

Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Panel

24 January 2017

Report title	Skills and Employment Update	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor John Reynolds City Economy	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Keren Jones, City Economy	
Originating service	City Economy	
Accountable employee(s)	Angela McKeever	Head of Skills
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Report to be/has been considered by		

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

- The Scrutiny Panel note progress in delivering Wolverhampton's Skills and Employment Action Plan.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Panel on skills and employment agenda in particular:
- a) Wolverhampton skills and employment action plan - update
 - b) High level skills and retaining skills - monitoring and progress
 - c) Area review for Further Education skills
 - d) Engaging businesses to take up training and skills opportunities (refer to Programme 1 of the Skills and Employment Action Plan).

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Stronger City Economy Scrutiny has been receiving regular updates on the skills and employment agenda. This report will provide a comprehensive update on this agenda in recognition of its importance to Wolverhampton. Wolverhampton has consistently higher rates of out of work benefits, higher than Black Country and England average, reflected both in Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) claimants and those claiming health related benefit Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). Low and no qualifications is a primary driver for unemployment and economic inactivity. Many of the new jobs created as a result of economic growth will be level 4 and above resulting in a significant mismatch between the skills levels of city residents and demand from jobs attributed to new growth. Wolverhampton currently has a higher proportion of its residents with no qualifications and a lower proportion of residents with higher level qualifications.
- 2.2 Wolverhampton City Strategy 2011-2026 set the target of achieving an employment rate of at least 70% by 2026 from a baseline of 61.3% in 2010. Wolverhampton's employment rate is on an upward trend and is currently 65.2% (Annual Population Survey 2015-16).
- 2.3 Despite some progress, skills and employment is still one of the greatest challenges facing the city. In autumn 2014, the Leader of the City of Wolverhampton Council announced the establishment of an independent Skills and Employment Commission, with the purpose of:
- Improving the city's prospects for sustainable growth, by ensuring the city had a workforce that meets the needs of current, and future employers,
 - Ensuring that the city's residents had the skills and qualifications needed to compete successfully for local job opportunities.
- 2.4 The Independent Commission recommended the following:
- Provide an improved joined up approach to careers advice for people of all ages in the city.
 - Improve the use of resources and create clearer roles across institutions and organisations concerned with education, training and skills development
 - Improve soft skills and addressing wider barriers to work
 - Work with employers to address under-employment and in-work progression

2.5 As a result of these recommendations, Wolverhampton Skills and Employment Action Plan was developed outlining the following programmes:

Programme 1, the City Work Place: aims to improve the support given to businesses to help them recruit, grow and retain skilled local people, resulting in more jobs and more successful enterprise.

Programme 2, the City Work Box: aims to create a virtual system that makes it easier for local people to obtain information, advice and guidance, resulting in more local people accessing local employment and progressing in the workplace.

Programme 3, the Learning City: initially aims to create a dynamic learning environment across the city centre, with strong connections into local communities. This is the first step in putting learning at the heart of our city's overall development.

2.6 In addition, in response to these challenges Cabinet Panel approved on 30 November 2016 funding for a joint City of Wolverhampton Council and Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) funded Wolves@Work programme.

3.0 Skills and Employment Update

3.1 Following the Skills Commission, a Skills and Employment Action plan for the period 2016-17 was agreed with partners across the city in order to deliver a number of priority projects. This was with a view to a longer term plan being put in place for the following 3 years from 2018-20. The delivery of this plan is being overseen by the **Skills and Employment Board** which meets bi-monthly.

3.2 The Skills and Employment Action Plan aims to develop a whole systems approach to skills and employment in order to support growth, address skills shortages and improve skills and employment levels of residents especially those that face complex barriers to employment. Performance information relating to the Skills and Employment Action Plan is attached as appendix 1.

3.3 **PROGRAMME 1: THE CITY WORKPLACE** aims to improve the support given to businesses to help them recruit, grow and retain skilled local people, resulting in more jobs and more successful enterprise.

