Creative Industries Sector Plan Consultation:
part of West Midlands Local Industrial Strategy

This Sector Plan articulates comparative strengths and future opportunities within the creative and cultural industries and proposes an initial set of interventions to unlock these strengths in a way that will multiply their value across the region's economy.

This document is part of the West Midlands Combined Authority's consultation on Industrial Strategy in conjunction with Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP), Coventry & Warwickshire LEP and Black Country Consortium. It contains a four page executive summary of the plan and a more detailed version in the appendix.

Sector Strength/Evidence

➢ £4bn+ in GVA , 9,975 Creatives enterprises, 48,800 jobs plus 40,000 further creative jobs in non-creative industries

➢ GBSLEP alone has the **potential to add nearly 4,000 new creative enterprises and 30,000 new sector jobs**[1] with this likely to scale considerably across the region

➢ 10% of the **UK Games Industry** (£224m) is in the region and offers strong opportunities around digital manufacturing, Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR) applications and innovative screen production

➢ **Next Generation Content Creation** is a key strength, currently amplified by our *diverse* population and BBC 3's youth programming base in Birmingham. Also, the development of High-End Production studios and a proposed Media Campus at the NEC

➢ A substantial **advertising, marketing and design** sector, including web, product, fashion design, PR and data analysis, supports growth opportunities with **design led** thinking a significant 'catalyst of growth' across all sectors

➢ Birmingham has the largest **Jewellery, Crafts and Designer Maker** Cluster outside London, with a focus on high-value goods and hand-crafting for **automotive** production

➢ NESTA has identified Birmingham and the region as a 'Creative Challenger' cluster, with **strong collaborations, sector specialisms, a diverse ecosystem** and being on track to becoming a *central node* in the UK's creative geography[2]

The Creative Industry Opportunity

The region's creative economy is well positioned to take advantage of sector opportunities:

➢ 'Golden age' for high-end drama production – opens up the opportunity for the region as a **production centre for high budget content**

➢ Games form an important and growing component of the production sector. Technical advances and lowering costs for VR/AR open up markets in **entertainment, education, manufacturing and healthcare**

➢ Increased demand from consumers for **creative experiences**, such as **theatre, performance and live music**, will open up the market for the **region's cultural offer**

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[1] Creative Economy Mapping Study for GBSLEP https://gbslep.co.uk/resources/reports/creative-economy-mapping-study
[2] https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/creative_nation-2018.pdf page 38

- Easier and cheaper access to sophisticated content creation tools opens up opportunities to leverage the **diversity of our population in the creation of new commercial** *'content, experiences, services and originals'*
- Job opportunities are opening around **Creative innovation and creative skills, such as design, and are an enabler of innovation and growth across** *all* **sectors**
- Much greater interest in **immersive tech** from government and private investors, opens up the market for **entertainment** and the wider **visitor economy** as well as **high growth sectors**, such as Advanced Manufacturing, Business & Professional Services and Healthcare
- The region's strong digital and tech sector will stimulate **higher levels of innovation within our creative businesses who in turn will drive productivity and greater competitiveness** across the wider regional economy
- The region becoming the UK's first large scale **5G Test Bed** is a huge opportunity to develop new cloud based services and products that utilise this 1Gb super-reliable mobile connectivity, with much potential for new commercial ideas from creative businesses
- Commonwealth Games and Coventry City of Culture provide huge opportunities to stimulate further investment in the region across the creative and cultural industries

Creative Industry Activity by Industrial Strategy Foundations of Productivity

These proposals align with the five foundations of productivity that underpin the government's approach to industrial strategy: **ideas**, **infrastructure**, **people**, **business environment** and '**places**':

Ideas
Invest in creative industry led cross-sectoral innovation programmes across the region. Map gaps and opportunities left by current provision, e.g., around STEAMhouse, and invest in new programmes, ensuring that *design-thinking* is a part of this wider approach.

Infrastructure
Invest in creative sector incubation networks and collaborative 'hubs'*, e.g., a* national Live/work Jewellery & Designer-Maker Incubation network in Birmingham and regeneration of Leamington Spa's Creative Quarter. **Invest in Specialist infrastructure to grow creative sector capacity,** e.g., Film & TV studio capacity and Immersive technology studios. Ensure the **5G Region-wide Test-bed maximises creative sector opportunities** for new creative cloud services.

People
Launch a **region-wide Creative Talent Platform** that will discover, develop and provide opportunities for diverse talent through competitions and master classes, unconnected to formal education. **Improve the effectiveness of the FE/HE/apprenticeship pipeline and career progression for current creative sector workers.** Do this by supporting the development of a *Creative & Cultural Industries Climbing Frame model* across the region, developing and launching **new apprenticeship models, new entrant (freelance) support programmes** and a **skills passport**. Also, **strengthen supply chains** and simplify access to them for production companies

Launch a region-wide **Industry-led careers programme in schools** to develop the creative workforce of the future. Do this by aligning activities with all providers, running training sessions for teachers and Q&A's for parents and grandparents around creative jobs. Also, deliver a model of pilots that gives young people hands-on experience engaging in creative production outside (if possible inside) the curriculum.

