

RE-CENTERING & REVALUING THE REGION

Outdated perceptions of the region prove a significant challenge to our collective future, impacting audiences, workforce and investment. Nationally and internationally significant events are drawing investment into the region that give us an opportunity to rethink the West Midlands as a place to be proud of and visit.

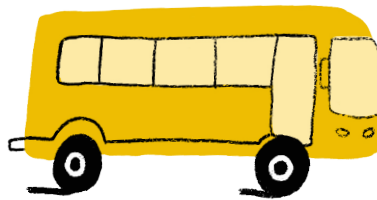
Our analysis clearly suggests that there are significant proportions of people, particularly on the edges of the region, who are highly culturally engaged, but don't see Birmingham and the West Midlands as a valued cultural destination of choice.

Many travel elsewhere (presumably to London) for cultural events. The opportunity to re-position the region as a cultural capital is important, not only for this group of residents, but for tourism opportunities as well.



Cultural tourism generates:

40,000 jobs
and **£1.8 billion in GVA**.
Which is **1 in 47 jobs and £1**
in every **£55 of GVA** in the
WMCA area.



2.8 million visits to the
WMCA area in 2019 were
attributable to culture.



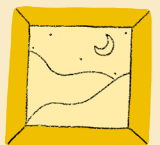
Prior to the pandemic, the West Midlands Growth Company (WMGC) reported a record 134 million visitors to the WMCA region. This was a **2%** increase on the previous year.

COVENTRY CITY OF CULTURE 2021

The city is estimating an additional **2.5m VISITORS** to Coventry in 2021/22 to attend events as part of the City of Culture.

BRITISH ART SHOW

The British Art Show is the biggest touring exhibition of contemporary art in the UK. The tour will be stopping at four locations across the UK, including Wolverhampton between January and April 2022.