3.4 The **Black Country Growth Hub** offers a one stop shop approach to business assistance across the Black Country, with packages of support available to local businesses. It aims to equip Black Country manufacturing Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) with the tools and support they need to compete, innovate and take advantage of supply chain opportunities on offer to them. Our approach to business relationship and diagnostic is capturing intelligence on business needs including skills, training and workforce development needs. The Enterprise team will look to engage and capture through our relationships with businesses, the following

- ✓ understand and respond to the latest thinking,
- ✓ trends and innovation in key sectors;
- ✓ to provide feedback to the Growth Hub and other partners on key products and services;

- ✓ to secure engagement in the Councils regeneration and place growth agenda;
- ✓ to gain a heads up on any potential growth opportunity or de investment decision
- ✓ understand local supply chains,
- ✓ business financing arrangements,
- ✓ Workforce development plans.

3.5 To complement this, £1.8m European Regional Development Funding has been secured to fund the **Black Country Advice Investment and Markets (AIM)** project will offer specialist support for SMEs pooling business support across four local authorities, the University and Chamber of Commerce, enhanced with specialist consultancy and delivered via the Growth Hub delivering the following:

Outputs	Target
Diagnostic and brokerage support (3 hours)	1000
Business assists (12 hours)	460
New jobs created	115

3.6 The **Skills for Growth Team** have focused on supporting businesses to recruit locally. This kind of work focuses mainly on entry level, low skill vacancies but can be a successful tool for addressing unemployment as well as a successful way of encouraging local and incoming businesses to recruit locally. Between January 2016 and May 2016 the Skills for Growth team enabled 187 residents to access jobs in 9 local businesses. The current Skills for Growth team engage with employers across Wolverhampton's city centre and growth corridors in 2017. This will be enhanced by five additional workers engaging with employers through the joint CWC/ DWP wolves@work project (3.11). Employer engagement will provide clear directions for the content and quality of training to be provided designed and delivered by local training partners. Referrals to the jobs will come from a wide range of local partners including wolves@work, JCP and Wolverhampton Learning Platform with jobs and training opportunities will be advertised on the Workbox site

PROGRAMME 2: THE WOLVERHAMPTON WORKBOX

3.7 The **Wolverhampton Workbox** aims to create a virtual system making it easier for local people to obtain information, advice and guidance, resulting in more local people accessing local employment and progressing in the workplace. The Work Box is being co-designed with employers, Connexions, Adult Education, Schools, Wolverhampton College, University of Wolverhampton, the Community Learning Platform, DWP and training providers. The site will be demonstrated at the Stronger City Economy Scrutiny meeting.

3.8 The Wolverhampton Workbox will be a fully functioning, interactive website which will act as a 'front door' to provide local people, businesses and providers with improved access to information, advice and job opportunities. The Workbox builds on best practice developed by Telford which successfully aligned existing services behind a website contributing to a fall of 50% of 16-24 year olds out of work between April 2014 and March 2015.

- 3.9 The Workbox will provide clear and up to date information on local skills and employment provision
- Opportunities for continued engagement through online skills assessment and access to local advice and guidance services
 - Access to training including bespoke and fast track training into jobs
 - Access to intensive employment support, CV preparation and job matching
 - Information on and access to apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships provision.
- 3.10 A framework for Job Brokerage is being established with the Council, Jobcentre Plus and local training partners to put in place a more coordinated approach with partners and employers. The framework will have four key elements:
- Residents: identification and assessment of the client for job readiness. Referrals from JCP, Talent Pool, VCS and private providers etc. Work ready support provided to client.
 - Work Ready Residents: referred for job brokerage to be supported with job matching and pre-recruitment services. Package of support provided to meet client and employer needs.
 - Employers: identification of job opportunities with inward investors, business links and with Job Centre Plus. Package of Support provided to employer.
 - Pre-Recruitment Training: co-design of pre-recruitment training programmes to support employer solutions.
- 3.11 **Wolves@Work - A new partnership between the City of Wolverhampton Council and the Department of Work and Pensions** will enhance the Job Brokerage model going forward.
- 3.12 On 15th November 2016 the Leader for the Council, the Managing Director and Strategic Director met with Sandra Lambert, Regional DWP Manager, to discuss strengthening partnerships between the council and DWP in order to reduce the high local unemployment 4.1% (Nov '16), and in particular youth unemployment which stands at 6.08% (Nov'16) of 18-24 years olds (double the average in England).
- 3.13 Drawing on successful programmes that have been delivered in other parts of the Country, it was agreed that the two organisations would design and deliver a bespoke three year work programme for the city, which consists of the following:
- Commitment of the equivalent of £3 million resources over a three year period towards the costs of a new, locally branded programme
 - Deliver 3000 people into sustained employment over the three year period, of which at least 1,000 will be young people
 - Jointly recruit and manage a team of 30 “Work Coaches” who would coach young people and employers through all three key stages of the employment journey: a) into work, b) during the first three months of employment, c) career development