Launch a **Multi-Strand Diversity Leadership and Social Mobility Programme** for the creative industries. Do this by creating a **regional forum of emerging diverse talent** and coordinating the efforts of creative intermediary organisations. Further develop WMCA Leadership Commission findings and implement their specific actions across the sector.

Business Environment

Launch a **region-wide Specialist Creative Sector Business Support Programme focused on scale-up potential businesses.** Include in this **specialist advice, scale-up support, mentoring and finance**. Launch a **Creative Industries Angel Hub** and a region-wide **Test-bed for the development and exploitation of creative Intellectual Property (IP)**. Stimulate the **internationalisation and export readiness of our creative businesses,** supporting them in accessing international festivals and global markets. Extend access to export insurance products for creatives through the Department of International Trade.

Strengthen **Creative Clusters and cross-regional working** to stimulate opportunities and economic growth. Launch a **West Midlands Design & Maker Bureau** and other development bureau's that will bring 'intelligent brokerage' to enable the formation of a regional *Creative Super Cluster that can stimulate cross-regional business opportunities for all sectors*. Provide training to **professionalise the management of sector** intermediaries to increase their effectiveness working with creative businesses. **Invest in the promotion of our creative industries** regionally, nationally and globally.

Place

Launch a **10-year Cultural Action Zone Investment Programme** that is locally defined, industry and politically led and places equal value on small and large scale interventions. Also, develop a unified region-wide **Festivals Strategy**.

Creative Industries 'Supercharge' Interventions by Foundations of Productivity

Ideas	People	Business Environment	Infrastructure
Launch a Creative Industry Led Cross-Sectoral Innovation Programme	Launch a region-wide Creative Talent Platform	Launch Region-wide Specialist Creative Sector Business Support & Funding - focused on scale-up potential businesses	Invest in Creative & Cultural Industry Infrastructure
	Improve the effectiveness of the FE/HE/apprenticeship pipeline and career progression for current creative sector workers	Stimulate the internationalisation and export readiness of our creative businesses	Develop New Digital Infrastructure across the region that takes into account the needs and opportunities of the creative sector
	Launch a region-wide Industry-led careers programme in schools to develop the creative workforce of the future	Strengthen Creative Clusters and cross-regional working to stimulate opportunities and economic growth	
	Launch a Multi-Strand Diversity Leadership and Social Mobility Programme for the creative industries	Invest in the promotion of our creative industries regionally, nationally and globally	
Places			
Launch a 10-year Cultural Action Zone Investment Programme			

Full List of LIS Creative Industries Commitments & Asks

IS Foundation	LIS Cross-Cutting Theme	Proposed Intervention
Ideas	**Innovation Digital**	**1** **Launch a Creative Industry led Cross-Sectoral Innovation programme that addresses missed growth opportunities**
Infrastructure	**Trade & Investment**	**2** **Invest in Creative & Cultural Industry Infrastructure** **2.1-2.1** Including creative sector incubation networks and collaborative 'hubs' and Specialist infrastructure to grow creative sector capacity, e.g., film studios
	Skills	**3** **Work with digital Infrastructure providers across the region (e.g., 5G Test bed) to maximise opportunities to launch creative based cloud services**
People	**Skills Innovation**	**4** **Launch a region-wide Creative Talent Platform**
		5 **Improve the effectiveness of the FE/HE/apprenticeship pipeline and career progression for current creative workers** **5.1-5.6** Implement new apprenticeship models, support new entrants and freelancers, including launching a skills passport
		6 **Launch a region-wide Industry-led careers programme in schools to develop the creative workforce of the future** **6.1-6.3** Implement CPD programmes for teachers, Q&A sessions for parents and hands-on experiences for students
		7 **Launch a Multi-Strand Diversity Leadership and Social Mobility Programme** **7.1-7.3** launch a sector diversity forum, further develop WMCA Leadership Commission findings and implement their specific actions across the sector
Business Environment	**Innovation**	**8** **Launch a Region-wide Creative Business Support Service** **8.1-8.3** Implement a sector Knowledge Bank with industry intermediaries supporting business scale-up, launch a Creative Industries Angel Hub and launch a region-wide test bed for the development and exploitation of creative Intellectual Property
	Trade & Investment	**9** **Stimulate internationalisation and export readiness** **9.1-9.2** Extend sector access to international festivals and global markets, increase access to export insurance products
	Skills	**10** **Strengthen Creative Clusters and cross-regional working to stimulate opportunities and economic growth** **10.1-10.3** launch a West Midlands Design & Maker Bureau, fund intelligent brokers to create an effective creative *super cluster* across the region and run a training programme to professionalise the management of sector intermediaries **11** **Invest in the promotion of our creative industries**
Places	**Innovation Digital**	**12** **Launch a 10-year Cultural Action Zone Investment Programme that is locally defined, industry and politically led and places equal value on small and large scale interventions**

Appendix A contains a more detailed version of this Delivery Plan including specific rationales for interventions

Appendix:

Local Industrial Strategy for the West Midlands:
Creative Industries Sector Action Plan

1.0 Executive Summary

This is a draft sector action plan for the creative industries, part of Local Industrial Strategy for the West Midlands Combined Authority region. It has been produced as the basis for discussion with stakeholders, including representatives of the region's creative and cultural industries.

