

# Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Panel

16 March 2016

<b>Report title</b>	Review of the Year 2015/16	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor John Reynolds City Economy	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All	
<b>Accountable director</b>	Keren Jones, City Economy	
<b>Originating service</b>	City Economy	
<b>Accountable employee(s)</b>	Heather Clark	Service Development Manager
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<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>		

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## Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

- The Scrutiny Panel consider progress to deliver key actions raised at previous meetings and consider ideas for a forward plan for 2016/17.

## 1.0 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Panel on progress on key action points highlighted during 2015/16 meetings and consider ideas for a forward plan for 2016/17.

## 2.0 Background

2.1 Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Panel has met five times in 2015/16 to review the work of the City Economy Service and make recommendations for improvements.

- 28 July 2015 – External Funding Update
- 24 September 2015 – Attracting Investment
- 6 October 2015 – Visitor Economy
- 1 December 2015 – Budget and Skills and Employment Commission
- 9 February 2016 Business and Enterprise

2.2 This report will provide an update on key comments made at these meetings.

## 3.0 Review of Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Panel 2015/16

3.1 A detailed overview of the City Economy Service and key achievements will be presented at the meeting.

Corporate Objective	Relevant Scrutiny Panel Meeting	Cross Cutting
<b>An environment where new and existing business thrive</b>		
Developing a vibrant city	Visitor Economy (06.10.2015)	External Funding update
Supporting businesses, encouraging enterprise and attracting inward investment	Business and Enterprise Attracting Investment (09.02.2016)	Budget
<b>People develop the skills to get and keep work</b>		
Improving our critical skills and employability approach	Skills and Employment Commission (01.12.2015)	

3.2 Appendix 1 contains an update on the key comments and actions raised at Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Panel over the last year.

## 4.0 Custard Factory Visit

4.1 A small group of Councillors visited the Custard Factory in Digbeth, Birmingham on 29 February 2016. The Custard Factory has been operating for 25 years and it is a privately owned business. The company own five acres of land having bought the

freehold of the premises and borrowed against its assets to buy other premises in the area.

- 4.2 Artists and artisans were encouraged to use the spaces which were initially given for free to get them in use. Once the building was in use and in demand, the spaces were let and income re-invested in the building to make it clean and safe with electric and heating. The building and businesses have grown organically over the years.
- 4.3 They have 400 studios covering all aspects of creative enterprises – including media, architects, and software - employing 3,000 employees. Grant funding has been used for capital to fill funding gaps, however the company has not required revenue funding. Their model initially started by offering a derelict building to artisans for free, however they now have a number of buildings, one offering short term leases of six months and another offering longer term leases of five years. In the longer term, they are looking to offer cheaper flexible open plan accommodation.
- 4.4 Key points arising from the visit:
- They emphasised the importance of spaces to network with other businesses.
  - A key success factor is flexibility converting small studios into larger space to meet demand from larger companies.
  - The only thing missing was some ‘flop down’ space, a communal space with desks and coffee available to be an informal and networking area.
  - Architecture is important. Good buildings attract good businesses and good workers to the spaces. The local Architect focused on how to make a physical space work for the businesses.
  - Their growth market is from the south especially London as businesses move up north to save costs; businesses are finding that there is also the right talent in the Midlands.
  - They have recently attracted a software department of a company based in London with the creation of 60 jobs. The company ASOS was struggling to recruit software engineers in London. The Custard Factory provided a quality refurbished building.
  - The business is flexible and adaptable: It started out with artists and artisans however there are now more media, architect and software game businesses. New businesses coming to the Custard factory including a motorcycle factory. Companies are moving out of London and they want talent, skill and opportunities offered in Birmingham. E.g. Yamination, a new animation studio.
  - The Custard Factory has links with Birmingham City University (BCU) and recognises the importance of retaining talent in the area.