- Launch the “Wolverhampton Work Pledge Card” in January 2017 in collaboration with the largest employers in the city. To include pledges to provide meaningful work experience and a commitment to local recruitment
- Work with local employers, particularly the largest employers that are committed to helping the city tackle this issue. The focus will be on delivering the employer led activities that Youth Employment UK have identified that are key to tackling the levels of youth employment. This will include obtaining buy-in in the Wolverhampton Business Champions, City Economic Growth Board, the Black Country Growth Hub, The Black Country Chamber of Commerce
- Develop and manage a pool of City Work mentors to provide additional support to young people alongside the Work Coaches
- Build local employer commitment to employing local people as part of the City’s Local Procurement Charter

3.14 Development and delivery of the programme will be overseen by Leadership Group comprised of senior management across both organisations – Department for Work and Pensions and City of Wolverhampton Council. The Project Board will meet monthly. The CWC Executive Board will also receive regular progress reports. The Governance Structure is attached in Appendix 2.

3.15 Engagement of employers as active partners will be through the City Board structures i.e. the Skills and Employment Board and the Economic Growth Board, as well as through the Wolverhampton Business Champions.

3.16 A dedicated project manager role has been appointed who will responsible for all aspects of project management including finance, marketing and operations.

3.17 Impact in the Black Country is a Black Country wide project worth £51 million, a partnership between the four Black Country local authorities and Talent Match, to provide intensive support specifically to young people between 15 and 29 not in employment, education or training. This is over and above that provided by the work coaches. The City of Wolverhampton Council’s project is funded by £7.97 million made up of £2.9 million European Social Fund (ESF), £2.9 million Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) and £2.2 million local match until July 2018. Wolverhampton’s targets are to engage 3,342 young people, provide 1,733 with a customised support package and support 856 into employment, education and training. The project is ahead of profile as outlined below.

ESF/YEI Outputs and Results	2016 Target	Achieved	Lifetime target
No. engaged onto the programme	600	632	3342
No. receiving customised support	360	412	1733
No. supported into a positive outcome	63	78	856

- 3.18 Funding can also be used to fund customised support to meet the needs of the young person. An Impact Dynamic Purchasing System, to speed up the procurement process, is currently being procured and in the meantime, the Impact Team is developing specifications to procure delivery through open competition. Employment opportunities in the rail sector have already been commissioned. Graduate placements, support for young people in contact with the Youth Offending Team and emotional and behaviour support for 16-18 year olds are currently being commissioned. Others under development include Individual Placement Support for people with mental health issues and support for lone parents on income support. Three task and finish groups are meeting to identify programmes to support young people by addressing their specific needs.
- 3.19 PROGRAMME 3: THE LEARNING CITY** aims to create a dynamic learning environment throughout the city, with strong connections into local communities. This is the first step is the creation of a learning quarter in the city centre.
- A modern Library Service – encouraging learning and literacy for all
 - Relocation of the College to the City centre
 - Potentially a city Sixth Form Hub if the opportunity arises.
 - Adult Education Services focusing on the most vulnerable

High level skills and retaining skills - monitoring and progress

- 3.20 The City of Wolverhampton is home to the University of Wolverhampton which has 23,000 students. It has an excellent track record of its students finding employment with 96% of students finding employment, 80% of which in the West Midlands and 66% in professional or managerial roles. Despite this, skills retention is also an issue for the city.
- 3.21 Some graduates face barriers to moving into employment, therefore the ESF and YEI funded Impact project has commissioned specific **support to unemployed graduates** who need additional support in securing employment. For example graduates with a registered disability and/or graduates who have had a background in care. The project will support unemployed graduates in our most deprived communities, those from Black and Minority Ethnic groups and those with English as a second language as they all face additional challenges in securing graduate level employment.
- 3.22 The URBACT III funded **Gen Y City project** aims to explore strategic policy solutions to increase the economic impact of under 30's in the city focusing on:
- Developing creative tech talent: 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;
 - Retaining young people: through creating opportunities/pathways for young people to jobs or self-employment and to create that vibrancy that will make young creative techs want to stay; and

- Attracting creative tech talent: 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.

