

Podcast: Megatrends in the West Midlands- Future Business District

Music followed by introduction by Rebecca Riley, Associate Professor at City-REDI and WMREDI, University of Birmingham:

Rebecca Riley:

Welcome to the Redi podcast. I'm Rebecca Riley, Associate Professor at City-REDI and WMREDI, University of Birmingham. In our first series of podcasts, we'll be looking at megatrends in the West Midlands. WMREDI has developed evidence examining the impacts of COVID 19 on the West Midlands region by producing economic impact monitors and a state of the region report with policy partners.

The WMCA commissioned further work to look at the megatrends identified in the state of the Region 2020 Report. This process has highlighted potential for the acceleration of existing trends by the COVID 19 crisis, culminating in new scenarios for future economic activity, life and places.

Some examples of megatrends we explored include business models and operations, work and training, future health and greenspaces local living, changing city centre business districts, just cities, Generational conflict, urban responses and economic shocks, future mobility and tactical urbanism.

There is a gap in policymakers understanding of whether these trends will continue altering the structure of society and businesses in the longer term. These podcasts and the larger program of work it's part of will help us explore selected trends and scenarios with policymakers locally and nationally in more depth, helping them formulate economic recovery policy, which takes account of these changes.

The scenarios identified could have significant economic consequences and scarring effects of vulnerable groups and places as a result of impacts on human, social, physical and natural capital. This research examines these impacts and trends, developing future scenarios in greater depth in order to identify, along with policymakers, those policies which may be more effective in restarting the economy, encouraging recovery, and creating long term renewal by encouraging positive trends and mitigating negative effects.

I hope you enjoy the series and for a more detailed look at megatrends, please download and read the associated provocations and report on the topic - Megatrends in the West Midlands.

More music followed by a discussion between Johannes Read, Data and Policy Analyst at City-REDI/WMREDI, Mike Best, Senior Director at Turley and Kevin Johnson, Managing Director from Urban Communications.

Johannes Read:

Right. And so here we are. Hello, everyone. A welcome to the City RED Podcast. City REDI Megatrends podcast where we're looking today at the Changing City Centre business districts. I'm Johannes Read, Policy and Data Analyst at City REDI/ WMREDI at the University of Birmingham.

And today I'll be talking with Kevin Johnson, managing director of Urban Communications and Mike Best senior director of planning at Turley. Both Kevin and Mike were involved in the future business district report and research from Colmore Bid business districts and that was ongoing from February 21 ish until about this time last year.

So here we go today. Mike, welcome. How we doing today? How's everything going with anything? Quite busy, I think, with the Commonwealth Games recently.

Mike Best:

That sort of. Well, yeah, only attending but yet it's been a great 11 days, hasn't it, for the city. It feels a long way from COVID. When I remember coming into the city centre in sort of the early summer of 2020 and you know, that's probably what prompted us to Kevin and I to talk about the future business district study as a as a concept, really, that we were concerned.

Well, you know, would people come back to the city and how would we get them back? And here we are two years later, and I suppose you just need a Commonwealth Games and job done really.

Johannes Read:

Well only if it was that easy. Well, thank you. Yeah. Kevin, great to see you. I think last time we met in person, I think was at the launch of the Future Business District Report, which is actually the first time I'd been to a post-pandemic meeting event.

So, you were the host of that that day? I can do half as good job as you did then with a slight amount of humour and maybe a few more jokes, a few more laughs, though, then I'll have done a good job.

And that event was one of the many themes that emerging from the research, which is about collaboration coming together and so on. So how have things gone since then that day?

Kevin Johnson:

Well, and as you said, a very low bar for your hosting, which you're going to exceed with aplomb. I think you'll probably have more jokes, but less volence than we had on that night. There we are. That's the basis of podcast. Yeah, good. And like Mike says, if you have a Commonwealth Games, you know, every couple of weeks, then we wouldn't have had to have done this study a few weeks ago and a couple of years ago when we started.

But I think the Commonwealth Games does prove is that having culture, if you give culture, is what is definite definition. If you have culture in city centres, it brings people in and makes the place look and feel very different.

And I guess that's where we sort of came to it at the end of the day with you and your colleagues. And I think what that night proved that when we look at the afternoon and evening when we launch the report, is that people like coming together, being in the same space.