It articulates comparative strengths and future opportunities within the creative and cultural industries and proposes an initial set of interventions to unlock these strengths in a way that will multiply their value across the region's economy.

These proposals consider the five foundations of productivity that underpin the government's approach to industrial strategy[3]: **ideas**, **infrastructure**, **people**, **business environment** and '**places**'. Twelve specific actions are proposed:

Ideas

Action 1: Invest in a Creative Industry Led Cross-Sectoral Innovation Programme

- Commission a region-wide mapping study to identify creative innovation gaps and opportunities around, for example, the current STEAMhouse programme

- Invest in a number of creative industry led innovation programmes across the region that cover gaps and opportunities left by existing programmes

Infrastructure

Action 2: Invest in Creative & Cultural Industry Infrastructure

- Invest in creative sector incubation networks and collaborative 'hubs', such as a Jewellery & Designer-Maker live/work and developing Leamington Spa's creative quarter

- Invest in Specialist infrastructure to grow creative sector capacity, such as Film & TV production facilities and immersive technology studios

Action 3: Develop New Digital Infrastructure across the region that takes into account the needs and opportunities of the creative sector

- Maximise the opportunities for new creative industry products and services during the roll-out of the large scale 5G test bed across the region

- Ensure new digital exchanges become available within the region and take into account the needs and opportunities of the creative sector

People

Action 4: Launch a region-wide Creative Talent Platform

- Invest in an online platform to discover, develop and provide opportunities for diverse talent through competitions, unconnected to formal education

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[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-strategy-building-a-britain-fit-for-the-future

Action 5: Improve the effectiveness of the FE/HE/apprenticeship pipeline and career progression for current creative sector workers

- Launch a Creative Industries Regional Skills Task Force to coordinate existing skills research across the region

- Support the development of a *Creative & Cultural Industries Climbing Frame model* across the region. Develop and launch new apprenticeship models

- Launch a New Entrants Support programme and Skills Passport

- Address gaps in the supply chain of creative talent through specific training and reskilling programmes

Action 6: Launch a region-wide Industry-led careers programme in schools to develop the creative workforce of the future

- Align regional commitments, including to the Careers and Education Company (CEC) and with national support, such as Creative Industries Federation's £2m creative careers fund

- Deliver a model of pilots that give young people hands-on experience engaging in creative production outside (if possible inside) the curriculum

- Advocate alongside industry to embed creative thinking and practice more fully in the national curriculum for schools at all levels

Action 7: Launch a Multi-Strand Diversity Leadership and Social Mobility Programme for the creative industries

- Create a regional forum of emerging diverse creative talent by coordinating the efforts of a wide range of creative intermediary organisations together with current and future beneficiaries

- Disseminate the findings of the WMCA Leadership Commission and pro-actively connect the creative industries with our diverse communities

- Revise **specific regional actions around diversity and inclusive growth within the creative industries** based on new understanding from the above actions.

Business Environment

Action 8: Launch a region-wide Specialist Creative Sector Business Support programme focused on scale-up potential businesses

- Implement a **Specialist Creative Support Pathway** across the region accessible by all creatives with growth ambitions, supported by the Growth Hubs

- Launch bespoke sector funding including a **Creative Industries Angel Hub** for the region

- Set-up a region-wide **Test-bed for the development and exploitation of creative IP** with the Intellectual Property Office (IPO)

Action 9: Stimulate the internationalisation and export readiness of our creative businesses

- Extend **creative sector internationalisation** through the growth Hubs by supporting business access to international festivals and global markets

- Ensure Growth Hubs are working with the Department of International Trade (DIT) to **maximise the impact of the DIT's export insurance products** within the creative sector

Action 10: Strengthen Creative Clusters and cross-regional working to stimulate opportunities and economic growth

- Launch a **West Midlands Design & Maker Bureau**, the first of a number of nimble 'Creative Bureau's' that will act as a coordinated voice for the many facets of the design industries. Develop further specialist bureau's over time.