3.23 **City Apprenticeship Offer:** currently take up in Wolverhampton of apprenticeships is low and there is a need for an improved focus on the relevance of the curriculum and the quality of the offer. Higher level apprenticeships are a particular focus of this work. An apprenticeship partnership has been set up to:

- Deliver joined up marketing and events to promote apprenticeships to employers, residents, young people, parents, schools, careers advisers etc.
- Improve coordination of delivery – work together to simplify and coordinate the offer to business across the city
- Simplify the offer for all age groups (using the Workbox) and improve access through better traineeships and pre-apprenticeships provision
- Access funding and opportunities – work together and position ourselves to maximise funding and development opportunities.
- Higher Apprenticeships - Expand the higher apprenticeships offer and develop pathways between levels for target sectors
- Supply skills for growth - enable and support jobs and growth in the three development corridors and wider functional economic area.
- Potential for an apprenticeship hub if the opportunity arises.
- Understand how we collectively might capitalise on the apprenticeships levy to benefit local business and people and develop the LA scheme as an example of good practice. This will be achieved through:
 - Second meeting of partnership group held on 4/12/16 to agree priorities for a City action plan in response to the apprenticeship levy.
 - CWC are part of a combined authority proposal to government to develop an apprenticeship accelerator proposal in which funding could be devolved to the region.
 - CWC is working on their own approach to the apprenticeship levy.
 - Apprenticeship paper going through scrutiny. Councillors provided with baseline data and the challenges in relation to increasing participation. Subsequent meetings will see Councillors meeting local providers, employers and young people.

4.0 Financial implications

4.1 Although there are no financial implications to this report, activity that is helping to address skills and employment activity in Wolverhampton are often externally funded. The city of Wolverhampton Council's Impact project is funded by £8.0 million made up of £2.9 million European Social Fund (ESF), £2.9 million Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) and £2.2 million local match until July 2018. Partners are also delivering against these priorities through other ESF matched with Big Lottery and Skills Funding Agency funded. Financial implications of the joint CWC and DWP funded Working Wolverhampton projects were covered in the Cabinet Panel report on 30 November 2016. [ES/10012017/B]

5.0 Legal implications

5.1 There are no legal implications to this report. [Legal Code: TS/04012016/C]

6.0 Equalities implications

6.1 The activities outlined in this report have positive equalities implications. All externally funded projects have targets around equalities. For example, Impact which is aimed at young people who are not in employment, education and training has output targets for men and women, migrants/ethnic groups, people with disabilities including mental health and lone parents.

7.0 Environmental implications

7.1 All externally funded must demonstrate positive sustainability implications. By supporting local residents into local job opportunities, we can help to reduce in commuting and associated negative environmental implications.

8.0 Human resources implications

8.1 There are no human resource implications.

9.0 Corporate landlord implications

9.1 There are no corporate landlord implications to this report.

10.0 Schedule of background papers

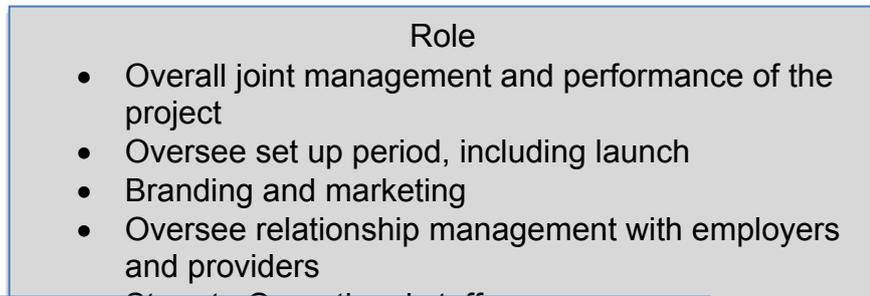
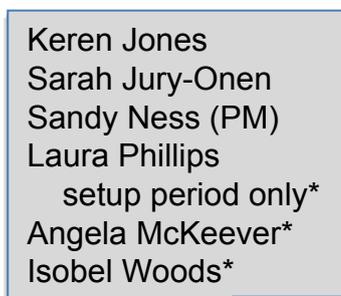
Appendix 2 Governance structure - Wolves at Work