- A key issue for the Custard Factory is the lack of footfall to Digbeth, since the Custard Factory is based in a mainly industrial area, therefore it needs to work on the ground floor offer.
- The business currently operates as private landlords so do not offer business advice, however recognise the importance of account management in attracting investors.
- Existing tenants can play an important role in attracting other companies into the space. Similar businesses tend to cluster. It is generally the physical space that attracts them. The technical set up is also important - Superfast Broadband was installed in the building aimed at attracting technology companies.
- The Custard Factory owners has another building in the Jewellery Quarter which tends to attract talent from the North of the City. One side of Birmingham services the Black Country region, whilst the other services Coventry and Warwick.
- To address negative crime perceptions, they have compared crime statistics with similar areas elsewhere.
- Although the area has not previously been a regeneration area, companies are now buying up pieces of land in advance of HS2.
- David Peebles expressed an interest in seeing the Wolverhampton buildings which could be adapted for creative uses.

## **5.0 Financial implications**

5.1 There are no financial implications to this report. Financial implications were considered in the individual reports submitted to each Scrutiny Panel.  
[ES/03032016/S]

## **6.0 Legal implications**

6.1 There are no legal implications to this report. Legal implications were considered in the individual reports submitted to each Scrutiny Panel. RB/02032016/N

## **7.0 Equalities implications**

7.1 There are no equalities implications to this report. Equalities implications were considered in the individual reports submitted to each Scrutiny Panel.

## **8.0 Environmental implications**

8.1 There are no environmental implications to this report. Environmental implications were considered in the individual reports submitted to each Scrutiny Panel.

## **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 recommendations.

## **11.0 Schedule of background papers**

- Detailed review of 2016/17 actions

Date Raised/ Focus (Corp Priority)	Comment	Update	Forward Plan
28 July – External Funding  (Stronger Economy)	Risk of delays in approval of external funding	<p>EU funded projects are still awaiting approval, however expected imminently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black Country Advice, Investment and Market Development (AIM)</li> <li>• Black Country Transformational Growth Opportunities Local Delivery (GOLD)</li> <li>• Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) Impact in the Black Country</li> </ul> <p>In the interim, preparatory work is underway to ensure projects are ready to start as soon as funding is confirmed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment of roles: all job descriptions have been prepared and allocated. Once funding is confirmed, internal approvals will be sought and posts advertised initially through redeployment then internal and external concurrently.</li> <li>• Match funding: is being identified and necessary measures are being put in place including timesheets, logo on e-mails and Job Descriptions.</li> <li>• Procurement: where possible existing procurement frameworks will be used. Where outside the scope, specifications for being drawn up for further procurement exercises.</li> <li>• Necessary project management paperwork is in place.</li> </ul> <p>The Scrutiny Panel may wish to revisit project progress in six months to allow projects opportunity to recruit and start delivering.</p>	End of September /October
28 July – External Funding	Impact of Comprehensive Spending Review on Skills Funding	The Government protected the base rate funding for 16-18 provision and the core Adult Skills participation budgets in cash terms, at £1.5 billion. Providers will therefore still be subject to a real-term cut over the next four	March 2016

		years as a result of inflation. The Government will make £360m of efficiencies and savings from non-participation budgets and efficiencies that will be delivered through locally-led Area Reviews and winding up of organisations such as the UK Commission for Employment & Skills. Area Reviews will be supported with additional government funding and will ensure the further education sector is financially resilient and meets local economic needs	
28 July – External Funding	Skills funding and small businesses	The Black Country European Structural and Investment Fund Strategy (ESIF) identified a number of priorities in terms of provision for Skills for Growth. Although part of the money will continue to fund existing support such as Skills for the Unemployed and Skills for Redundancy, Skills for Growth will also be funded recognising the importance of funding training to meet business needs.	
28 July – External Funding	Innovative ways of delivering apprenticeships	<p>The CSR announced the aim to deliver 3 million high quality apprenticeships by 2020. The Apprenticeship Levy of 0.5% will cover more employers and will create a larger fund to expand apprenticeship provision.</p> <p>The Skills for Growth team are working with workforce development to understand the implications for the Council as an employer. The levy will apply to businesses with a payroll bill of £3m or more and where it does apply the organisation will be required to contribute 0.5% of their gross PAYE. This will be in the region of £600,000 for the Council. The levy then allows an organisation access to funds to pay for apprenticeship training. The Government is currently consulting on an apprenticeship target of 2.3% of employees, amounting to over 100 apprentices for the Council.</p>	
28 July – External Funding	Package to promote inward investment, City investment officer and marketing of Wolverhampton	Attracting inward investment and encouraging indigenous investment is a core element of the Council’s Enterprise business facing team. The focus for inward and indigenous investment activities fall into three key areas, regional, national and international, linked with Wolverhampton’s key	