Yes, they like having a drink and all of that and talking about stuff. And we need more of that, more collaboration and less focus on people just sitting at their desks in city centres. We can do that at home.

It's the collaboration. It's the culture stuff that will in the end, which is going to make the city centre come to life anywhere near as much as it did in the last couple of weeks.

Johannes Read:

Yeah, I think that's true. Really, and while looking forward this podcast today, I think we've tried to cover a few broad sections. One is kind of outlining the trends that are going on, which be really well described in the media, but also in research and just quite well research recently.

But what I also would like to do is not just talk about our research as a future business district, but see how is Birmingham City centre performing in regards to those trends? These big broad trends make a difference in a place.

So, and also what initiatives are underway in Birmingham maybe, Mike, with you as part of the Colmore Bid, what are these initiatives? So, I'll hope I'll start with posing that to you.

Mike, what are the main trends in Birmingham and how have organizations in the city centre been addressing them?

Mike Best:

Yeah. I mean, I think, you know, the study which if you as you said earlier, we started work on seriously in sort of February 21 when we were still in lockdown. So, all of the meetings, all the engagement we did, we through the study was all virtual.

So that launch event where we got together in person was quite a quite an exciting moment in the in the, in the, in the journey that we've been on. But at that time, we were looking at, you know, what might happen post-pandemic.

And, you know, there were lots of sort of gloomy predictions of the future. There were also a lot of people saying, oh, we'll just go back to normal afterwards. And sort of I've sort of always referred to Freedom Day back in June of last year when the government announced that, you know, the restrictions were lifted, but not necessarily everybody responded by going back to how they lived and worked before. And, you know, there are still quite a lot of analysis of trends out there, particularly by centre for Cities who were doing a high street tracker.

And it's for me and I know Kevin and I sort of got Andrew Scott from centre of cities involved and in the future business district study because of the work that they were doing. And we just felt like it was a really useful indicator, and that work is still ongoing and even now I think these the data I was just looking at goes from July 22.

But you know, footfall in in Birmingham City centre in its broadest sense is still only about 70%, 77% of where it was before the pandemic. Now that obviously doesn't account for the Commonwealth Games.

I think last Friday wasn't anything on the street was tweeting yesterday that that had the highest ever footfall through the street station on Friday of 250,000 people. So, you know, that clearly has been a major boost for the city centre.

But if you take that out even up to quite recently, footfall is still below where it was pre-pandemic. And that differs to some extent between the sort of the working day and the evenings and then weekends. So actually, what the data is showing is that weekends are doing better.

They were over 100% pre-pandemic level. So, what we have seen I think over the last 12 months is hospitality has come back quite strongly. There are still challenges in the industry generally in terms of staffing levels and we've seen that in many venues that haven't been able to provide, you know, for all week round staffing.

But I think hospitality has had something of a recovery. The night-time economy is generally still down to where it was pre-pandemic, but it's in a better place. So, I think what we're seeing probably the most obvious signs of is that the workers aren't coming back to the same extent that that perhaps was predicted.

And I think that's largely because here we are, you know, recording a podcast on our on our laptops and screens, you know, teams remain sort of the main means by which people are communicating and meeting. And it's highly efficient.

Whether it's the best way to use our time and whether it's good for our mental health is a different thing altogether. But I think what most sort of professional services businesses is saying anyway is that, you know, teams are still dominating our working day, so people aren't coming back into the office in the same numbers.

They're coming back in a different pattern. Some of them aren't working every day of the week. So, he's saying the sort of Tuesdays, Thursdays being the busiest days, people aren't necessarily coming in for the full working day. They're coming in outside of the traditional peak, which is probably good for public transport.

But, you know, they're coming in for part of the day, particular meetings, or particular gatherings, as Kevin was saying, that collaboration and connecting with other people has become the main driver for people coming into the office. I was in our London office yesterday and they have a a weekly meeting where they insist everybody comes in and meets face to face.

And I think it has been a good thing to sort of get people back in the office, because particularly for those with longer commutes, working from home does work well. And, you know, people have found it's better to their sort of family life as well.

So, I think those changes and the hybrid working, as we said in the report, is definitely here to stay. So, it's how we sort of track people back in and office. Occupancy levels are low. I think samples were reporting quite recently at a national level, something like 25% office occupancy compared to like 60% pre-pandemic.