- Set-up a network of 'intelligent' brokers that work together forming a *Creative Super Cluster* - a virtual network that identifies new opportunities for creatives across the region

- Run a **training programme to professionalise sector intermediary management**. Pilot this with the Cluster Manager Toolkit being developed and disseminated by GBSLEP

Action 11: Invest in the promotion of our creative industries regionally, nationally and globally

- **Develop a Creative Sector Promotion Plan,** that brings together combined intelligence on what world class creative assets we have that provide an opportunity for promotion

- **Run a Creative sector Promotional campaign,** based on the above sector promotion plan, that targets potential investors and customers locally, regionally, nationally and internationally

Action 12: Launch a Cultural Action Zone Investment Programme

- Launch a ten-year investment programme into **Cultural Action Zones** that will enable our culture to flourish in a multitude of ways and multitude of places, both large scale and small scale

- Develop a **Unified Region-wide Festivals Strategy,** including convening and commissioning events of scale

2.0 Methodology

This creative industries plan has been developed with the collaboration of a cross-regional steering group. This group has been informed by engagement with creatives, sector intermediaries, cultural organisations, academia and public and private partners across the 3-LEP geography which includes Black Country, Greater Birmingham and Solihull and Coventry & Warwickshire. In addition, a number of key sources of data have been taken into account, including:

- The *National Creative Industries Sector Deal* (March18)[4]

- Existing intelligence for the sector at a national and regional level; including
  Greater Birmingham Creative Economy Mapping Study[5]
  Independent review of the Creative Industries[6] *(Sir Peter Bazalgette)*
  Creative Nation Report[7] (NESTA, Feb18)

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[4] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/creative-industries-sector-deal
[5] https://gbslep.co.uk/resources/reports/creative-economy-mapping-study
[6] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-the-creative-industries
[7] https://www.nesta.org.uk/publications/creative-nation

Create Together Growth Strategy[8] (Creative Industries Council)
Creative Industry Federation's *Industrial Strategy Sector response*[9]
Blueprint for Growth[10] (CWLEP)
Creative Economy for Coventry: Trends and Potential

- Engagement workshops conducted for the GBSLEP mapping study during July 2017[11]

This plan presents a scale of ambition, by both refocusing the use of existing resources and highlighting the potential of new monies (£10m-£100m+) to leverage the potential of the creative industries in the region.

2.1 Definitions

The most recent definition of the Creative Industries and the Cultural sector are used throughout this document as defined by Department of Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS)[12].

Definition of Creative Industries: *'Those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property'* (DCMS 2001). The creative-subsectors included within this definition have been determined by measuring 'creative intensity', the proportion of creative occupations which make up employment in each sub-sector. This currently includes: Advertising & Marketing, Architecture, Crafts, Design & Designer Fashion, Film, TV, Video, Radio & Photography, IT software & computer services, Publishing, Museums, Galleries and libraries, Music, performing and visual arts[13].

Definition of the Cultural Sector: *'Those industries with a cultural objective at the centre of the industry'.* This includes the sub-sectors of: Arts (performing arts, artistic creation, operation of arts facilities), Film, TV and Music, Radio, Photography, Crafts, Museums & Galleries, Libraries and Archives, Cultural Education and heritage.

There is a well understood link between a strong cultural offer in any given place and increased economic value. For example, value is always generated indirectly by making the place more desirable to study, work and live in due to an improved quality of life for citizens. However, the methodology needed to objectively capture the quantum of this value can be complex.[14]

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[8] http://www.thecreativeindustries.co.uk/media/367095/final-version-july-5.pdf
[9] https://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/sites/default/files/2017-05/Industrial%20Strategy.pdf
[10] https://business.warwickshire.gov.uk/may-2017/news-in-brief/cwlep-launches-blueprint-for-growth-of-regions-digital-creative-sector
[11] https://gbslep.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Creative-Economy-Mapping-GBSLEP-Dec17-full-report.pdf pages 53-54

[12] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/736270/DCMS_Sectors_Economic_Estimates_-_Methodology.pdf   DCMS Sectors Economic Estimates - August 2018   *page 6 & 13,*
[13] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/736270/DCMS_Sectors_Economic_Estimates_-_Methodology.pdf   Table 2.1 Page 10 and page 6/7
[14] https://ahrc.ukri.org/documents/project-reports-and-reviews/measuringeconomicvalue/ *Measuring Economic Value in Cultural Institutions*, AHRC/NESTA pages 2-9

3.0 Sector Strengths & Opportunities

3.1 Value of the Creative Sector

The Creative Industries are worth £4bn+ in GVA across the WMCA region.[15] There are 9,975 Creatives enterprises (second only to Manchester within Combined Authority regions) with 48,800 jobs in our creative industries and a likely 40,000 more in non-creative industries[16]. This is complimented by a strong Digital & Tech sector which together enable the region to have a strong cross-sectoral innovation activity.

GBSLEP's Creative Economy[17] (which includes creative jobs in non-creative industries) is worth £4.1bn in GVA (9% of the total) and employs 50,000 workers (5.6% of total), the Creative Services Value Chain, including advertising and marketing, is worth £1.9bn in GVA and the creative content value chain is worth £1.4bn in GVA.

CWLEP generates 188m of the £225m GVA of the West Midlands Games industry from a core of 50 firms centred around Leamington, Southam and Warwick[18].

There was a 422% increase in digital start-ups between 2006 and 2016 in Walsall and Wolverhampton[19].