		<p>business clusters, with a focus on Advanced Engineering and specifically aerospace.</p> <p><b>Generating the leads:</b> the Council proactively targets potential investors both from outside Wolverhampton (inward investment), working closely with partners and inside Wolverhampton (indigenous investment), working with businesses who wish to grow enabling them to stay in Wolverhampton. We have developed strong links with United Kingdom Trade and Industry (UKTI) international offices who support overseas companies to set up and locate their businesses in the UK, providing information on both UK business investment and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) opportunities.</p> <p>The Council is a partner in <b>Invest Black Country (IBC)</b>, the Black Country's inward investment agency, which acts as single point of entry for inward investment and lead generation for the Black Country. It aims to secure significant levels of new investment and employment through the global business marketing of the Black Country, targeting key markets and sectors, and the provision of a package of advice and assistance for potential investors augmenting the services currently available locally. Additionally the Council is working with Marketing Birmingham to maximise the future inward investment relationship.</p> <p>A <b>City Investment Manager</b> was recently appointed within the City Economy service to promote the city as one of the most business-friendly locations in the UK and market the city's offer as a place to work, live, visit and invest. The role will package and promote the overall offer, developing and commissioning specific campaigns, projects and marketing communications tools. This will include development of the "Wolverhampton" brand ensuring synergy with the wider Black Country and West Midlands. It's strategic objectives are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improve the perceptions of the city as a place to live, work, visit, invest, learn and do business in</li><li>• Attract more investment into the city by promoting the</li></ul>	
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<p>28 July – External Funding</p>	<p>Evaluation of City Conferencing Programme</p>	<p>The City's annual City Conference Season consists of three separate weeks of activities which are interlinked to support delivery of the City Strategy. Each week has a focused programme providing a platform to showcase the city's achievement and bring people together to shape a better future and prosperity for all.</p> <p>However having completed a conference season and delivered a second Business Week there are areas where improvements could be made and activities built on over each season to improve the overall quality and impact of the Conference Season. These areas listed below have been developed following the analyses of evaluations and reflect on learning gained to date.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start preparations earlier</li> <li>• Set an overarching theme for each week</li> <li>• Strengthen partner developmental support for and equal contribution</li> <li>• Extend and widen the momentum events programme</li> <li>• Strengthen communication and promotional activity</li> <li>• Work towards achieving a self-sustaining programme</li> <li>• Widened the range of events and impact</li> </ul>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empowering residents to compete for jobs</li> </ul> <p>2016 City Conference Programme is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Resident Week</b> 14 – 18 March 2016: the overarching theme is ‘empowerment’ to support residents compete for jobs and enhance their skills and develop healthier lifestyles and be active in their communities. Appendix A contains an overview of Resident Week programme approved by the Inclusion Board</li> <li>• <b>Visitor Week</b> 2- 10 July 2016: the suggested overarching theme is ‘footfall’ achieving increase footfall through retail, leisure and cultural activities. Appendix B provides an early indication of how the programme is developing. Design of the programme will be developed further with those involved in the Visitor Economy.</li> <li>• <b>Business Week</b> 26 – 30 September 2016: Overarching theme ‘invest’ already approved. Appendix C provides an early indication of how the programme is developing. Design of the programme will be developed further with Business Forums.</li> </ul>	
<p>24 Sept – Attracting Investment  (supporting businesses, encouraging enterprise and attracting inward investment)</p>	<p>Strengthening the inward investment offer: including ensuring people have right skills and better information about local suppliers</p>	<p>In addition to our activities to strengthen the inward investment offer outlined above, we have set out below how we are ensuring people have the right skills for jobs created and better information on local suppliers.</p> <p><b>Facilitating local recruitment:</b> The Skills for Growth scheme within City Economy are proactive in ensuring that local people with the right skills to meet their businesses’ needs. The account management service supports employers to design a suitable recruitment and skills plan for their future and existing workforce. This includes direct promotion of vacancies and support with apprenticeships, traineeships and pre-recruitment programmes to support unemployed people back into work. Training packages are delivered with the support of the Wolverhampton Employability Partnership.</p>	<p>March 2016</p>

