

Cabinet (Resources) Panel

15 September 2015

Report title	First Impressions of the City	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor John Reynolds City Economy	
Key decision	Yes	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Keren Jones	
Originating service	City Economy	
Accountable employee(s)	Keren Jones	Service Director
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Report to be/has been considered by		

Recommendation(s) for action:

To endorse actions to improve and promote the Wolverhampton Offer.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To report the progress being made to implement the recommendations from the First Impressions of the City scrutiny review, since the report to Cabinet (Resources) Panel on 3 March 2015.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The First Impressions of the City scrutiny review identified four key work streams. Following the formation of a new Council Cabinet in May 2015, responsibilities for the four work-streams were revised. The new responsibilities are set out below.

Work streams delivered in partnership with other city organisations	Lead
1. Developing a joint marketing strategy and communications strategy for the “Wolverhampton Making it Happen Brand”	Cabinet Portfolio holder for City Economy Service Director, City Economy Head of Corporate Communications
2. Improving the Wolverhampton Offer	Cabinet Portfolio holder for City Economy Service Director, City Economy

City of Wolverhampton Council work-streams	Lead
1. Managing and improving the reputation of Wolverhampton	Leader Head of Corporate Communications
2. Harnessing the value of social media for Councillors	Leader Head of Corporate Communications

- 2.2 The remainder of this report sets out progress on marketing and developing the City’s offer, as set out in recommendations 1 and 2 above. Progress on recommendations 3

and 4 has already been reported at various times during the last nine months as part of the Council's corporate communication activities.

3.0 Developing a joint marketing strategy and communications strategy

3.1 This work stream is being taken forward by the Place Directorate in partnership with businesses, the University and the College through the City Economic Growth Board. It also aligns the activities of the City centre BID Company, to market the City centre to businesses, visitors and residents, and the business support offer, marketed through the Black Country Growth Hub.

3.2 Under the Making it Happen brand, a draft framework (see appendix a) has been developed to guide the collaborative working between the Council and its key partners to market the City to the following audiences:

- Developers and inward investors
- Businesses and (potential entrepreneurs)
- Visitors
- Residents
- Students and learners

3.3 The strategy is supported by a Making it Happen communications plan, the delivery of which is co-ordinated by the Council's Head of Corporate Communications, with the support of a partner officers group. Below is a summary of four main marketing campaigns being used during 2015/6:

- **A City conference programme:** a local platform for showcasing and promoting opportunities to key audiences: local people (spring conference week), visitors (summer conference week) and business, developers and investors (autumn conference week).
- **Raising the City's profile:** using major national and international events to target investors and developers.
- **A momentum programme:** focusing on key business sectors to reinforce the opportunities in the City.
- **Research and development:** identifying best practice and opportunities to improve.

3.4 Further work has also been commissioned to refine the marketing strategy, plan and collateral, as set out below:

Actions	Milestones
Promote the Wolverhampton Story in easily accessible written and visual forms. This activity brings together facts, figures, images and qualitative information that portray Wolverhampton as a business friendly, innovative and creative City. The collateral can easily be made available to all partners to include as part of their	First version of the Wolverhampton Story will be presented to Scrutiny, Cabinet and to key audiences in September. This includes Business Week in September 2015. A simple card sized fact sheet about investment in the City has been produced

