

WMCA Board

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Report title	Regional Approach to Culture - Update
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Report has been considered by	WMCA Cultural Leadership Board WMCA Cultural Officers Group SED Board WMCA Programme Board

Recommendations for action or decision:

WMCA Board is recommended to:

- (1) Note the update on Culture, following the January 2019 board paper on this topic.
- (2) Agree the proposed regional strategic priorities for Culture outlined at paragraph 6.2.
- (3) Agree that the Cultural Leadership Board and Culture Officers Group will be responsible for co-ordinating regional activity to make progress on these strategic priorities.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an update on the opportunities and challenges in the region relating to culture.
- 1.2 To secure agreement of the strategic priorities for culture which have been co-developed with the regional Cultural Officers Group and the Cultural Leadership Board.

2. Cultural Sector Context

- 2.1 This paper, and the WMCA culture portfolio, use the DCMS definition¹ of the cultural sector, which includes arts, film, TV & music, radio, photography, crafts, museums & galleries, libraries and archives, cultural education and heritage. There are other groups within WMCA and its partners that focus on elements of this definition (e.g. Create Central, WMGC Tourism Board) who are regularly engaged on portfolio activity.
- 2.2 The West Midlands has a rich intangible & tangible cultural heritage ranging from Tolkien to heavy metal and Shakespeare to two-tone. As the birthplace for the industrial revolution, the region also has a wealth of physical heritage assets, which are unique even in a global context. The diversity of the region is celebrated through Diwali, Eid, Black History Month, Vaisakhi and Chinese New Year as well as hundreds of other festivals each year, giving a glimpse into the richness of the spirit and the unique DNA of those that live here. The region has world-class cultural institutions, as well as smaller organisations with a big impact within their local communities and geography. Appendix 1 and 2 of this paper outlines activity happening across the region, and the organisations that make up the regional cultural ecosystem.
- 2.3 However, further work is still needed to ensure that the region can fully maximise on its cultural assets to promote and brand the region nationally & internationally. This includes maximising the opportunity of Coventry City of Culture 2021, British Art Show No9, Black Country UNESCO Geopark and Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games in re-animating our high streets, creating new jobs and supporting small businesses, and maximising opportunity for our hyper-diverse communities.
- 2.4 Culture matters to our national economy. In 2018 the arts and culture industry directly generated £28.3bn in turnover, £13.5bn in GVA, 190,000 FTE jobs and £7.3bn in employee compensation. It is also a productive sector, with an annual GVA per worker of £69,000, compared to £57,000 for the non-financial UK economy as a whole.²
- 2.5 Levelling up the region means attracting and retaining talent from across the UK and the world, and culture is a key influencing factor for people and businesses relocating. The West Midland's is the UK's relocation destination of choice for people moving out of London and the South East. Continuing this trend means investing in our cultural heritage and diverse communities, making the most of our under-utilised buildings and empty spaces to re-animate every part of our region.

¹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/829114/DCMS_Sectors_Economic_Estimates_-_Methodology.pdf

² https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Cebr_report_14102020.pdf

2.6 Levelling up also means supporting the diverse communities in our region facing significant social challenges. Creative and cultural businesses have a pivotal role in driving placemaking, social cohesion, quality of life, and wellbeing. In terms of educational opportunity, participating in cultural activity supports children's achievement in all subjects and increasing likelihood of getting a degree.³

3. Impacts of Covid-19

3.1 The arts and culture sector has faced a significant loss of GVA since the outset of Covid-19 and national lockdowns, as a result of an overall decline of economic activity and a shortage of footfall into organisations. Overall, the arts and culture sector is anticipated to see its GVA 23% lower than expected in 2020. The hardest hit subsector is music, performing and visual arts with an estimated GVA loss of £2,280m, equivalent to a fall of 26%.⁴ As noted by Government⁵, the arts and entertainment industry saw a 44.5% reduction in monthly GDP in the three months up to June 2020 compared with the three months earlier, making it one of the sectors worst hit by the pandemic. The impact on employment has also been significant - approximately 70% of workers in the arts and entertainment sector were furloughed under the Government's coronavirus job retention scheme (CJRS), the second highest after accommodation and food services.