		<p>Engagement activity has been very high, especially within the last 12 months with over 200 companies engaged supporting over 1500 vacancies across a wide range of job opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wiggle opened in July 2015 creating over 140 warehousing and logistic roles with 80% of recruited workforce living within the City.</li><li>• Casino 36 an initial 15 trainee croupiers have recently been taken on and are currently undergoing training with The National Gaming Academy ( Jan 2016)</li><li>• Transline (Amazon) continued success in promotion of both permanent and seasonal warehouse roles and over 800 Wolverhampton residents employed in 2015.</li><li>• Care sector employers working in partnership to develop new employment pathway to support upskilling and recruitment of staff. There were over 200 vacancies available since Nov 2015 to Jan 2016. Team are currently supporting 15 care employers. This includes a new build in North East of City creating new jobs both in care and hospitality and an existing employer with 40 vacancies.</li><li>• Slater's Ales are opening a new bar in the city centre in Feb 2016 creating 15 roles. Bespoke recruitment and training solutions implemented which will maximise the opportunity for local residents with final interviews this week.</li><li>• Airspace is a 3 million pound new investment in Wednesfield creating 100 new jobs in the leisure sector. Bespoke recruitment and training support has maximised the opportunity for local people and AirSpace opened late Dec 2015.</li><li>• Sainsbury's new superstore and 60M investment created 340 new jobs.</li><li>• Jaguar Land Rover continued expansion and bespoke pre-recruitment training to support local unemployed people in</li></ul>	
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24 Sept – Attracting Investment	Making it Happen video: different version developed for visitor economy; inclusion of	The Wolves Story video is the top level video, however there is a playlist on the City Council tube channel: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2EkDbF8X1BY&amp;list=PL7QXo5I9k4BILa">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2EkDbF8X1BY&amp;list=PL7QXo5I9k4BILa</a>	

	new logo	<a href="#">RR-HRg5uBG6V-fjesDf</a> The city's fortnightly Renew bulletin with the latest show reel can be viewed here: <a href="http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/renew">www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/renew</a>	
24 Sept – Attracting Investment	Information available on the internet to assist potential investors from abroad including frequently asked questions and proforma to highlight different requirements.	Inward Investment website under development and likely to be launched Spring 2016.	July 2016
24 Sept – Attracting Investment	Need to help and support growing businesses a key priority for the city	Going forward, in addition to mainstream resource, the Black Country AIM project and BIS funded provision will enhance the offer as outlined in the attached Business Support Ecosystem.	
24 Sept – Attracting Investment	Discussions to develop Cycle Race as part of Carvers marathon  Mayoral visit to Wiggle	Wiggle has been passed the contact details of organiser at Compton Hospice to explore opportunities to support the cycle race as part of Carvers Marathon. Wiggle has been contacted to arrange a time for a visit by the Mayor.	
6 October – Visitor Economy  (Developing a Vibrant City)	List of venues and facilities available within Visitor Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic &amp; Wulfrun Halls (currently closed for refurbishment)</li> <li>• The Slade Rooms</li> <li>• City of Wolverhampton Art Gallery</li> <li>• Bilston Gallery</li> <li>• Bantock House and café</li> <li>• Molineux House (City of Wolverhampton Archives)</li> <li>• City Parks</li> </ul> <p>Each site offers hire opportunities to businesses and the general public, along with internally programmed events and exhibitions. The Art Gallery,</p>	

