	20%	29%	20%	24%	21%
Walsall	27%	51%	32%	22%	26%	34%	30%	21%	21%	28%	23%	14%
Tamworth	26%	53%	46%	21%	26%	21%	26%	32%	17%	20%	20%	15%
Lichfield	25%	51%	39%	16%	29%	27%	24%	25%	24%	13%	23%	14%
Cannock Chase	23%	51%	32%	22%	28%	18%	24%	21%	24%	17%	15%	13%
Redditch	22%	44%	24%	14%	24%	28%	24%	14%	17%	20%	20%	10%
East Staffordshire	21%	28%	31%	16%	23%	31%	22%	20%	19%	11%	17%	18%
Bromsgrove	21%	47%	24%	14%	23%	21%	20%	16%	17%	22%	17%	11%
Nuneaton & Bedworth	20%	40%	30%	12%	16%	22%	22%	16%	21%	11%	21%	10%
Sandwell	16%	40%	22%	12%	15%	22%	16%	7%	17%	14%	11%	6%
Wyre Forrest	15%	27%	18%	12%	20%	18%	14%	8%	14%	16%	16%	5%

Notes:
Table is ranked on total national 'know more than just the name'
Samples for individual regions are small and therefore data should be treated with some caution. Northern Ireland is not shown as sample base is only 26.

West Midlands
Growth Company

Source: 2018/19 WMGC Awareness Research

4.2.5 This data also provides a useful benchmark which can be used to measure the success of future marketing activity.

4.2.6 Key steps moving forward: work with the WMGC to conduct annual perception research ensuring that sufficient funds are allocated to make the data statistically significant.

4.3 Power of Sport

4.3.1 The fantastic success of Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Club brings the city a national and international profile. The city needs to build on this, seizing the opportunities to use the power of sport to support wider marketing strategies.

4.3.2 However, the city is also home to other significant sporting assets. Wolverhampton Racecourse is one of the UK's only all-weather race tracks – again bringing national profile. Wolves Speedway are national championship winners. The city is also home to the Grand Slam of Darts – currently hosted at Aldersley Stadium.

4.3.3 Indeed, Aldersley Stadium has the opportunity to be a growing sports venue, hosting national teams such as England badminton, table tennis and martial arts. With

growing requirements for sporting content on TV channels, there are opportunities to bring greater profile and income to the city at Aldersley Stadium. Proposals are currently being considered to enhance the facilities there to attract bigger events and new sports.

- 4.3.4 This will put the city in a stronger position to be able to influence the decisions of national Commonwealth sporting associations in the run up to Birmingham 2022.
- 4.3.5 The City Council is also exploring the opportunities to host national cycling events – again the city has a strong connection to this sport through Olympic greats such as Sir Hugh Porter and an industrial heritage that saw the city being one of the largest manufacturers of cycles in the UK in its heyday. The city is now home to Wiggle, a well-known cycling and sports clothing and equipment business.
- 4.3.6 Key steps moving forward: develop plans to maximise the opportunities at Aldersley Stadium for high-profile events and ensure the city benefits from Commonwealth Games opportunities.

4.4 *Proud to be Wolves*

- 4.4.1 Reinvigoration of the mainly digital campaign #Proud2beWolves to focus on two elements: resident's pride in where they live and in their wider city. The campaign will operate on these two levels but also connect to the other elements set out in this framework.
- 4.4.2 It will build on the current #proud2bewolves campaign which between January 2018 and January 2020 saw 507 social media posts, reached an estimated seven million people, saw 78,000 clicks and 15,600 shares, likes and comments.