So a lot of office occupiers and landlords are looking at, you know, how do we create work spaces that people want to come back and use? And certainly, a lot of businesses are reducing the number of desks and they have been for a long time happening with hot desking, which certainly precedes

the pandemic, but the better quality offices and the newer offices and the businesses that can afford to.

Do you think the refurb, I think, are proving successful and they're attracting a lot of people back? I think there's a there's a whole secondary and tertiary market in businesses simply can't afford to spend that kind of money who probably aren't attracting people back and want. Certainly anecdotally and from some of the evidence I've seen, you know, local authorities aren't necessarily getting people back into their town and city centre offices.

And I think that's something of an issue that the public sector isn't coming back. And I know that's a bit of a Jacob Rees-Mogg thing to say, but it's all about the culture, isn't it? If you've got the right sort of culture, an environment for people to come back into.

And then there are the attractions in the city centre or a town centre environment to get people back. That's what's going to drive the footfall. So that's I we'll get on to talking about initiatives, but that's what we've been really focused on from a bid perspective in the city centre management perspective.

You know, what can we do in the space between, as our report said, that sort of appeals to people's desire to get back together and join the sort of the community that we create in the city centre. But clearly work and how office businesses perform is key to that as well.

Johannes Read:

Yeah, I think you summed up quite succinctly all the different main trends in our report, whether that's the digital way of working, meaning hybrid work is here to stay and still that demand for continued interaction, collaboration which can then, you know, be it could be a cultural way and the growth of cultural organizations could and those sectors hospitality and so on, could be a beneficiary of that, especially when you're looking at the footfall in numbers terms may be different, but that the reasons behind that footfall coming on weekends, coming in not just for work but for experience, is something you can't get elsewhere.

These are things. But also, there are some negatives like you mentioned and whether that's good for people's wellbeing. There are cities then maybe places where affluent younger people who are mobile can access. Well, what about safety as well on transport?

So these are like, as we all know, positives and negatives here. But we've in our report, we tried to map this like a scenario map. We don't know what's gonna happen in future at all. Doctor Who But if we do experience, say, an increase in footfall for experiential or for cultural or other sorts, those sorts of initiatives going up, we could see a certain type of future city centre where one way is becoming rather than becoming a ghost town, people come in for a maybe a city playground scenario. People come in just for something to experience.

You can't get elsewhere. So that's what we've kind of identified with. Kevin, do you think that that which is that something that's likely to continue?

Kevin Johnson:

It is very difficult to predict. And of course, with your work and your colleagues at City-REDI. I didn't want to sort of give a prediction or even I. I sort of desired pointing out sort of quadrant axis that you guys came up. I think what we're seeing already is that there's a playground element.

Now that Mike's touched on, the most of the Commonwealth Games are a bit of an oddity too, but hopefully will have a long lasting legacy that goes beyond just hanging around to watch a bit of athletics in the city centre and enjoy the festival on the French parks and so on.

What we are seeing, of course, as Mike touched on, is more people coming in the weekends as a general trend in a lot of cities on the return from the pandemic. So you would hope that there's a move away from that ghost town.

That was to some degree, although that was changing already a move away from the ghost town at weekends. You'd want to try and get the night-time economy back a little bit more. And I think one of the things that we really focused on in that report was not just about either getting people back or even going for a Roaring Twenties sort of scenario that was mapped out in a bit like in the return from 100 years ago that you just got a lot of high-level activity going on. What we wanted to try and ensure is that we've got a more open and inclusive city centre and business district, that the kind of people from all kinds of backgrounds, from all parts of the city, from all parts of the region and beyond, did not see the city centre somewhere where they were not welcome, that they were not engaged in professional services, or I couldn't come and enjoy the retail offer in the city centre and I felt for some reason excluded.

I think there was a real desire in our work to say that, you know, as we return, as people come back to the office, albeit in a very slightly reduced frequency, is that we wanted to grow the city centre with more activity, with more people coming in that felt excluded for economic, social or other reasons.

And, of course, that would get people to enjoy the city centre at all times and going back to a burgeoning night-time economy, but also getting more activity in the weekend. Now it's far too early to tell, even, you know where we're nearing a year since we stood in that room with Michael Jackson.