		Bantock and Molineux House will soon be available for wedding hire. Visitor Economy is developing a website containing information for hirers about our facilities, this will then be added to by other providers who wish to use it.	
6 October – Visitor Economy	City Visitor Ticket	Discussions to develop this kind of offer will only take place once the new business plans for the council operated visitor economy sites are in place and operational. The Visitor Economy service is currently implementing a significant restructure and new operating model.	
6 October – Visitor Economy	Opening hours of visitor attraction	Opening hours are under review with a consultation planned post-election. The Service is looking at investing in the cafes at the Art Gallery and Bantock site to lowering operating costs in order to operate seven days a week.	
6 October – Visitor Economy	Struggling night-time economy	Major investment in the Civic Halls to re-establish Wolverhampton’s position as the number 1 touring venue in the West Midlands.	
6 October – Visitor Economy	Cross marketing	Monthly partner venue meetings take place between Visitor Economy and other partners including the Light House Media Centre, Grand Theatre, Newhampton Arts Centre, Arena Theatre, Creative Wolverhampton and Business Improvement District (BID). These meetings focus on collaboration and cross marketing. The quarterly Exhibitions and Events brochure carries content for other arts providers in the city.	
6 October – Visitor Economy	Event timetable	An events programme has been developed with Business Improvement District (BID) and partner events discussed at partner venues meeting. Events scheduled include the Queen’s 90 <sup>th</sup> Birthday, St Georges Day, Brass Bands, Vaisakhi, Bonfire Night, Christmas Lights and Diwali.	

6 October – Visitor Economy	Grand Post House/ cluster opportunity and opportunity to create a buzz in proximity of buildings by managing public buildings separately	The University of Wolverhampton has submitted a number of funding bids on behalf of a wider partnership aimed at refurbishing the Grand Post House to create workspace to support the development of creative enterprises aiding graduate retention in the city. An ERDF application is currently being appraised and bid submitted to Local Growth Fund. The project is due to start in April (build opens April 2017).	
6 October – Visitor Economy	Visitor offer and integration with Grand Theatre	The Council is currently procuring Local Growth funded improvement works to Grand Theatre. Work will be undertaken in August 2016.	September/ October 2016
6 October – Visitor Economy	Coaches at Grand Theatre	The Grand Theatre has increased resource within the marketing department including a dedicated Marketing Manager who looks after coach bookings. Coach parties to the Grand are increasing steadily. These visits are not currently to any other aspects of the city offer.	
1 Dec Budget (Stronger Economy)	How we're supporting other cultural businesses including business plans for future financial sustainability	In addition to the activity of the partner venues meeting, Visitor Economy are delivering business assists as part of the funding agreement for the Civic Halls refurbishment. This currently includes advertising assistance and venue hire. It will soon include hosting food, drink and hotel information on our websites, in collaboration with the businesses involved. The Makers Dozen studios at the City of Wolverhampton Art Gallery site house local artists and makers.	
1 Dec Budget	Account Managers adding value to business communities	Two Navigators to be appointed for Wolverhampton as part of AIM project. Navigators will account manage the business throughout their journey through assessing their needs and supporting them to access specialist support. A workshop has been held and list of needs/wants produced creating brief and Digital Transformational Team advising on suitable products are required.	

<p>1 Dec Skills Commission (People develop the skills to get and keep work – improving our critical skills and employability approach)</p>	<p>Job Box</p>	<p>The ‘Job Box’ concept was a recommendation that emerged from the Skills and Employment Commission to address the issue of complexity of existing local provision that supports residents into employment. A stakeholder scoping workshop was held February 2016 to inform the scope of the model going forward. An action plan will be presented to City Board in April 2016 focusing on the key themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement, Communication and Added Value.</li> <li>• Initial assessment/diagnostic and how we support informed choices</li> <li>• Pathways to work – how do we create integrated routes</li> </ul>	<p>July 2016</p>
	<p>One City One Campus</p>	<p>Local Growth Fund (LGF) is funding a feasibility study to create a new city centre located campus for City of Wolverhampton College to provide the foundations for an effective business plan to ensure a cohesive and cost efficient proposal to achieve wide reaching economic and skills outcomes for the City. The feasibility study, which will be ready by end March 2016, aims to deliver potential solutions for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Financing the relocation into the centre of Wolverhampton;</li> <li>b. The sale of existing site for Housing development;</li> <li>c. Take over and fit out of the listed former Royal Hospital Building from Tesco, forming the new building;</li> <li>d. If the Hospital site is identified as preferred option, usage of the remainder of the Hospital site;</li> <li>e. Whether an alternative site is better suited to deliver the City and Sub Regions growth objectives; and</li> <li>f. Learner market testing for future curriculum structure in the new location.</li> </ol>	