3.2 The pandemic has also shown the fragility of the sector in terms of business models, as well as employment issues particularly around freelancers. It is predicted that the effects of the crisis could be long lasting, given impacts to distribution channels, productivity changes, lower levels of international and domestic tourism, a drop in purchasing power, and reductions in public and private funding.⁶ Responsive public support and recovery strategies are therefore needed to ensure that the impacts on the cultural sector will not result in a negative impact on cities and regions in terms of jobs, revenues, levels of innovation, citizen well-being, and the vibrancy of communities.

3.3 In the WM Culture Response Unit's submission to the DCMS *'Impact of Covid-19 on DCMS Sectors'* inquiry⁷, potential regional job losses of 200,000 were outlined, resulting in the possible collapse of the local cultural sector just before major cultural events in the region. We have since seen several large cultural organisations in the region announce redundancies with up to 50% of staff consulted, including Royal Shakespeare Company⁸, Birmingham REP⁹ and Birmingham Museums Trust¹⁰. Other impacts have included the delaying of the Coventry City of Culture programme and the British Art Show 9 Wolverhampton. There are also continuing concerns about the support for freelancers, who form a large part of cultural sector workers.

³ <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/3abd/db6df785269f454aff4fd9006de8f1d7773f.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication/impact-culture-recovery-fund-arts-and-culture-sector>

⁵ <https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/covid-19-impact-on-the-uk-cultural-sector/>

⁶ https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=135_135961-nenh9f2w7a&title=Culture-shock-COVID-19-and-the-cultural-and-creative-sectors

⁷ <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/250/impact-of-covid19-on-dcms-sectors/publications/written-evidence/?page=4>

⁸ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-coventry-warwickshire-53936168#:~:text=Royal%20Shakespeare%20Company%3A%20Job%20cuts%20as%20programme%20cancelled,-27%20August%202020&text=The%20production%20company%20in%20Stratford,a%20consultation%20period%20with%20employees>

⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2020/jul/14/birmingham-arts-venues-announce-major-job-losses>

¹⁰ <https://www.museumassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2020/07/birmingham-museums-trust-begins-redundancy-consultations/>

4. Government Cultural Recovery Funds

- 4.1 The region has had investment through the £1.56bn Cultural Recovery Fund (CRF) from the Government, distributed through the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Historic England, Arts Council England and the British Film Institute. Some of the funds were also allocated to cultural sector benevolent funds to help individuals not covered through other schemes. CRF was also not designed to be 'new investment', but to provide a rapid response to ensure cultural organisations and businesses could survive until March 2021.
- 4.2 In terms of heritage grants, the West Midlands was the 3rd lowest area for awards. There were 162 awards nationally, amounting to just under £15m, of which 16 awards in the West Midlands totalling just under £1m.
- 4.3 In terms of grants administered by Arts Council England, the total investment within the 7 metropolitan authorities' area was £23.5m (including grants under & over £1m, excludes Capital Kickstart and repayable finance). This provided vital funds to regional institutions such as the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Belgrade Theatre in Coventry, and Grand Theatre in Wolverhampton, enabling them to remain open despite lost revenues. However, when compared with per capita investment, the chart below demonstrates that outside Birmingham, Coventry & Wolverhampton, the investment levels were significantly lower than the UK average of £6.41. In some cases (e.g. Wolverhampton & Dudley) individual high value grants for large organisations also push the per capita figure high.

