Report to:  Cabinet, 19th January 2015

Report of:  Scrutiny Committee

Subject:  NATURE AND EXTENT OF EMPLOYMENT IN WORCESTER CITY – FINAL REPORT

1.  **Purpose**

1.1  For Cabinet to note and consider the recommendations in the report.

2.  **Background**

2.1  The purpose of the review was to support Worcester City Council’s Cabinet to better understand the issues involved with employment in Worcester City.

2.2  There were four Members in the review group:

    Cllr Joy Squires (Chair)
    Cllr Andy Stafford
    Cllr Christine Cawthorne
    Cllr Mike Whitehouse

2.3  It was agreed the review group should not re-visit, but instead build on areas covered by the Youth Employment Scrutiny review undertaken in 2014/15.

2.4  The review group should also be mindful of the remit of the Scrutiny Committee to investigate matters affecting the City as a place and not just its service and functions. The group should be mindful of not duplicating any existing work undertaken by council officers or key partners.

2.5  The review initially involved a desk based approach, involving expert officers and primary and secondary evidence in the form of reports, data, previous scrutiny reports and case studies. There were call for evidence sessions on the 6th and 8th of October 2015 where key stakeholders, providers and interested parties were able to supply specialist evidence.

2.6  A list of all the evidence and research that has been used to inform this report is included as **Appendix 2**

2.7  Scrutiny Committee met on 25th November 2015 and considered the report of the review group (**Appendix 1**). The Committee agreed the recommendations as set out in the report and one additional recommendation regarding Hub/incubator space and managed workspace.

3.  **Equalities, Financial, Health and Safety, HR, Legal, Policy, and Risk Management Implications**

3.1  **Equalities**  – None arising from this report.

3.2  **Financial**  – None arising from this report.

3.3  **Health and Safety**  – None arising from this report.
3.4 **HR** – None arising from this report.

3.5 **Legal** – None arising from this report.

3.6 **Policy** – This report aligns with the Worcester City Council’s Corporate Plan priority Increasing prosperity through successful businesses and great jobs and indicates the Council’s support for improving skills and creating the conditions and environments for businesses to grow and stay in Worcester.

3.7 **Risk Management** - None arising from this report.

4. **THE CHAIR OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS:**

4.1 That Cabinet consider the following recommendations:

i. **Employment Conference** – The City Council should host an Employment Conference to enable key stakeholders to discuss issues raised in this report, suggest solutions and plan for implementation.

ii. **Employment Forum** – To ensure that the approach of finding joint solutions becomes sustainable, the City Council should establish an Employment Forum that will meet at intervals to be agreed. The design and shaping of this will be an output from the Employment Conference.

iii. **Networking Programme for Start-Ups and Businesses with Growth Potential** – Key stakeholders will be asked to design and shape what this looks like at the Employment Conference.

iv. **Hub/incubator space and managed workspace** – The City Council should work with partners to identify ways to develop hub, incubator and managed workspace in the city.

v. **Commercial property options** – The City Council should work with partners to investigate options available for new commercial premises within the City.

vi. **Business rates changes** – The City Council should look into the impact and opportunities surrounding changes in Business Rates and should engage stakeholders and businesses themselves in their consideration of any proposed changes.

**Wards:** All  
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**Background Papers:** Scoping Report - 15th July 2015