1 Dec Skills Commission	Influencing West Midlands agenda re Skills and Employment	Heads of Skills across the Black Country to meet regular to input and influence Combined Authority agenda around skills and employment.	July 2016
9 Feb Business & Enterprise	Combined Authority: skills, enterprise start-up and delivering economic information.	Skills funding will be devolved to those Combined Authorities that have devolution deals and distributed through a block grant and outcome agreements. Indicative timelines are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2016-17 – transitional year of “enabling” local commissioning of outcomes</li> <li>• 2017-18 – development of a framework for local commissioning with block grants and outcome agreements based on Skills &amp; Employment Plans</li> <li>• 2018-19 – full devolution of skills funding (provided readiness conditions are met)</li> </ul>	
9 Feb Business & Enterprise  (supporting businesses, encouraging enterprise and attracting inward investment)	Business and Enterprise ties to skills agenda: how businesses are being supported to appoint and how businesses are influencing curriculum	An overview of the work underway to ensure businesses have the skilled workforces they require is given above.  Education Business Partnership (EBP) set yearly business plan and targets. 2015/16 targets are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work Experience – 2100 young people (achieved to date 478)</li> <li>• Work Related Learning – 4200 young people (achieved to date 1086)</li> <li>• STEM Ambassadors Approved – 151 (achieved to date 157)</li> <li>• STEM Events – 85 single school and 47 multi-school events (achieved to date 76 and 53)</li> </ul> Jaguar Land Rover Education Business Centre aims to host 111 delivery days/events. In January, the centre has hosted four sessions including Juniper Training, Birmingham City University and a European teacher visit.	March 2016

		It hosted 39 students in January totalling 478 to date	
9 Feb Business & Enterprise	Update report in six months	An update report on the Black Country Growth Hub including BIS and ESIF funded provision including the ERDF funded AIM and GOLD will be bought back to a future meeting to allow time for the new projects to start delivery once funding is approved.	December 2016
9 Feb Business & Enterprise	Paper to celebrate successes in the city including effectiveness of programmes	<p>Case Studies will be captured and included in future reports, however some case studies highlighting best practice are set out below:</p> <p><b>Wiggle</b>, the UK's biggest online cycle and tri sports retailer, opened its distribution centre in Bilston in August this year, and worked with Wolverhampton City Council, the City of Wolverhampton College and JobCentre Plus to fill some of the 150 warehouse roles it created. The online cycle shop took over the The Citadel, the 320,000 sq ft building on the Black Country New Road in Bilston. Wiggle have already said they are drawing up plans for the second phase of work, which will give another 80,000 sq ft-100,000 sq ft of storage at the site. This will create an additional 500 jobs in the next three years. Wiggle had a prominent role at Wolverhampton Jobs Fair back in March 2015, and stepped up its recruitment drive by offering permanent warehouse operative positions at its Citadel base to local unemployed people. A bespoke Wiggle pre-recruitment course run by City of Wolverhampton College was delivered aimed at developing the skills of jobseekers, and give them guaranteed interviews for the roles which are available. Additional support was provided by the Council's Economic Inclusion team for jobseekers who needed to improve their employability, maths and literacy skills to enable them to access additional roles both at Wiggle and other Warehouse employers. The outcome of the partnership support resulted in 80% of the new workforce has been recruited from the city. The overall support package</p>	December 2016