Some want some more white wine, but I think it's still too early to say. But I think there are some trends there that the kind of things that that you guys in a in a sense predicted or at least analyzed the three two week or 2 to 3 week, you know, three numbers to the I'm of vice versa that that seems to be very broadly the case when it comes to professional services knowledge intensive businesses but that culture hybrid working more agility all these kind of things the focus on safety and transport, public places on the offices, all these issues are playing out, it would seem, and they're having an impact on what people do and where they were they spend their time.

So I would hope in a very long winded way of answering your question, and I would hope that we come to a point which is, you know, yes, city playground, but not city playground to the detriment of not being a working space, but also somewhere which is got a bit of a Roaring Twenties feel to it, but in a more open, inclusive manner than might have been the case 100 years ago. I think we're heading towards that kind of area of the graph, as it were. But I wouldn't like to be to emphasize, to hang my hat on exactly which little, you know, square on the graph we're going to end up in.

Johannes Read:

Yeah, that's an important point. I think when we were doing podcasts, it's, um.

We're talking about graph here. So we'll have to maybe describe bring this to life so on this axes looking at how we're increasing in footfall that will be the reason behind footfall aren't we a where the people come in for more experiential cultural organization, more or less that's on the vertical axis, whether that's increasing or decreasing. And then on the horizontal, we're looking at an increasing decreasing in employment with people coming in for work. What sort of work people come in for?

And this is like just a map, a potential way of of seeing what could happen and now where? Well, you know, two years after the start of the pandemic, like Kevin, you said, we can't see where we are in this space.

But there are positive negatives of each of these city polygon quadrants, for example, those quadrants such as playground. And I think, Mike, we're looking now at we can do something about this. We've got a bit of a vision and that Kevin's outlined.

And I'd also like think what can we do in Birmingham City centre to make the most of these challenge opportunities, mitigate some challenges as well, but really bring them to life?

Mike Best:

Yeah, that's right. And I mean, some of the initiatives that came out of the study, we're starting to develop through the bid, but also it's working together. I think while the biggest things that came out of the pandemic was a more collaborative working between all of the agencies, I think initially, you know, even in the first week of the pandemic, I think we sent up all of our security team home because there was nobody in the city centre.

But then actually the police and the city council said, well, we can't let you in because there's plenty of things we think to do just to maintain order. And I think that started a collaborative process which has continued over the last two years.

So everything from the way that we all sort of providing effectively an ambassador service through to dealing with security issues is working much better across the city centre between all of our sort of on site teams. But then we're collaborating on lots of ideas around events and activities to sort of enliven spaces and that's proven a real positive.

And I think that will over time lead to, I suppose, a more city centre wide approach because when we looked at future business districts study, we managed to get funding from the YMCA, from the City Council and from all five bids in the city centre.

And some of the natural inclination was say, look, this study is about the business district, so you're looking after yourselves. But what I think the study very quickly identified was that we're all quite reliant on each other. So the retail area, the business area, hospitality areas like South Side and even then residential areas like jewellery quarter and West Side, you know, there are connections between the mall and the entertainment districts and so on and so forth.

So we wanted to try and broaden out our scope. And just taking one example, I think that cultural enterprise zones have been talked about and I think a number of been identified around the city centre and that's a good opportunity to focus effort in particular areas. But one of the things that we

identified and I know Kevin was quite a champion of what was saying, you know, we've got to think about how we link together those cultural experiences across the city centre.

And if you're coming in, for one thing, how can we attract people to move to a different part of the city centre for another experience? So if they come into a museum or they come in for an event or an outdoor event, how do they then find the opportunity oh, or signpost it to the right places to go and have a bite to eat elsewhere in the city centre or spend some time in a in an open space in a park or a garden. So I think we're looking at things on a much more city centre wide basis now.

And that's led really to the commitment the City Council have made towards the post we identified. I think Kevin probably came up with a name originally which was Curator General, which really the idea was we want to curate the public space within the city centre.

So we're connecting the different districts we're making or getting buildings and the occupiers to come outside and make more use of the public realm. And so if we can manage or curate that space across the whole city centre, you know, that can be a real positive reason for people to come back into the city.

So this role we kicked around for quite a while, I think off the back of the Commonwealth Games and obviously there was a lot of talk this week about legacy and I think with big points that's coming out of the legacy message both from the organizing committee, the city council is about sort of social inclusion and sustainability.

You know, this isn't about physical landmarks. I mean, yes, a lot of money has been spent on improving the stadium and the aquatics centre and so on and so forth. But, you know, this is one games where we've made an awful lot of use of existing facilities, and that's great to see.