Geography	Awards	Amount	Per capita
West Midlands	157	£40,299,671	£6.79
<i>West Midlands - 7 Met</i>	83	£23,453,988	£2.65
<i>Birmingham</i>	48	£15,077,541	£13.20
<i>Coventry</i>	12	£2,795,309	£7.52
<i>Walsall</i>	2	£190,000	£0.67
<i>Wolverhampton</i>	9	£2,093,345	£7.95
<i>Sandwell</i>	4	£268,501	£0.82
<i>Solihull</i>	3	£204,905	£0.95
<i>Dudley</i>	5	£2,824,387	£8.78
East Midlands	128	£22,201,823	£4.59
North East	83	£18,725,643	£7.01
North West	236	£52,842,977	£7.20
Yorkshire & Humber	176	£36,731,475	£6.67
South East	259	£46,922,984	£5.11
East of England	155	£30,457,041	£4.88
South West	180	£36,374,644	£6.47
London	640	£143,147,502	£15.97
UK Average		£427,942,410	£6.41

- 4.4 At less than £1 per capita, the CRF funding levels particularly for the Black Country and Solihull remain considerably below the national averages. The WMCA and LAs had no role in coordinating or developing applications for the Culture Recovery Fund, and so these allocations do not reflect a coordination failure in the short term – but do clearly make the case that in the medium and long term there is a need for greater collaboration across the region.

5. WMCA Support for Regional Cultural Activity

5.1 Regional leadership, to realise the potential of our major cultural opportunities and address existential challenges to the sector, will be key moving forward. In the previous year we have developed the arrangements to support collaboration – now the key will be supporting and investing in these forums moving forward.

5.2 In January 2019, the WMCA Board agreed to:

- Establish a Cultural Leadership Board (CLB) to drive the development of a more holistic approach and deeper strategic coordination across the region in relation to Culture, particularly in relation to major cultural events such as Coventry City of Culture and Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games cultural programme.
- Revise the arrangements for the Culture and Tourism Advisory Group, now operating as the Cultural Officers Group (COG), to better respond to opportunities and give a clear leadership role to the cultural sector.
- These changes were aimed at enhancing the enabling role of the CA and to support coordinated, sector-led activity across the region, including convening the cultural leadership in the region, as well as CA helping to maximise the quantum and effectiveness of funding secured and deployed in the region.

5.3 Key progress milestones for the Cultural Leadership Board include:

- Recruitment of members in Autumn 2019 and appointment of Martin Sutherland, CEO of the Coventry City of Culture Trust, as Chair. As of December 2020, the CLB has 22 members from across the WMCA geography. The members participate in an individual capacity, not on behalf of their institution, but their experience reflects different parts of the sector, including art forms (music, theatre, heritage, libraries, film, etc) and cross-cutting themes such as cultural education, disability arts and wellbeing. The full list of members is as follows:

LEP Area	Local Authority	Name	Organisation
BCLEP	Wolverhampton	Pamela Cole-Hudson	Gazebo
BCLEP	Sandwell	Parminder Dosanjh	Creative Black Country (CPP)
BCLEP	Wolverhampton	Adrian Jackson	Grand Theatre
BCLEP	Sandwell	Jerrel Jackson	Creative Academies Network
BCLEP	Dudley	Andrew Lovett	Black Country Living Museum
BCLEP	Sandwell	Gina Patel	Young Combined Authority
CWLEP	Coventry	Doreen Foster	Warwick Arts Centre
CWLEP	Stratford-upon-Avon	Catherine Mallyon	Royal Shakespeare Company
CWLEP	Coventry	Julia Negus	Theatre Absolute
CWLEP	Coventry	Laura Nyahuye	Maokwo
CWLEP	Coventry	Martin Sutherland	Coventry City of Culture Trust
GBSEP	Birmingham	Nikki Bi	Civic Square
GBSLEP	Birmingham	Indi Deol	DESIblitz
GBSLEP	Birmingham	Ian Francis	Flatpack Film Festival
GBSLEP	Birmingham	Cheryl Jones	Grand Union
GBSLEP	Solihull	Ayub Kahn	Libraries, Communities, Museums - Warwickshire County Council
GBSLEP	Birmingham	Timothy Maycock	Birmingham Hippodrome

GBSLEP	Birmingham	Karen Newman	Birmingham Open Media
GBSLEP	Birmingham	Aftab Rahman	Legacy WM
GBSLEP	Birmingham	Simeon Shtebunaev	Birmingham Architectural Association
GBSLEP	Birmingham	Ammo Talwar	PUNCH Records
GBSLEP	Birmingham	Raidene Carter	2022 Commonwealth Games