Creative industry 'super-strengths' identified across the West Midlands Combined Authority include:

- 10% of the **UK Games Industry** (£224m) is in the region and offers strong opportunities around digital manufacturing, Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR) applications and innovative screen production

- **Next Generation Content Creation** is a key strength, currently amplified by our *Diverse* population and BBC 3's youth programming base now in Birmingham. Also, the development of High-End Production studios and a Media Campus at NEC (Stephen Knight, Mercian Studios)

- A substantial **advertising, marketing and design** sector, including web, product, fashion design, PR and data analysis, supports growth opportunities with **design led** thinking a significant 'catalyst of growth' across all sectors

- Birmingham has the largest **Jewellery, Crafts and Designer Maker** Cluster outside London, with a focus on high-value goods and hand-crafting for **automotive** production

- NESTA has identified Birmingham and the region as a 'Creative Challenger' cluster, with **strong collaborations, sector specialisms, a diverse ecosystem** and being on track to becoming a *central node* in the UK's creative geography[20]

Overall, the Combined Authority targets adding £3Bn in GVA and 18,000 jobs to the region's Creative & Digital sector by 2021 and £7bn GVA, 29,000 jobs and 18,000 NVQ4+'s by 2030.[21]

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[15] WMCA Creative Sector Stats from Black Country Consortium https://www.the-blackcountry.com/ Quantum on scale of West Midland region's creative sector by GVA is considered to be an under-estimate, with the true figure well over £4bn
[16] https://gbslep.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Creative-Economy-Mapping-GBSLEP-Dec17-full-report.pdf extrapolated using cross-regional data on page 43, 49,50
[17] The *Creative Economy* is defined as workers in creative industries plus creative occupations in other industries https://gbslep.co.uk/resources/reports/creative-economy-mapping-study executive summary page 9
[18] https://www.cwlep.com/sites/default/files/games_industry_-_blueprint_for_growth.pdf
[19] https://www.the-blackcountry.com/upload/Annual%20Economic%20Review%202016/BCC_AER_2016.pdf
[20] https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/creative_nation-2018.pdf page 38
[21] SEP: Making Our Mark https://www.wmca.org.uk/what-we-do/strategy page 40/41

3.2 Trends & Opportunities

The region's creative economy, with its creative and digital strengths, including a focus on data analysis and behavioural insights, is well positioned to take advantage of trends and challenges affecting the sector:

- **Digital disruption of consumption:** consumers of entertainment content moving relentlessly online, with fragmentation of audiences across platforms. Although often accompanied by growth in overall audiences, online revenues do not yet replace those in 'traditional' media – sectors such as music, journalism, and publishing have to find new business models to adjust to these changes.

- **Digital disruption of production:** e.g., data analysis and artificial intelligence (AI) are dramatically changing patterns of work in advertising; digital manufacturing ('fab labs') transforming design, prototyping and production processes, with the largest effect being felt in sectors other than creative and digital. This is making agencies and individuals with those skills an indispensable part of the supply chain, e.g., within advanced manufacturing.

Combining sector trends with regional strengths enables us to identify the following specific opportunities:

- 'Golden age' for high-end drama production – driven by the FAANG's[22] such as Netflix - opens up the opportunity for the region as a **production centre for high budget content**

- Games form an important and growing component of the production sector for original digital content. Technical improvements and cost reductions of **VR/AR** open up new markets across **entertainment, education, manufacturing and healthcare**

- Increased demand from consumers for **creative experiences**, such as **theatre, performance and live music**, will open up the market for the **region's cultural offer**

- Easier and cheaper access to sophisticated content creation tools opens up opportunities to leverage the **diversity of our population in the creation of new commercial *'content, experiences, services and originals'***

- Job opportunities are opening around **Creative innovation and creative skills, such as design, and are an enabler of innovation and growth across all sectors**, especially as consumers are demanding ever more functionally sophisticated and well-designed products and services

- Much greater interest in **immersive tech** from government and private investors, opens up the market for **entertainment** and the wider **visitor economy** as well as **high growth sectors**, such as Advanced Manufacturing, Business & Professional Services and Healthcare

- The opportunity to grow job numbers across **IT** and core **high-level specialist digital skills**, from data analysis to visualisation, will help stimulate **higher levels of innovation, productivity and competitiveness** across the whole regional economy

- The region becoming the UK's **5G Test Bed** is a huge opportunity to develop new cloud based creative services and products that utilise this 1Gb super-reliable mobile connectivity

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[22] 'Faang' - Acronym for the five most popular tech stocks https://www.investopedia.com/terms/f/faang-stocks.asp

4.0 Proposed Actions

Proposed actions are grouped under the *foundations of productivity* headings that underpin the government's approach to industrial strategy[23]: **Ideas, People, Infrastructure, Business Environment** and **Places.** There are twelve specific actions:

Ideas (Innovation)

Invest in our world-class creative production, innovation and cultural offer

Action 1: Launch a Creative Industry Led Cross-Sectoral Innovation Programme

Rationale for intervention:

- *The regions creative specialisms, such as design and games, have an unfulfilled potential to enable the development of new products and services across all sectors. This is underpinned by NESTA identifying Birmingham as being on-track to becoming a central node in the UK's creative geography[24], having recently gained creative specialisms along with a diverse ecosystem and the presence of high-growth firms.*

1.1 Commission a **Region-wide Mapping Study** to identify existing provision, gaps and opportunities that new creative industry led cross-sectoral innovation programmes could address

1.2 Invest in creative industry led **cross-sectoral innovation programmes** across the region, for example, extending the model of STEAMhouse[25] by applying different approaches and focuses following the gaps and opportunities analysis above. Ensure that *design-thinking* is a part of this wider approach

Ambition - £10m+ A range of new creative led cross-sectoral innovation programmes to be established across the region.