And I think if we can have a post-games legacy, which is for the people of Birmingham, that would be the best thing. So I think part of that role is really about how do we coordinate activity and events across the city centre, how do we make it safer to come in?

How do people get a positive experience of traveling into the city centre? We've been discussing about how we can get people back onto rail because rail is still probably the slowest to recover post-pandemic. Busses, I think, were better initially.

How do we better use the canal infrastructure for walking and cycling into the city centre? Make people feel safe coming in? And then how do we animate spaces? Get people active? How do we make more use of the cycle, hire and scooters and other forms of personal mobility to get around the city centre?

And that new role with actively talking to all the bids. The City Council at the moment see if we can get that funded and appointed to be a new city centre wide role, which we've not really had in the city for quite a while.

The city council covers the whole city. The future city planning is very much about broadening out beyond the city centre and reaching out to those inner urban suburbs that have been forgotten. That is a great thing, but I think increasing the size of the city centre isn't really what that's about.

It's more about access to opportunity. And I think for the city centre, if we can attract and appeal to more people to come in, the city centre is the city centre for the people of Birmingham. It's not just for the sort of traditional workers.

So I think a more inclusive approach where people feel, you know, they can come into the city center, they can use it, the public spaces are there for them. And it would be a much better long term, more sustainable future for the for the city centre as a whole in the business district.

So those are some of the ideas we've got about how to appeal and attract more people into into the city centre.

Johannes Read:

Yeah, but you make a point there, Mike, about the reasons really for a for a city centre.

What is the point? Because if you look at city centres over time, they've always changed, right? I mean, the trends that are happening prior to the pandemic, such as this hybrid work example, was already ongoing. And the way people were looking at inclusivity and transport and sustainability was already there.

And this pandemic supercharged in a lot of ways those trends. And I think if we look into the future, then we also looking at what those what could those trends mean for Birmingham and I think maybe Kevin, what are those opportunities, what are those trends that we can build on to look to the future for this, maybe a acuity general or just the city centre and overall can really build on and make a vision for Birmingham?

Kevin Johnson:

Well, I think just your point about history is well made because people, particularly in the midst of the pandemic, all the sort of as the first two or three months a through of the pandemic, people said, would we return? You know, we've gone through all kinds of things, plagues and wars. And Gibson knows well over the centuries that cities have existed. And that is largely true. And we're saying, you know, there is a return to office working and to the activity in the city centre.

I think there are three things that mark activism between this, you know, seismic shock to the country and in particular to cities and working. One is technology. As Mike touched on it, we are recording a podcast. I think we're all in our bedrooms, offices, a home as we do this, although I don't need to make listeners put them off their breakfast, lunch or tea, but we are all sitting in our bedrooms and home offices.

You know, often during the pandemic, what would it have what would it have been like going through this pandemic 20, 20, 21, if we didn't have teams Zoom, Netflix, iPlayer, etc., etc.?

How would we have coped? What would we have done? Would we have returned to cities quicker? How would we have got work done, etc.? Technology makes such a big difference to on this pandemic as compared to other seismic shocks.

Secondly, is sustainability a real desire from, you know, governments, from businesses, and I think largely from people to tackle the net zero agenda, which means that, you know, making visits into the city that you don't need just to sit at your desk and then go home without talking to anybody who might likes to talk about the Tupperware commuter, doesn't even spend money on lunch when

they go into the city centre because they've brought in their lunchbox from home. So sustainability is a big thing. And I think thirdly, people are more powerful than ever they were 100 years ago.

The worker was not as powerful. They didn't have as much balance in the workplace as they do now. And add to that, you've got all kinds of freelance, self-employed, small businesses, etc., etc.. You know, workers are not just sort of shifted around by employees, they are much by themselves that can vote with their feet and take their labour elsewhere.

And they have their own value sets that they want to make sure that the company. The industry they work in adhered to and aligned to. So these things make a real difference. But I think your question is I think some of those things then give us an advantage.

In Birmingham, we've got a great professional services, modern services economy, which has plenty of opportunities and lots of work going on led by the LEP. In terms of all of that, you know, the technology mix with all parts of the professional services mix.

You've got a desire from the public authorities, but a real big designer, I think from the kind of people who work in the city centre to live up to the sustainability, to the net zero agenda. They want to see that.