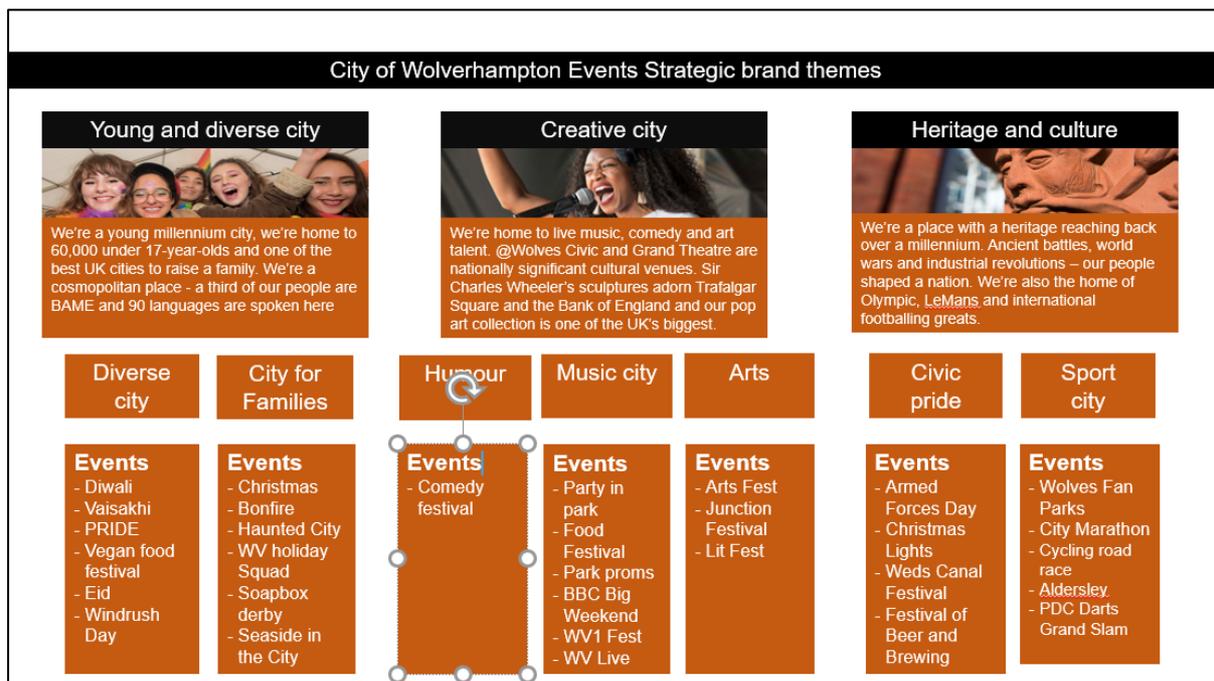
5. More visitors are attracted to city events and venues

5.1 *Five-year city events strategy*

- 5.1.1 There is significant opportunity to develop a more vibrant and ambitious city events strategy aimed at increasing footfall across the city and economic benefit and well-being.
- 5.1.2 This approach aims to build on the work already done to grow events such as the City of Wolverhampton Food and Drink Festival which saw 18,000 attend the free festival in 2018 and 14-15,000 paying customers attend in 2019. Given the financial challenges faced by the council, this approach of 'commercialising' our events offer is critical moving forward but may need some initial investment to prove and develop the market.
- 5.1.3 Recently, all staff working on external events have been brought together in a new, single city events team to ensure better coordination and planning for city events. This is supported by a cross-council events coordinating group, reporting to the city marketing board.

5.1.4 The plan is to develop our events planning in line with some wider strategic city brand / marketing themes (these may need to be adjusted based on the ongoing WMGC review work). Those themes support new and existing events and audience attraction and are: young and diverse city, creative city and city of heritage and culture. The diagram below shows how these themes link to planned and proposed operational events.

Diagram four: City of Wolverhampton events strategic brand themes



5.2 Develop and promote our creative and cultural offer

5.2.1 The city has a strong creative and cultural offer and is home to the UK's second largest collection of Pop Art. The Civic Halls and Grand Theatre add to the city's regionally significant assets and there are also clusters of creative tech workspace.