<p>promotional activity, so that the City repeatedly gets across strong, convincing and consistent messages to our key audiences and markets.</p> <p>The format can be regularly refreshed without significant additional expenditure.</p>	<p>and has been well received by a range of audiences.</p> <p>For Business Week 2015 there will be additional card sized fact sheets that include facts and opportunities about initiatives to support business, workforce development, and opportunities for residents to invest in themselves through education, learning and volunteering</p>
<p>Wolverhampton Making it Happen Digital Platform. All main cities have destination and investment platforms that are separate from the Council website, to promote their cities as an attractive destination for inward investment and a good place to do business, learn, visit and live.</p> <p>The City Board is developing a single digital platform for key stakeholders to market the City of Wolverhampton’s offer to businesses, developers and investors.</p> <p>Local company Connect have been commissioned to develop a destination website for the City of Wolverhampton, focusing initially on the inward investor, developer and business audiences. The structure of the website is such that the sections for visitors, learners and residents can easily be added.</p> <p>The digital site will be a joined up, consistent and co-ordinated approach – partner organisations will have access to their own templates to add, update or amend content as necessary. There will also be direct links to the Council website, the BID websites and the Growth Hub.</p> <p>There are three stages to the development of the site – structure, design and content. The development of the site is currently in the first of these stages.</p>	<p>The first phase of the website will be launched at Business Week in October 2015. Content is being produced, based on information collected for the production of the Wolverhampton Story.</p> <p>Stakeholder engagement is crucial to developing a digital platform and the suggested site map was recently shared key internal officers, the portfolio holders for City Economy and City Assets and members of the Economic Growth Board Marketing Sub-Group for initial feedback.</p> <p>The look and feel of the new website will initially use the “Making it Happen” brand.</p>
<p>A refined strategic proposition for the City. Building on the work above, a further exercise will produce a focused, end user-centric strategic brand proposition for the City, which will build on</p>	<p>A set of brand guidelines and collateral will be produced, for use across all organisations in the City, in order to promote the City in a consistent and co-ordinated way.</p>

the City's strengths and its developing offer.	The process will involve key stakeholders within, and outside of the Council.
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4.0 Improving the Wolverhampton Offer

4.1 The First Impressions of the City scrutiny review also identified the need to improve the City's offer, based on business and resident perception surveys and other evidence bases. The table below summarises the work underway under each main market segment:

Audience segment	Activities to strengthen the evidence base
Developers and Inward Investors	<p>Funded from the Place Regeneration Reserve, a number of important pieces of work have been commissioned to develop and market the City's City centre development opportunities:</p> <p>City Centre Westside and Southside Planning Guidelines – developing the market offer.</p> <p>City Centre Westside Opportunity sites market offer – a package of opportunities to the development market.</p> <p>City Centre Southside Opportunity sites market offer – a package of opportunities to the development market.</p>
Existing businesses and start-ups	<p>In-depth geographical business surveys, starting with the City's three strategic development areas: Junction 2, City Centre and Bilston Strategic corridor. The local organisation Policyworks has been commissioned to deliver the first of these surveys in the Junction 2 area. The final report will be received in October 2015.</p>
Visitors	<p>Until 2015, WV One was responsible for co-ordinating data for the City centre. In the future this activity will be undertaken by the Wolverhampton City Centre BID Company.</p> <p>An in-depth visitor survey for the Civic Halls and Grand Theatre was undertaken several years ago, and was part of the evidence base used to make the successful business case for Regional Growth Funding for major capital investment in the City's entertainment venues.</p> <p>Audience development work has also been undertaken, with support from the Arts Council, for the other Council run cultural venues. This is informing current activities to make these venues less reliant on Council subsidy.</p>

	In addition, a detailed feasibility study has been completed to identify how the City can develop its niche business conferencing offer. This is also informing current activities to make these venues less reliant on Council subsidy.
Learners	The comprehensive evidence base that was developed for the Council's Skills and Employment scrutiny review and subsequent independent Skills and Employment Commission, forms the basis of an action plan that is being developed to take forward recommendations to improve the City's education and skills offer to residents, learners and employers.
Residents	Underpinning all of the above is the need for the City to provide an attractive quality of life offer to residents, and for those considering re-location to the City. The overview of how the City is perceived as a place to live is co-ordinated by the policy and corporate communications teams.

5.0 Financial implications

5.1 All activities identified in this report will be covered through the dedicated budget of £50,000 to support the City Marketing Strategy, approved resources from the Regeneration Reserve and existing Place and Corporate Marketing budgets. Alongside this external funding and partner contributions are sought where possible. For example, The Wolves have already committed to the production of a series of photographs to promote the city and Staffordshire County Council will be contributing 50% towards Junction 2 surveys as part of the i54 joint venture arrangements [ES/26082015/S]

6.0 Legal implications

6.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. As this report does not authorise any specific actions or contracts, further authority will be required if the Council is to enter into any contracts or other legal documents. [Legal Code: TS/07092015/S]

7.0 Equalities implications

7.1 There are no equality implications.

8.0 Environmental implications

8.1 There are no environmental implications.

9.0 Human resources implications

9.1 There are no human resource implications.

10.0 Corporate Landlord Implications

10.1 There are no corporate landlord implications.

11.0 Schedule of background papers