Infrastructure

Action 2: Invest in Creative & Cultural Industry Infrastructure

Rationale for intervention:

- *Industry reports a lack of affordable workspaces of all types, from incubators and start-ups to grow-on spaces, which may be constraining industry growth*

- *Commercial investors see a lack of public sector co-investment as a barrier to key pre-commercial infrastructure such as incubation spaces[26]*

- *Lack of specialist infrastructure constrains growth in our emerging creative sectors, e.g. studio and production space for film and TV (which is responding to a growth in high-end production from*

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[23] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-strategy-building-a-britain-fit-for-the-future
[24] https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/creative_nation-2018.pdf page 7, 38
[25] http://www.steamhouse.org.uk

[26] See full version of GBSLEP Creative Economy Mapping Study https://gbslep.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Creative-Economy-Mapping-GBSLEP-Dec17-full-report.pdf

streamers such as Netflix), motion capture for Video Games & Animation and collaboration space for creative thinkers to develop ideas

2.1 Invest in creative sector incubation networks and collaborative 'hubs'

Including for example:

- A national **Live/work Jewellery & Designer-Maker Incubation network** in Birmingham, bringing emerging and established designer-makers into a vibrant and supported environment, includes high-end craft skills in automotive (£m+)

- Regenerate and develop the **Creative Quarter in Leamington Spa**, (£20m inc. £5.3m for Hub) underpinned by the existing creative community and the *Silicon Spa* gaming cluster and further developing **Fargo Village** in Coventry (£m+)

2.2 Invest in Specialist infrastructure to grow creative sector capacity across the region

Including for example:

- Invest in the **TV and Film production capacity** of the region by establishing new larger scale studio and production facilities. e.g., Stephen Knight Film Studios, NEC, Birmingham (£m+)

- Invest in the **Immersive Technologies** Studio in partnership with Coventry University and the creative industry (£2m)

Ambition - *£10m+ £100m+ Additional resources will enable more of this pipeline to be funded across the region*

Action 3: Develop New Digital Infrastructure across the region that takes into account the needs and opportunities of the creative sector

Rationale for intervention:

- *Creative businesses are at the forefront of product and service innovation where the utilisation of very high-speed connectivity will be essential, for example, to deliver very high bandwidth media production over IP and to bring new cloud services that require an extremely stable and robust network to deliver.*

3.1 Work with our **5G Roll-out partners** across the region to ensure that the needs and opportunities for the creative sector are understood and maximised

3.2 Work with digital infrastructure partners to ensure that new **Digital Exchanges,** giving up to 10Gb+ connectivity, become available within the region and take into account the needs and opportunities of the creative sector

People

Invest in the diversity, talent and skills of our existing and aspiring creative workers.

Action 4: Launch a region-wide Creative Talent Platform

Rationale for intervention:

- *Developing the region's creative talent of the future is a key opportunity to harness and promote the unfulfilled potential of our super diverse[27] population. This should be done by all means possible, which means including non-academic and qualification based approaches*

4.1 Launch a regional **Creative Talent platform** that will discover, develop and create new opportunities for diverse talent that can be expressed on a screen. This will include broadcasting, arts, games and social media and will extend beyond talent such as performers, musicians and writers to include a wide-range of creative craft roles, from director of photography and sound design to designer-maker and costume designer.

This platform will bring together a wide range of talent competitions, some co-commissioned by the platform itself, others linked in from sponsors. It will serve the needs of the arts, cultural and broadcast sectors as a whole and will be launched in partnership with a wide-range of stakeholders such as BBC, Channel 4, Sky Arts and The Space.

Participants do not have to be involved in any specific education, study or training courses. However, the platform will include access to wide ranging on-line support materials that will enable entrants to compete more effectively in their chosen category. It will also include a regular series of face-to-face workshops and events that will increase the platforms profile and bring the region's creative talent together.

Talent that has been discovered and recognised through this platform will be supported in their next steps, from promotion on the world stage, connecting them to agencies and potential employers or simply finding the right next course to develop their career.