5.2.2 Planned investment proposed for [these](#) venues, should improve the city's offer further as will hosting the prestigious British Arts Show in 2021 and the potential to develop a cultural programme to coincide with the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

5.2.3 However, creative and cultural content isn't just confined to venues. The City's cultural ambitions include creating new public event spaces in the city for events maximising new Smart technology and demonstrating the role of culture in regeneration and economic growth. The city boasts a large number of parks and open spaces, where a broad range of events currently take place across the calendar year. This events programme is set to grow through a number of strategic commercial relationships, underpinned by the previously mentioned five-year events plan.

5.2.4 Plans to overhaul the What's on Wolverhampton website and improve its marketing, will also extend the opportunities the city has to offer to a wider audience and underpin marketing and campaign activity.

5.2.5 Due to the strong combination of good building stock and period architecture across the city, favourable logistics, low costs and an ability to deliver on short timescales, there is a developing location filming opportunity in the city. Recently, this has resulted in two large productions favouring Wolverhampton over cities which are far more established in this market.

5.3 *A new Business Conference and Tourism Proposition*

5.3.1 The city has a strong ambition to increase opportunities to host conferences, to attract business tourists to stay and for visitors to have a positive experience of the City of Wolverhampton. The city is looking to build on the current experience of hosting conferences - a strong driver for these being the highly specialised research undertaken at the University - with the active regeneration programme that is underway so that we can position and present the city to attract conferences to Wolverhampton.

5.3.2 The West Midlands Growth Company have been commissioned to look at the current needs of the market and to assist the city to engage with key intermediaries who have a role in recommending destinations to European and global networks.

5.3.3 Initial research by WMGC shows that there is very limited national and international awareness of the city as a potential location for business tourism – compared to the other cities in the region. Given that the city already has a number of locations for conferences: the University, Grand Theatre and Molineux Stadium – and is set to benefit from enhanced provision in the next 2-3 years with a new train station, Civic Halls renovation and the Westside development, the timing is opportune to begin to develop our proposition in this area.

5.3.3 As a city we are keen to develop relationships, to understand the needs of the conference market and highlight key attractions, all of which will contribute to a strong Wolverhampton City conference proposition. Early indications have shown a strong market interest linked to the aerospace sector and feedback has highlighted the city is a good location, accessible by rail, road and air.

5.3.4 This work is already starting to generate results, the city has been successful in securing the UK - Light Rail conference which will be taking place on 19 –20 May, bringing between 250 – 300 delegates in the city from across the UK.

5.3.5 Earlier this month the city hosted a visit from 9 European delegates representing a number of conference associations including biomedical, textiles, engineering, retail and translation medicine. The feedback from the group highlighted that they had heard of Wolverhampton but only through the links with football. The group were impressed with the accessibility and short journey time to Birmingham, London and Manchester and were very complimentary about the conference venues they saw. They also valued the city's historic features such as the Grand Theatre and the Art Gallery and were very complementary of the city's art collection and venue space at

the gallery. The visit has given the team a good insight into how the city needs to approach and engage this key market. It has also led to follow-up discussions.

5.4 *Develop a family day offer proposition*

5.4.1 The WMGC national and regional perception research highlighted a potential gap within the city for a family day offer proposition.

5.4.2 Although there are activities for children, young people and their families – WV Holiday Squad in summer 2019 highlighted this with 18,000 attending 350+ activities – the city does not have a day offer proposition similar to other cities across the country.

5.4.3 More work is required to understand what this proposition could potentially be and to discuss potential opportunities with existing operators. There is also significant scope to better package elements of our existing offer which again links in with the redevelopment of the What's on Wolverhampton website.

6. **More businesses invest or grow here**

6.1 *International trade and investment strategy*

6.1.1 Attracting new investment and jobs to the city is fundamental to achieving managed growth and delivering the overall aims of the council plan: 'More good jobs and investment in our city'. Improving the city's presence and position in overseas markets that leads to the attraction and securing new businesses will raise the overall GVA growth of the city generating business rates, training and job opportunities for residents.