LEVEL 1 - Leadership group

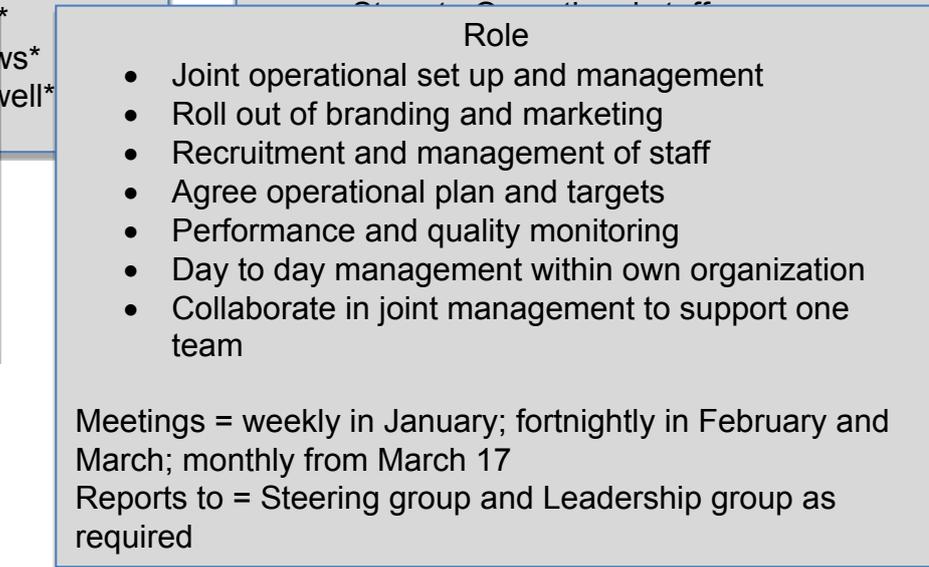


LEVEL 2 –

Steering group



Level 3 -



Operational /delivery group

Appendix: Post 16 Priorities

Title:

Post – 16 Priorities update

Prepared by:
 Kate Howard

Date: 1 December 2016

Intended audience: Internal Partner organisation Public Confidential

Purpose or recommendation

The Education Board is requested to:

Note progress to date on post 16 developments across the city.

Endorse continued activity against priorities outlined in the Post - 16 review update (SEB

Overview

There are four guiding influences which inform all post-16 strategy and delivery:

- Quality
- Choice
- Progression
- Viability

There is a commitment to improved cross – Directorate working as well as a more integrated approach to working with external partners across the city and region eg City of Wolverhampton College, University of Wolverhampton, employer forums and other local authority 14-19/post-16 leads. The post-16 priorities under development endorse City and Black Country strategic priorities and are responding to national policy changes.

5 Key themes embed City - wide priorities into a Post - 16 vision:

Priority 1: Improving Partnership and Collaboration

Priority 2: Supporting Aspirational Attainment

Priority 3: Ensuring Demand Led and Inclusive Post 16 Provision

Priority 4: Developing a Skills Pipeline to Sustainable Employment

Priority 5: Planning Capital Investment

See Appendix 1 for details of priorities and timeline.

2.0 Background and context

The Post - 16 vision and plan is cross-Directorate and has been reviewed internally over the last six months by the Strategic Education Board; Children and Young People's Transformation Board and, on 8 November 2016, an overview of the Post 16 priorities was submitted to the City of Wolverhampton's Council Scrutiny Committee as part of a Post 16 report on November 8th 2016.

Externally, the plan has been reviewed by various groups including: Wolverhampton's Young People Skills and Employment Group; headteachers leadership briefing; secondary headteachers' workshops and The Black Country Training Provider Network.

The plan is now integrated into the Council's VERTO system to ensure that progress sits within the Council review process and inter-dependencies are understood. Progress against the priorities endorsed by the consultation process above is set out in an updated

Development plan which will be supported by the VERTO system where appropriate. (Appendix 2).

Impact on the City of Wolverhampton Council and / or City

Priority 1: Improving Partnership and Collaboration

The most significant partnership developments against the plan are:

A. The new City wide Apprenticeship Group. Its 3 priorities are:

- Access – including pre-Apprenticeship/Traineeships
- Skills for Growth including promotion and uptake of Higher/Degree Apprenticeships
- Communication/Marketing

The focus for the Post 16 plan is exploring new pre-Apprenticeship programmes which secondary schools can access, including potential 14-16 and post 16 provision at a City Centre Campus as well as a school based offer.