- Governance & reporting structures established, including vision & mission statement. Skills and diversity audits completed in spring 2020 with a further recruitment process completed in December 2020 to fill identified skills and art form gaps.
- In 2019 – 2020 the CLB met five times and established working groups on:
 - a) Role of Culture in Regional Economic & Social ambitions, key outputs to date:
 - West Midlands cultural sector data mapping project developed in partnership with DCMS, Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, Coventry City of Culture Trust, Birmingham City Council, GBS LEP, WMGC, Culture Central and Arts Council England. This involved commissioning two pieces of work:
 - 1) Audiences & engagement, with the key output being a regional audience development strategy to help to tackle levels of low cultural engagement across the WMCA area. Initial findings expected in March 2021.
 - 2) Economic impact and cultural infrastructure a focus on the economic & social value of culture, employment data, labour forecast and cultural tourism figures. A key part of the work will be a digital cultural infrastructure map, which is planned to be an open-ended map with accompanying data sets, similar to a resource developed by the [GLA](#).¹¹
 - Contributing to the development of the £80m ‘*Cultural Catalyst*’ programme for WMCA’s ‘*Recharge West Midlands*’¹² submission, as well as £369m ‘*Culture & Placemaking Investment Programme*’ as part of the ‘*WMCA CSR submission*’¹³.
 - Engagement with WM5G, the WMCA Wellbeing team, and the Applied Inclusive Growth team
 - b) Funding & Resilience, key outputs to date:
 - Core support to West Midlands Culture Response Unit, formed by Culture Central to coordinate sectoral resilience in the face of lockdown
 - Exploring opportunities for alternative investment models, working closely with Arts Council England subject specialists
 - c) Cultural leadership, entrepreneurship & engagement, key outputs to date:
 - Development of a Cultural and Creative Social Enterprise pilot to support diverse cultural entrepreneurs across the region
- CLB members also engaged across different workstreams – two members sat on the External Advisory Group for the WM Digital Roadmap and a group of members developed a response to the Planning White Paper consultation with a culture focus.
- The CLB has in principle signed up to the ‘[More than a Moment](#)’ Pledge initiated by the West Midlands Cultural Response Unit, in response to Black Lives Matter. The board is currently reviewing its own practices in relation to the pledge.

¹¹ <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/arts-and-culture/cultural-infrastructure-toolbox/cultural-infrastructure-map>

¹² <https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/3975/west-midlands-economic-recovery-our-ask-and-offer-hd-spreads.pdf>

¹³ <https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/4322/rebuilding-the-west-midlands-src-csr-submission.pdf>

- The CLB joined the West Midlands Culture Response Unit (WMCRU) in April 2020. WMCRU was a specially formed un-constituted taskforce to support the recovery of the region's arts and cultural organisations. The initiative was led by Culture Central, a Birmingham based cultural sector membership organisation. This temporary unit was created to deliver an action-orientated, sector led response to the Covid-19 outbreak to ensure the visibility, viability and recovery of the cultural sector in the West Midlands and was also endorsed by the WMCA. The WMCA also seconded a full-time policy officer (Keziah Watson) to Culture Central to support the delivery of the activities.

5.4 The Cultural Officers Group (COG) has continued to operate and streamlined its activities. Their key achievements for 2019-20 include the development of regional strategic priorities for culture, which are outlined in paragraph 6.2. In addition, COG has had a key role in the development of the £80m '*Cultural Catalyst*' programme for WMCA's '*Recharge West Midlands*'¹⁴ submission, as well as £369m '*Culture & Placemaking Investment Programme*' as part of the '*WMCA CSR submission*'¹⁵. COG has also been contributing to the development of the West Midlands cultural sector data mapping work, as well as creating links with other WMCA workstreams.