Ambition - This platform can be scaled by having more revenue supporting its launch and development over the first 3 years. (£1m-£2m)

Action 5: Improve the effectiveness of the FE/HE/apprenticeship pipeline and career progression for current creative sector workers

Rationale for intervention:

- *Qualifications at level 4 and above are lower on average in the West Midlands than the rest of the UK. It is the case, however, that many people make fantastic contributions to the creative industries without holding Level 4 qualifications. However, having higher level qualifications is a proxy for skill and adaptability, so addressing these shortages remains important*

- *FE and HE creative courses and apprenticeships are often not fully aligned with the current needs and changing demands of creative businesses*

- *There are challenges, especially for new entrants, around the freelance nature of creative work. Typically after a 1-2 year apprenticeship workers become freelance, these individuals need support to further develop their skills and become more employable*

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[27] https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/superdiversity-institute/about/about-superdiversity.aspx definition of super diversity

- *The supply chain has gaps and it can be difficult for production companies and those wanting to hire workers to identify who is available in the market place and exactly what skills and talent each is offering*

5.1 Launch a **Creative Industries Regional Skills Task Force** to coordinate existing skills research across the region to get a clearer picture of the current and future skills needs of the creative and cultural sector[28] in the light of changing job requirements. Do this by developing intelligent mapping and bringing together FE, HE, training providers and employers within a *Creative Skills Forum. Include intermediaries such as Screen Skills (Formerly Creative Skillset), Creative & Cultural Skills, Birmingham Education Partnership, Arts Connect, Creative Alliance, Producers Forum, West Midlands Screen Bureau and Film Birmingham.*

5.2 Use the mapping study results to work with FE/HE institutions and training providers, enabling them to **make meaningful changes to their courses and the way they market the creative sector to students**

5.3 Support the development of a *Creative & Cultural Industries Climbing Frame model* across the region and **develop and launch new apprenticeship models**, taking into account approaches such as *Talent Connect* and *Foot-in-the-Door* (Creative Alliance) and proposals for an Apprentice Training Agency (ATA) which can facilitate multi-employer 'freelance' style apprenticeships. Ensure that these new apprenticeships can have wide-ranging 'micro-module' content, leading to a more versatile workforce. Support the completion of T-Levels across creative occupations, as these will be the only post-16 courses from 2021.

5.4 Launch a **New Entrants Support programme and Skills Passport**, initially focusing on those with 1-2 years' experience who are often propelled into freelance working before they are ready for it. Support them with additional training and access to further work opportunities. Develop a broader approach to the *Skills Passport* developed by Screen Skills for High End drama[29], for example, include in the passport proof of practical and successful participation in particular types of work. Pilot this in GBSLEP region.

5.5 **Work with existing providers of crewing databases to implement a simpler 'one-stop-access' to the region's supply chain of talent and creative services** to encourage more production in the region. (work for example with, Film Birmingham, Crew Birmingham, 'People who know people who work in TV' and others)

5.6 **Address gaps in the supply chain of creative talent,** especially where this is damaging the ability of the region to get large productions here, e.g., shortages of electricians. Also ensure that current creative workers can get reskilled so they can adapt to changing job needs. Work with regional skills budgets and programmes to maximise the chances of these skilling needs being covered through existing resources

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[28] CFE Research Study 2018: Skills needs assessment for the creative and cultural sector
[29] http://creativeskillset.org/high_end_tv/supported_programmes/skills_passport

Action 6: Launch a region-wide Industry-led careers programme in schools to develop the creative workforce of the future

Rationale for intervention:

- *Low levels of awareness, cultural acceptance and interest in creative occupations within schools and in specific communities is damaging the regions creative and digital talent pipeline and contributing to projected skills shortages in the future.*

- *The school curriculum, especially at secondary, fails to include sufficient provision for creative & digital skills and transferable soft skills, like confidence, that emerges from access to the arts and creative subjects like drama. This means that young people entering FE and HE are relatively poorly equipped to seize the career opportunities that the creative industries provide. Industry bodies such as the Creative Industries Council and the Creative Industries Federation have been advocating for national policy change at the Department for Education over many years.[30]*

- *In order to inspire and engage with future talent we need to be promoting creative industry opportunities from primary school right through to Level 7 qualifications, so that students, their parents and grandparents are able to understand the opportunities, risks and rewards the sector brings and compare it with other career chooses in a balanced way, enabling them to make informed career decisions for their future.*

6.1 Align the work of the Careers and Education Company (CEC) and their contracted regional providers, such as Birmingham Education Partnership (BEP), with national initiatives, including Creative Industries Federation's £2m Creative Careers Fund. Address funding gaps, such as those for regional skills coordinators and support a range of specific programmes and tasks, including:

- Bring together multi-academy trusts, Ark, Titan, Royal Society of Arts Network Academies (RSA) with other groups to develop a stronger network of schools and academies

- Deliver CPD programmes and Career Walks for teachers, career advisors and work coaches about careers in the creative sector

- Deliver 'inspiration' presentations and workshops for young people about the roles people do, the skills people need and the routes people take into sustainable paid work in the sector

- Run Q&A sessions for parents and grandparents of young people from diverse backgrounds, experiences and abilities about careers in the sector. Integrate this with a new programme of balanced career development that covers all industries, sectors and opportunities giving students and their parents a clearer understanding of the risks and rewards of different career choices.

6.2 Deliver a model of pilots that gives young people hands-on experience engaging in creative production outside (if possible inside) the curriculum. Do this by partnering with, for example, Intellectual Property Office (IPO) and their *Cracking Ideas* educational tool[31] with British Film Institute and Birmingham Ormiston Academy. Also, partnering with the schools and colleges *National Collaborative Outreach Programme*, an example being University of Wolverhampton's *Saturday Art & Design Club*.