B. School reconfiguration of Post- 16 Provision and City Campus/Learning Quarter Development: Schools have been extensively briefed on policy changes within the Government's Post 16 Skills Plan to ensure leaders understand that current provision may not meet new guidelines on what schools are expected to deliver in the future ie academic or Applied General courses and not vocational/technical provision.

To inform future planning/re-configuration of provision, schools have also received detailed data and presentations on sixth form sizes; small class sizes; space utilisation analysis to highlight inefficiencies and to allow for year 7 expansion. There has also been a presentation on financial viability of sixth forms so Governors and school leadership teams can plan strategically for the future.

C. The Learning Quarter – see Priority 5. The Director of Education and the Post 16 lead are part of the Learning Quarter consultation group and have contributed to the development of a briefing paper to inform an architect's brief for the proposed City Campus development.

D. The Cultural Quarter. The Director of Education and the Post -16 lead are part of a University consultation group to explore the City of Wolverhampton's review of the potential use of space around the University to create a new cultural quarter informed by educational aspirations for the city. A brief proposal for options on educational models will be shared late November, prepared by the Director of Education.

Priority 2: Supporting Aspirational Attainment

Post - 16 school support is focussed on working with a deputies network on specific issues impacting on post 16 success. The Council commitment to purchase ALPS performance data is will inform school support in identifying issues which require brokered school and school to school support. The data sets are particularly useful in drilling down into value added data ie where learners are not performing against projections provided by national data sets on expected levels of progress.

The curriculum review of Post -16 provision has been outlined in Priority 1 but there are issues which also relate to academic provision including weaknesses in breadth of provision leading to lack of learner choice as well as current under-performance and weak progression pathways. The Post -16 review and discussions with Headteachers is informing this debate, with the potential for some new viable and ambitious remodelling of provision across the City.

An area for future development is to review the delivery and poor success of post 16 GCSE English and Maths achievement – a national issue which locally needs to be reviewed.

Priority 3: Ensuring Demand led and Inclusive Post 16 Provision

The main areas of progress is the development having a city network to focus on apprenticeships, outlined in Priority 1 and planning to support the new Learning Quarter proposals.

The review of the alternative learning offer is underway and new programmes are being developed by some schools and providers to improve provision and progression.

Alternative Provision: Engagement with the Black Country Training Provider Network is in place to progress new opportunities for post 16 alternative provision, with the College as the lead provider, as it is developing new more flexible framework for learners to improve learner choice, quality and increased learning hours.

The Wolverhampton Quality Assurance framework has been developed, following extensive consultation with the LA, schools and providers. The final draft was reviewed by the Education Board in July 2016. It is now being trialled with about six schools and six providers. Any school which is offering alternative provision internally will be invited to use the QA framework as part of its Self Evaluation Framework. The robustness of the QA framework is to provide an evidence base which will meet any external review, including Ofsted inspection criteria.

Consultation with parents and carers is also underway by the SEND consultant to inform future High Needs provision across the city, in partnership with City of Wolverhampton College and other providers.

Priority 4: Developing a Skills Pipeline to Sustainable Employment

Four main development areas:

1. Talent Match is now providing targeted support for young people.
2. The kite mark award for Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance is being successfully developed with 12 schools in phase 1.
3. All schools are engaging with Work Box, following dissemination of a prototype and presentation to secondary Headteachers.
4. Progression into internships and progression onto Apprenticeships a priority within the Apprenticeship Group

Priority 5: Planning Capital Investment

Details of plans to inform the rationalisation/re-configuration of Post- 16 provision outlined above in Priority 2. The Council is facilitating meetings between education partners, including schools, Wolverhampton College; The University of Wolverhampton and providers - brokering new conversations about future strategic planning for secondary schools and how to develop and deliver a new Post-16 offer where appropriate. The outcomes of this process will continue to support the project delivery team for City wide capital investment.

Major investment in the proposed Learning Quarter includes plans for a new Post 16 centre offering a wide range of academic and vocational/technical programmes of study, as well as further development of SEND High Needs provision and other sector specialisms elsewhere in the City.

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