5.5 Following discussions on the unequal distribution of Culture Recovery Funds held between the Mayor and the Midlands Team at Arts Council England, the Black Country members of the Cultural Officers Group and the Cultural Leadership Board have convened a special sub-regional group to develop a proposal to address the lack of investment moving forward. The first meeting of the group took place in Dec 2020, and the group will continue to convene in early 2021 to develop a proposed programme by the Spring.

5.6 Other key progress across the Cultural policy work:

- Establishing cultural policy workstream within the WMCA, linking with Innovation, Public Service Reform, Wellbeing, Skills, Inclusive Growth, Commonwealth Games, Create Central, WMGC, Digital, etc.
- Creating contacts and collaboration in this field nationally, including DCMS, Arts Council England, Greater London Authority, M9 group.
- Ensuring WMCA is represented at the re-established Cultural Cities Enquiry
- Promoting the role of culture in place-based development including Town Funds
- Input into the Creative Industries Sector Recovery Sector plan

6. Regional strategic priorities for culture

6.1 To realise the regional opportunities for culture, and address the challenges outlined earlier in this report, the Cultural Officers Group (COG) have developed a set of regional strategic priorities for culture. COG has consulted the CLB for sectoral feedback and advice. These strategic priorities will provide a framework for regional cultural activity, and can form the foundation of a cultural strategy for the region, which will be a priority for 2021-22.

6.2 There are four recommended regional strategic priorities for culture:

1. **Development** – to support the cultural sector to grow and recover after Covid-10, strengthening regional networks and building resilience

¹⁴ <https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/3975/west-midlands-economic-recovery-our-ask-and-offer-hd-spreads.pdf>

¹⁵ <https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/4322/rebuilding-the-west-midlands-src-csr-submission.pdf>

2. **Participation** - Making sure that all our communities realise the benefits of culture
3. **Placemaking** – Harness culture’s potential to transform our cities, towns and local centres through unique experiences and a thriving night-time economy
4. **Promotion** – Use our major cultural events and diverse cultural institutions to position the West Midlands as the best place to work, live, visit, and invest

6.3 Responsibility for coordinating LA and LEP activity across these four areas rests with the Culture Officers Group. The Cultural Leadership Board are the key sectoral body to drive progress against these four areas, providing expert advice and shaping proposals. Officers in the WMCA will be responsible for supporting these groups and the Culture and Digital portfolio holder, and developing programmes and projects to supporting the four cultural priorities.

6.4 Once the strategic priorities have been agreed, the Cultural Officers Group and the Cultural Leadership Board will work with the WMCA officers to agree specific activity and delivery responsibilities. High level information on WMCA activity in 2020/21 is outlined in the WMCA Budget that has also been submitted to this Board meeting.

6.5 Any additional activity above and beyond WMCA delivery will require partnership with actors across the region and investment from central government, funding bodies, and the private sector. Some examples of potential activity and areas of collaboration are outlined in the below table:

Strategic priority	Potential actions
1) Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that business support and interventions are inclusive, reaching diverse-led and community-based cultural organisations ○ Explore models like the GLAs ‘culture-at-risk’ office which seeks to build shared resources for cultural institutions ○ Realise potential of culture to drive other agendas, particularly around sustainability, mental health and social prescribing ○ Explore opportunities to increase resilience and develop new financial instruments, including repurposing of business and delivery models particularly around digital ○ Support the cultural sector in restarting activity ○ Increase support for sector intermediaries, including destination management organisations, and fund ‘cultural brokers’ who will join-the-dots between silos that separate cultural organisations, businesses, tourism, the wider creative industries, and communities, both geographically and through their background and heritage. ○ Strengthen regional networks of cultural SMEs and sole traders, including brokerage with non-cultural sector partners (facilitate & fund)
2) Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Given WMCA constituent areas are within the 22%-33% lowest category for cultural participation nationally, focussed work/activity in specific geographies and communities where data indicates that cultural participation is low, with the aim of increasing investment and driving up participation. ○ Ensure the opportunities around Commonwealth Games, City of Culture and British Art Show are maximised throughout the region (both delivery and legacy) to improve cultural participation, particularly for less-engaged groups and our hyper-diverse communities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development of joint approaches to ensure that all the work/activity is inclusive, and investment will reach organisations operating within the least engaged communities. ○ Develop ways to encourage, measure and promote the wider benefits of cultural participation (e.g. wellbeing, health)
3) Placemaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop an evidence base for cultural sector and the wider creative industries, including an interactive Culture Infrastructure Map ○ Develop a regional cultural infrastructure plan in collaboration with public sector, cultural sector stakeholders (e.g. CLB) and private sector to promote future investment ○ Work closely with Housing & Regeneration leads to ensure culture is at the heart of planning. ○ Inform the development of culturally led regeneration and town specific regeneration projects to ensure the needs and opportunities of the cultural sector are considered across policy areas (e.g. planning, licencing, transport links, tourism) to support the development of affordable workspaces, cluster working and the night-time economy ○ Work together to support sustainable new cultural partnerships to re-animate our cities, towns, green spaces and local centres through targeted place-based initiatives. ○ Work towards securing inward investment which will enable development of places where people want to work, live and play ○ Ensure that interventions are linked to inclusive growth and/or community wealth building principles ○ Use financial innovation, such as asset-based investment, creative land trusts, levies, place-based crowdfunding and community wealth building, alongside public and private capital, to support resilience and long-term sustainability of the cultural sector ○ Maximise benefits from major events, including legacy impacts
4) Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work jointly with WMCG Tourism Board and other stakeholders to promote West Midlands as a cultural destination, particularly in relation to major events ○ Work collaboratively to position West Midlands as a great place to live – cementing local pride of residents through campaigns and other activities ○ Actively promote opportunities that can prevent talent-drain and increase the skills and opportunities of the creative workforce in the region ○ Actively work to increase the international reputation of the West Midlands as a cultural powerhouse and a destination, working with the tourism and hospitality industries and other cross-sectoral bodies

7. Financial Implications

7.1 There are no financial implications as a result of the proposals within this report.

7.2 As detailed above, once the strategic priorities have been agreed, the Cultural Officers Group and the Cultural Leadership Board will work with the WMCA officers to agree specific activity and delivery responsibilities. More detail on WMCA activity will be part of the high-level deliverables in the WMCA Budget presented to the Board in February 2021. The possible scale of the activity WMCA will directly support in financial terms be dependent upon the resources allocated to this portfolio

8. Legal Implications

8.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

9. Equalities Implications

9.1 While there is no equality impact in relation to this paper, consideration of approaches to ensure that activities are inclusive and reach widely within the least engaged communities is needed. Currently, the cultural industry's workforce lacks diversity in terms of ethnicity, age, and socio-economic background. Moreover, a number of communities in the region are not able to equally realise the benefits of culture. Identifying the root causes of this under-representation and targeting efforts to diversify and reach out more widely is therefore crucial.

10. Inclusive Growth Implications

10.1 Culture is what our citizens do. It is part of their individual and shared identities, and connects them to their places and one another. In inclusive growth terms, this means that nurturing and growing cultural assets is an important outcome in its own right, as well as because of the economic imperatives of doing so. This is not reflected in the four strategic priorities per se, but should be considered when building the work programme around those priorities.

10.2 The full inclusive growth implications of the work can only be determined as plans are shaped and resources allocated, but in line with the four inclusive growth tests, ensuring that the benefits of investments also accrue to future generations, ensuring that access is extended to people who are excluded from parts of a wider cultural offer, and embedding local ownership, will be important characteristics to draw out. The cross-regional of the Cultural Leadership Board stands the realisation of these considerations in good stead.

11. Geographical area of report's implications

11.1 The Cultural Officers Group and the Cultural Leadership Board are mostly from constituent authorities but include representation from non-constituent members and the three LEP areas. Where relevant, the focus is therefore on the whole CA footprint, including non-constituent authorities.

12. Schedule of Background Papers

Appendix 1 – Midlands cultural sector key statistics by Local Authority

Appendix 2 – WMCA area Cultural ecology systems map