



# Collectively Strategising Culture Our Plan



Co-created by over 125 leaders from the regions Cultural Sector, Collectively Strategising Culture outlines our priorities and ambitions as a sector in the West Midlands. This plan has been designed to create a shared sense of direction, purpose and responsibility to ourselves and our stakeholders.

To create this plan our summit in February 2024 brought together those working across the cultural sector in the region to ask:

- How will we work together collectively, and lead for our future?
- How can we drive forward a long-term vision for the region's cultural ecology?
- How do we ensure an ambitious, innovative, inclusive and sustainable sector?

As a sector we often work with many external strategies and contexts, shaped by partners, stakeholders and funders. Our summit was a moment for us to connect and collectively decide on our regional priorities together. This plan is our response to the question **'What are our components of a collective, actionable, cultural strategy for the West Midlands?'**



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As a sector we worked together to agree our shared plans – these form the basis for our collective action and vision:

**Culture with, for and by everyone** – this grouping of key components underpins all of the work we are doing in the region and sets out our overarching collective vision for the strategy that informs our seven place based plans for the cultural sector.

Culture Central will use this vision and the seven plans below to shape our work, approach and actions; complementing the sectors own work and priorities. By working together through culture, we can make significant change for the benefit of the people and places of the region.

#### Plan 1

### Community Powered Culture

#### Aims:

- To have a cultural sector that puts people at the heart, through co-design and collaboration
- To centre culture around enabling all forms of creative engagement, providing an abundance of culture for communities
- Embed our practice through a clear understanding of creative and cultural engagement in the region

#### Our Action:

Culture Central in partnership with the West Midlands Combined Authority have commissioned the West Midlands Cultural Sector Research project 2.0 as part of our work as an Investment Principles Support Organisation. This includes a refreshed mapping of cultural and creative engagement across the West Midlands building on new datasets and capturing people's everyday creative engagement. The research findings and tools will be launched in 2025.

#### Plan 2

### Active collaboration to learn, understand and share practice.

#### Aims:

- We will have a regional cultural sector that has a collective mission and strategy
- We will be a truly collaborative sector who share knowledge and practice
- We will be courageous in our reflections and think critically about our work and impact

#### Our Actions:

We will continue to deliver our annual summit; creating space to drive our collective mission and strategy and build on collaborative action.

Our membership meetings and monthly West Midlands Culture Response Unit sessions create opportunities to share knowledge and practice by bringing together experts from within and outside of the sector.

#### Plan 3

### A skilled, resilient and sustainable cultural sector

#### Aims:

- We will have a strong cross sector network to build skills, resilience and investment
- We will have collaborative approaches to sustainability and environmental responsibility
- We will champion innovation by allowing flexibility and failure

#### Our Actions:

Working with the sector and partners, Culture Central are developing a regional workforce strategy to understand and map the regions workforce and design a strategy to build and develop a workforce for the future, prioritising equity, skills and resilience.

We continue to support and convene the network of Cultural Compacts across the region, delivering place based cross sector networks that drive cultural investment. Working together, this network are creating a range of opportunities for place based cultural activity, shared practice and collaborative action. This includes our regional growth enquiry into the future of cultural investment in the West Midlands launching in early 2025.

#### Plan 4

### An equitable sector for all

#### Aims:

- We will have a collective approach to equitable working practices in the regions cultural sector to ensure an accessible and inclusive sector.

#### Our Action:

We are developing our Charter for Equity, that will ensure good conditions for work within the cultural sector are established and maintained. This includes building and nurturing a consistent approach to equity, diversity and inclusion alongside ensuring equitable working practices and employment across the region.

# WM Culture Summit 2025

## Strategy in action

We've already started to take action but we know there is more to do.

Join us at the West Midlands Culture Summit on 5th February 2025 to hear more about the actions we have taken so far, and help us to establish our next actions for what we collectively want for the region.

## We will be discussing:

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### *Plan 5*

A unique and distinctive West Midlands that reaches across the world

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- Creativity will be at the heart of the regions identity
  - We will have a collective narrative for culture in the region
  - We will have a sector that reaches across the world through international partnerships
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### *Plan 6*

Creativity at the heart of education and lifelong learning and clear creative career pathways

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- There will be a creative and cultural offer available to every school in the region
  - We will collectively advocate and champion for creative education
  - We will work together on talent development and create and promote clear and equitable career pathways
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### *Plan 7*

Infrastructure and mobility for Culture

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- Cultural infrastructure in the region will be varied, valued (different scales, sizes, places and types) and developed.
- Increased opportunities for people to engage in creativity and culture in their place, open to all.
- We will have a transport system in the region that makes culture truly accessible.