And as I touched on earlier, a real desire to make the city centre look like a reflection of the wider city in the wider region and the country that we live in by opening up to more people, being more inclusive, including, I think having more people who are doing business in the city centre who in the past couldn't afford to take or didn't want to commit to expensive offices. So you've got that too. If you've got a real as we've seen in the Commonwealth Games, what the city has in abundance is youth as diversity and as creativity.

And I think coming out of the pandemic, if you like, supercharged with the Commonwealth Games and the success of that, we've got a real possibility to do something with our youth and our diversity with the kind of sector specialists that we've got, specialisms that we've got, not these modern professional services, and to make sure that we're a more inclusive city. And I think, you know, a combination of those and other factors means that there is there are some unique opportunities for Birmingham when it prepares itself to run through cities in the UK or indeed to other cities worldwide.

It's got some real advantages, but we need to, you know, we need to motor, I might suggest, because I'm off the payroll now, like we've got a motor a bit quicker than we've already been doing to, to, you know, supercharge some of these ideas and to supercharge the Commonwealth Games legacy.

Johannes Read:

You make a good point there, Kevin, about all the different strengths of Birmingham that we've got. And I think just to kind of wrap this up, I like to pose one last comment to make where I think right then, here we are, now we know where we stand after how long we've got the ideas and the trends.

We know how important it is to work together with different organizations. You mentioned the different business districts in Birmingham and also that local authorities and so on. What do we need happen now?

Mike Best:

Yeah, I mean, Kevin's absolutely right.

You know, we do need to accelerate the process of implementation. And that's often the way, isn't it, that so many of the things kind of get in the way. But I think, you know, the game does give us an opportunity with sort of the legacy to really supercharge some of these ideas, because I think it's proven that, you know, collaboration and working together, you know, and delivering a games very quickly, you know, has been a real lesson that I think even if Paris are talking to Birmingham now about how they can make a more sustainable games work for them in two years time for the Olympics.

So I think there are some good lessons to learn from, from just the experience of the last couple of weeks. But for us, in terms of the city centre, I think it's not already a case of saying, you know, let's do more around engaging with senior leaders and particularly landlords and those who are sort of driving the property market to understand how we can unlock the potential of the property in the city centre, because I think we can make more of that. That might be more residential, more flexible workspaces that, you know, we've talked about.

You know, let's make Birmingham the home of hybrid. And I think there's more we can do there. I think there's a whole lot we can do around culture and public space and, you know, animating it. And we've proven we can do that in the last couple of weeks as well.

So let's continue to do that. And I know there are a lot of events with the be 2022 cultural festival that carries on until September. But beyond that, through the winter, it would be great to have more of those kind of activities.

And then thirdly, it's about how do we get people into and attracted back into the city center? And again, I think just the experience of free public transport for the Games has been another really good example of how if you make things easier, people will do them.

I think people were put off. I found when we first started coming back after the lockdowns, people had got so used to commuting over very many years and then haven't done it for a period of time. And I know there's that whole thing around sticky behaviour and how people go back to what they did before.

But a lot of people I found have stopped commuting, particularly in peak times, because they just don't want to anymore. That's been a really big psychological moment for a lot of people. So how do we get people back into the city centre and make it easier to choose the time you want to travel, that there's flexible public transport that is, and evening services and so on and so forth, make it easy to come in for an evening and go to the theatre or go for a meal or go see a band or go to a club and get home night.

Those are the sort of things we need to do more of. So it's a lot of collaboration with the transport providers and the transport authorities as well. So it's not a short answer, but it's that, you know, collaboration across the board on five or six different fronts which we identified in the space between report and doing them.

Johannes Read:

all well, rather well. Thank you very much, Mike. Kevin, fantastic to speak to you both. Great to see you again as well. And in this hybrid way of working here, we all of you spent most of the time we stood around on the Internet, on Zoom calls.

We're here again. So that maybe that's one there. One interesting thing about our research is that, yes, maybe there are different ways of working, but still can do something useful and hopefully found this this podcast interesting theory on the megatrends the very podcast please and why subscribe and listen to all the others that have been going on. We're part of a series and hopefully hear more from us soon. All the best. Thankyou very much.

Mike Best:

Thank you.

Kevin Johnson:

Thanks.

END

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

WM
REDI

CITY
REDI

Supporting inclusive economic growth in the West Midlands and across the UK