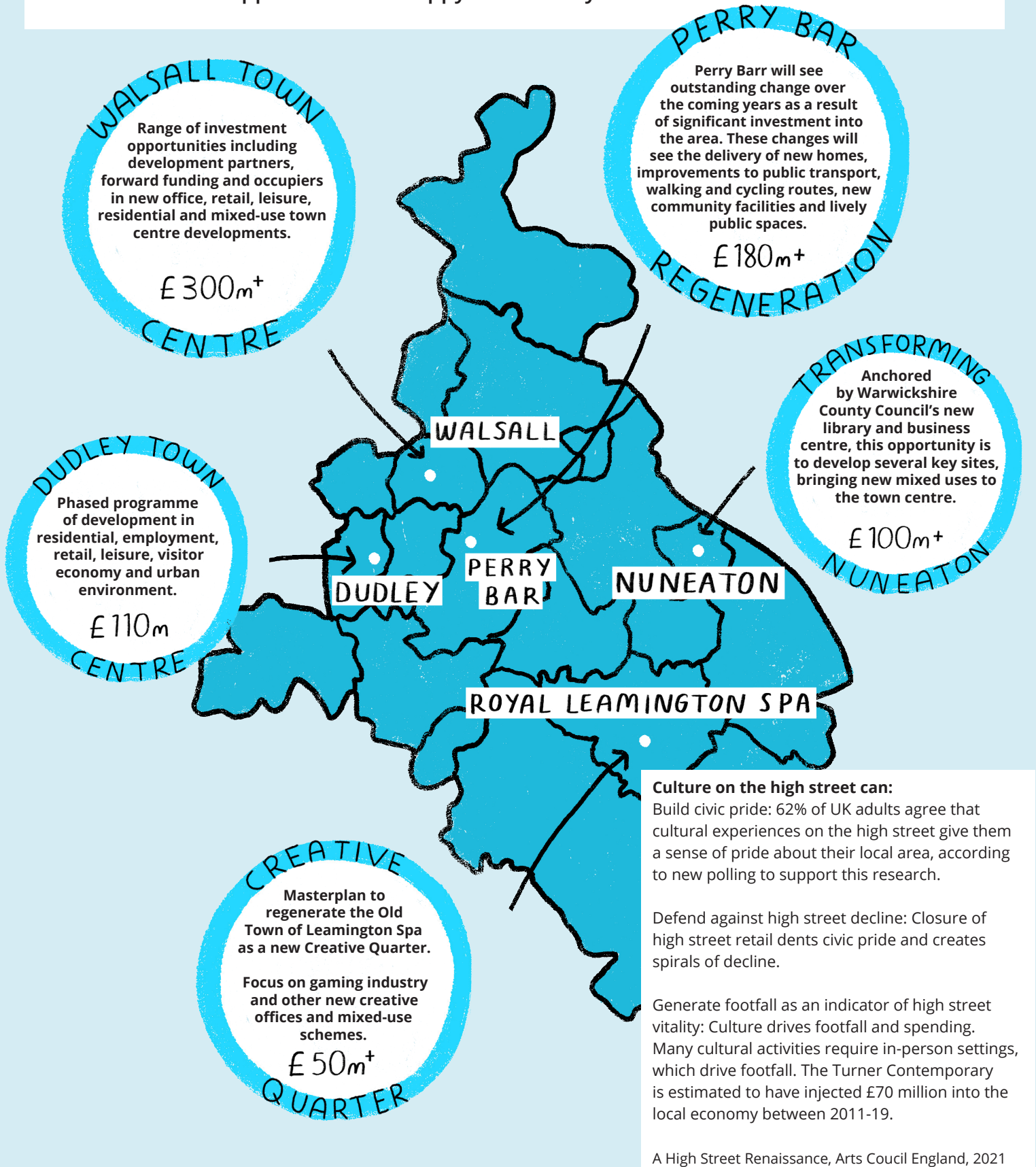
COMMONWEALTH GAMES 2022

Between **500,000** and **1 MILLION** visitors are expected to visit the area during the Games.



NEW & RENEWED PLACES

There are significant investments being made across the region that are creating and renewing the places where people live. Policymakers, local authorities, community groups and businesses are increasingly interested in culture and creativity, and we need to ensure that our collective knowledge is central to conversations around how communities are created and supported to live happy and healthy lives.



CREATIVE AND CULTURAL JOBS FOR ALL

Our cultural sector is growing in the West Midlands, creating opportunities through culture and developing our workforce. Although there is significant growth, research has highlighted that cultural sector workers are not representative of society. In the West Midlands our FE and HE courses are challenging this trend, supporting many local and ethnically diverse students who need support and opportunities within and beyond the sector.

SECTOR / WORKFORCE

In the five-year period leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic, the WMCA's cultural sector grew by 20%.

This was much higher than the trend for most sectors in the region and well in excess of the England average of 13%. However, the pandemic has had a devastating impact, especially on the community of freelancers in the region.



At a local authority level there have been varying levels of growth within the cultural sector. Local authority areas that have experienced exceptionally high growth rates since 2015 include Cannock Chase, Lichfield, Bromsgrove, Stratford-on-Avon, Nuneaton & Bedworth and Coventry. All of these areas have experienced 40%+ growth since 2015.

TALENT / CAREER DEVELOPMENT



5,500 STUDENTS IN CULTURAL F.E. COURSES

39% of students are from ethnically diverse backgrounds.

Compared to

21% overall population who are from ethnically diverse backgrounds.



8,200 STUDENTS ENROLLED IN H.E. CULTURAL COURSES

The most popular courses are design studies, drama and music. Birmingham City University is the largest provider in the region.

