

15 March 2012

**GROWING THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES EMPLOYMENT SECTOR IN
WALSALL**

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Cllr Adrian Andrew, - Deputy Leader and Regeneration

Report:

An update on progress made on consulting with members of the creative industries in Walsall.

Compared to other employment sectors the creative industries sector is relatively small in Walsall. The creative and digital sector employs under 2,000 people which represents 2% of total employment in the borough. The national average for this sector is 5% of total employment (source: ekosgen).

At the January 19 regeneration scrutiny panel a debate took place over how the council could help.

A Facebook page 'Can We Make Walsall A More Creative Place' has been launched to help engage online with people associated with the creative industries. Almost 50 people have signed-up to the page.

Flickr, a social media photography site, has also been used to consult through the long-established Walsall Flickr group.

More than 40 comments have so far been gathered.

These include requests for:

- A request for 'co-working' space. Co-working describes informal town centre office space which is often located in a cafe with wifi internet connection available. This has proved to be popular with self-employed freelance creatives in cities such as Birmingham, London as well as Wolverhampton.
- Empty buildings to be made available to college and University artists for pop-up exhibitions.
- Access to photographic studio space.
- A town centre music venue.
- Concerts at Walsall Town Hall Bar.
- Empty shops loaned to artists.
- Lower business rates for start-ups.
- Marketing and support for creative industries.

- A cultural event niche to Walsall.

Recommendations:

That


1. the Council continues to use the Facebook page ‘Can We Make Walsall A More Creative Place?’ as a means to consult.

and;

2. a further discussion takes place around creative industries with invited guests at the 23 April 2012 meeting of the Panel.

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