		<p>was co-ordinated by a dedicated council Account Manager and future plans included an expansion of the site creating over 200 additional jobs.</p> <p><b>Air Space Wolverhampton</b>, part of the Go Ape group, based at Bentley Bridge Retail Park, opened its doors on 23 Dec 2015. The £1.5 million park, which is set over two floors, has over 100 interconnected trampolines. It also has a number of areas for a range of activities, including a performance area and wall, air bag, basketball hoops and football goals as well as dodgeball courts. The development created 90 jobs with around 80 available to new roles based upon an ethos of staff members being at the heart of their business. They needed to recruit Air crew members, receptionists, hospitality and cleaning staff with a mix of full time and part-time roles. 72% of the new workforce are Wolverhampton residents.</p>	
<p>9 Feb Business &amp; Enterprise</p>	<p><b>Keeping Talent in the City:</b> bridging the gap between growing local talent and local businesses; need for local Councillors to get involved and play a more active role.</p>	<p>The City of Wolverhampton is a partner in the Urbact III funded Gen Y City project aimed at exploring ways of developing and retaining creative talent in cities. As part of stage 1, the baseline study recommended five areas of focus going forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Governance:</b> cities cannot address this challenge without working across sectors working across local government; universities; and businesses.</li> <li>• <b>Placemaking:</b> crucial to develop a vibrant place where young people want to live, work and play.</li> <li>• <b>Developing creative tech talent:</b> start young at school to create young people to meet future business needs. Focus of discussion was how we can increase the number of young people studying STEM subjects</li> <li>• <b>Retaining young people:</b> through creating opportunities/pathways for young people to jobs or self-employment and to create that vibrancy that will make young</li> </ul>	<p>March 2016</p>

		<p>creative techs want to stay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Attracting creative tech talent:</b> relates to building on tourism to attract people to live in the area. The University actively promote itself to international students through their international offices. The City of Wolverhampton has offered to host a workshop in September involving the 12 transnational partner cities in the project.</li> </ul>	
9 Feb Business & Enterprise	Smart City agenda	<p>A report was recently taken to the Economic Growth Board on Smart Cities and opportunities going forward. A smart city uses information and communication technologies (ICT) to enhance quality, performance and interactivity of urban services, to reduce costs and resource consumption and to improve contact between citizens and government. Summarised below are a number of Smart City activities currently under way in Wolverhampton and the Black Country.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Smart Governance:</b> activities centre on encouraging and supporting public participation in local democracy and publishing council data to be exploited by citizens and businesses and to promote transparency. Local examples include putting annual budget consultations online to improve engagement and online petitions and consultations.</li> <li>• <b>Smart Economy:</b> the benefits of technology in stimulating economic growth is recognised with highly digitalised small medium sized enterprises (SMEs) growing faster, however studies suggest that without demand stimulation, only 15% of UK businesses will benefit. The University of Wolverhampton showcases the latest technology and demonstrates practical applications at their Visualisation Centre on Wolverhampton Science Park and is fronting an ERDF bid for a Digital Passport project that supports Black Country SMEs to become more</li> </ul>	End Sept/ Oct

		<p>digitalised thus increasing take-up of superfast broadband.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Smart Mobility:</b> many Smart City initiatives are already supported by the West Midlands Local Transport Plan and being developed at Black Country or Combined Authority level. Urban Traffic Control uses smart technology for traffic control and real time information updates.</li><li>• <b>Smart Environment:</b> Smart City thinking emphasises improvements in environmental outcomes such as reduction of carbon emissions and overall efficiency in the use of resources. The Council is developing energy management and generation in council properties including solar and biomass.</li><li>• <b>Smart People:</b> Being digitally connected can have significant benefits for our residents including increasing educational performance, chances of getting into employment and boosting lifetime earnings. It can also help to reduce poverty by providing access to cheaper services, health and reduce isolation. A range of ICT training is available across Wolverhampton ranging from basic getting online in community venues to courses at a range of levels from adult education, City of Wolverhampton College to the University of Wolverhampton.</li><li>• <b>Smart Living:</b> covers a range of lifestyle, behavioural and cultural initiatives. Housing Associations are looking at Smart technology around assisted living, enabling older people to live for longer in their home, and the NHS are also use Smart technology to enable people to control their condition at home, for example by remotely monitoring key health information such as blood pressure.</li></ul>	
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