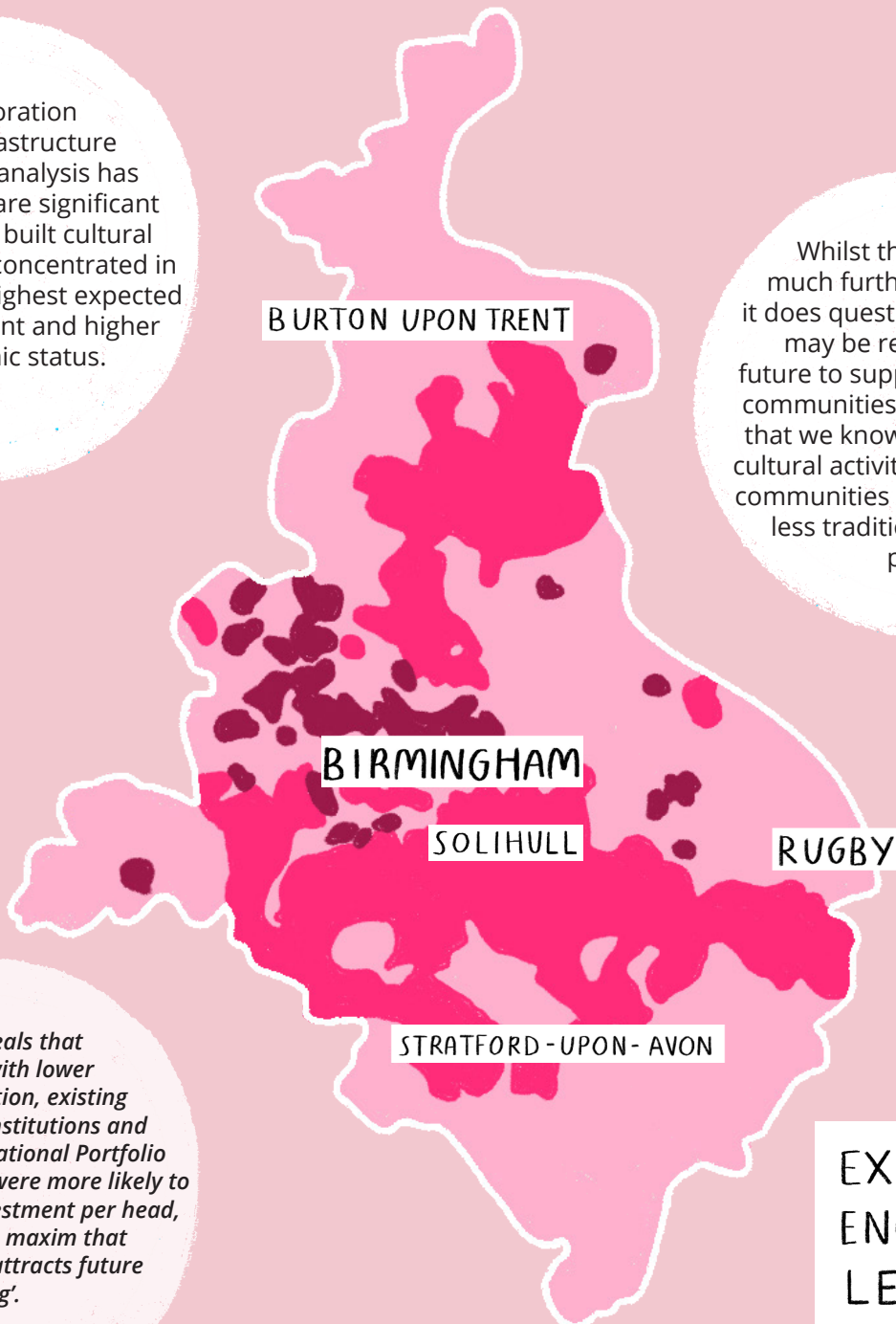
GRAVITATIONAL PULL & OUTDATED DEFINITIONS

Physical cultural infrastructure and investment is concentrated in areas with higher socio-economic status and higher levels of cultural engagement. This does not mean that cultural activity only happens in these places, but that investment and infrastructure often is not attuned to the lived cultural experiences of the people and places of the region.

The incorporation of cultural infrastructure venues into our analysis has shown that there are significant differences in the built cultural provision, which is concentrated in the areas with the highest expected cultural engagement and higher socio-economic status.

Whilst this area needs much further investigation, it does question how resources may be re-aligned in the future to support and recognise communities, particularly given that we know that creative and cultural activity in lower engaged communities tends to happen in less traditional spaces and places.

“ Analysis reveals that those areas with lower levels of deprivation, existing flagship cultural institutions and larger numbers of National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) were more likely to receive more CRF investment per head, perpetuating the maxim that ‘existing funding attracts future funding’.”



EXPECTED ENGAGEMENT LEVEL

- HIGH
- MEDIUM
- LOW

When policy meets place: ‘Levelling Up’ and the culture and creative industries. NESTA 2021.

DISPARATE COMMUNITIES/ INTERSECTING IDENTITIES

Traditional understandings of cultural engagement are changing, racialised identities, class, age and place all intersect forming a challenge to the way that we think about people's engagement with publicly funded culture.

In our region – patterns of engagement highlight two distinct groups of people, all engaging with publicly funded culture at three different levels; limited choice, social choice and unlimited choice. Engagement with culture cannot be simplified to singular identities.

GROUP 1

Predominantly white, slightly older than average, living in (less urban) areas of lower deprivation.

GROUP 2

Younger than average, ethnically diverse, living in city-based areas of higher deprivation than group 1.

LIMITED CHOICE

Places like:

TYBURN

Shard End,
Chelmsley Wood,
Bloxwich West,

FOLEY PARK

SOCIAL CHOICE

Places like:

LONGBRIDGE

Bourneville,
Dudley/Gornal, Castle
Bromwich, Franche &
Habberley North,

BELGRAVE

UNLIMITED CHOICE

Places like:

SUTTON FOUR OAKS

Meridan,
STREETLY
Lichfield/ Highfield.

LIMITED CHOICE

Places like:

BIRMINGHAM

Springfield,
Washwood Heath,
Palfrey, Sandwell/
St Paul's, Coventry/
Foleshill,

SOHO & VICTORIA

SOCIAL CHOICE

Places like:

**HANDSWORTH
WOOD**

Blakenhall,
Coventry/ St
Michael's, Lodge Park,

ANGLESEY

UNLIMITED CHOICE

Places like:

HALL GREEN

Moseley / Kings Heath,
Walsall/ Paddock,
COVENTRY / Wainbody.