6.1.2 To be a successful investment location, we need to have and articulate a strong sense of place and people offer, promoting our distinctiveness to existing investors, which form an increasingly important role in testing and defining the city's strengths and propositions.

6.1.3 We have commissioned the West Midlands Growth Company to help prepare a new International Trade and Investment strategy. This will set out Wolverhampton's objectives and priorities for securing inward investment and growth for the next three years (2020 – 2023).

6.1.4 It will identify the key strengths of our local economy and the sectors, technologies and opportunities that business investment activities will focus on. It will also recommend the global locations the city should focus on and present the high-level actions and initiative to deliver these. The strategy is expected to be ready by the end of February.

6.2 *Develop an International Centre of Excellence in Urban Innovation*

6.2.1 The University of Wolverhampton's £100 million investment in the Springfield Campus and the proposed £25 million Government investment in a new National

Brownfield Institute nearby, creates the possibility for a game-changing internationally significant centre of expertise.

6.2.2 Add to this the development of a 5G innovation hub in construction, the West Midlands Construction UTC and potential interest from the wider construction sector – commercial and non-commercial - and the city has the potential to be known as an international centre of excellence in urban innovation and construction.

6.2.3 This is supported by market demand which is eager to see greater research and development in sustainable construction given global environmental concerns.

6.2.4 Work is being progressed to develop and enhance this proposition in partnership with the university, WMGC and WMCA.

6.3 *National inward investment plan*

6.3.1 Building on from the work which is underway to identify and engage with international investors and new occupiers, the city is also looking at how it can strengthen its position within the domestic market.

6.3.2 A region-wide piece of research was undertaken by the WMGC last year to help understand the key criteria and qualities which occupiers and investors in the UK, are looking for. It highlighted that along with the physical location ie buildings and connectivity, access to relevant skills and a skilled workforce was a key priority for a range of sectors.

6.3.4 The council's enterprise team are currently working with market intermediaries and key partners including the BCLEP and the WMGC to ensure the city's investment proposition captures and reflects the skills and employment support which has been strengthened over the years by the Wolves@Work service, which has led to a 'One City' approach with the University, DWP and the College.

6.3.5 They are seeing a stronger confidence in the market recently and an increase in new enquiries, including those coming from companies already in the city, looking to grow. The start of this year the team has received 19 enquiries, compared to an average of 7 from previous years, these have come from both domestic and international sources. The number of new jobs has also grown significantly this month compared to previous years activity.

6.4 *Small-medium enterprise (SME) Growth Plan*

6.4.1 Over 95% of businesses in the city are SMEs, representing approx. 8,000 businesses, a key audience for the city. To help manage these relationships, the team at the City Council have adopted a strategically targeted approach to SME engagement and support. It is based on; growth sectors, strategic corridor investment, and individual innovation and entrepreneurship. 250 'growth potential' companies were identified most of whom had less than 50 employees and a turnover less than £5million.

- 6.4.2 For the past three years there have been two key initiative in place to support SME growth, an EU programme called AIM for GOLD and Wolves@Work to help with recruitment and workforce development. Both projects have a number of targeted marketing and engagement campaigns as part of their delivery which has seen the team engage with over 145 SMEs with AIM for GOLD, and 350 with Wolves@work.
- 6.4.3 The team has captured the outcomes of these programmes in marketing collateral including a “Small Business: Big Impact” booklet which is about to launch its third edition and a communications campaign to support Wolves@work. The team also posts case studies on the INVEST and Work box platform and shares these with partners including the Chamber of Commerce and BCLEP.
- 6.4.4 Next Steps are ensuring the team can maintain and strengthen the work which has helped build a positive reputation for the council and for the local economy of the city. The team will be launching later this year a monthly Business e-newsletter to help continue their engagement with a wide range of contacts, sharing current business initiatives and highlighting key corporate messages such as those around Corporate Social Responsibility.