6.3 Advocate alongside industry to embed creative thinking and practice more fully in the national curriculum for schools at all levels, for example through programmes like *Digital*

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[30] https://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/policy-and-research/skills-and-workforce

[31] https://crackingideas.com

School House, delivered by UkiE, sponsored by *PlayStation* and *SEGA* focusing on computational thinking from primary level. Also, fund other examples such as '*Play, Code, Share'* which focuses on secondary schools (years 8 & 9) to encourage engagement in the arts from play based learning, this one being focused on areas of deprivation.

Action 7: Launch a Multi-Strand Diversity Leadership and Social Mobility Programme for the creative industries

Rationale for intervention:

- *The West Midlands has a super diverse population but the benefits of this are not currently being leveraged within our creative workforce. A concerted region-wide effort needs to be instigated to maximise access to the industry from all parts of our diverse population.*

7.1 Create a Forum of emerging diverse creative talent by coordinating the efforts of a wide range of creative intermediary organisations together with current and future beneficiaries across the region. Use reverse-mentoring models to establish what their barriers are to accessing opportunities and career progression. Use this new understanding to change policies and pro-actively support them in furthering their creative ambitions and making a positive impact on social mobility needs.

7.2 **Disseminate the findings of the WMCA Leadership Commission** and pro-actively connect the creative industries and our diverse communities across its five themes; Leadership that Drives Growth, Working in partnership with Business, A step change in Recruitment and Human resources, Combatting the Evaluation and Learning Deficit and a Route map for the next generation.

7.3 Revise **specific regional actions around diversity and inclusive growth within the creative industries** based on new understanding from the above two actions.

Business environment

Barriers to growth for creative businesses prevent many scaling up sufficiently to have a major impact across the region.

Action 8: Launch Region-wide Specialist Creative Sector Business Support programme focused on scale-up potential businesses

Rationale for intervention:

- *The lack of larger creative businesses, especially indigenous ones, presents barriers to the growth of microbusinesses, both through constricted value chains, increased price competition and a lack of role models for creative business leaders and future entrepreneurs. NESTA notes that Creative businesses are more productive than most, so enabling their scale-up is a key factor in driving regional economic growth[32].*

- *The region lacks a consistent approach to creative industries specialist business support, with a games and digital focus within Coventry & Warwickshire LEP, a scale-up focus at GBSLEP and no specialist sector focus at BCLEP.*

- *A lack of recognition of creative intangible IP assets by funders limits R&D investment and the potential to commercialise a wide-range of new products and services.*

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[32] NESTA's report identifies the disproportionate value to the economy of scaling-up creative businesses
https://www.nesta.org.uk/publications/creative-nation

- *R&D tax credits do not fully recognise the value of creative innovation.*

8.1 Implement a **Specialist Creative Support Pathway** across the region accessible by all creatives with growth ambitions, supported by the Growth Hubs. Connect this with sector intermediaries such as Creative England and Advantage Creative with a range of mentoring and support programmes that augment the core support offer. Work towards making this support available across postcodes.

8.2 Launch a bespoke **Creative Industries Angel Hub** for the region as a part of GBSLEP's angel hub in association with UK Business Angels Association (UKBAA). Promote it across the region to maximise its creative sector investor base and its investee impact.

8.3 Set-up a region-wide **Test-bed for the development and exploitation of creative IP**, working with our regional Intellectual Property Office representative and partners such as STEAMhouse.

Use the lessons learned from IPO's current pilot, *Innovation Enabler* (IPO and GBSLEP funded) to design a test-bed that enables our creative business to make informed, strategic decisions regarding their IP and overcome barriers to commercialisation.

Action 9: Stimulate the internationalisation and export readiness of our creative businesses

Rationale for intervention:

- *Creative businesses have a huge untapped potential to export more, as many of their products and services can be sold digitally with relatively little friction between borders.[33]*

- *Creative Businesses often lack the resources to pursue foreign sales and make global connections.*

9.1 Extend **creative sector internationalisation** through the Growth Hubs by supporting business access to international festivals and global markets, enabling them to sell, for example, at MIPCOM, the global content production market. This will open up the region's creatives to new market opportunities around the world.

9.2 Ensure Growth Hubs are working with the Department of International Trade (DIT) to maximise the impact of DIT's export insurance products within the creative sector. These products under-write bank cash flowing of what can be seen as very high risk international transactions.

Action 10: Strengthen Creative Clusters and cross-regional working to stimulate opportunities and economic growth

Rationale for intervention:

- *The importance of leveraging the innovation and growth potential of creative clusters across the English regions, especially in larger cities, is set-out in the government's Industrial Strategy white paper[34].*

- *The development of local anchor institutes, including universities and specialist sector (cluster) intermediaries, has been identified as essential to the growth of the creative industries by the UK's*

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[33] Creative Industry Council: Create Together Report, *international and exporting from page 38*
http://www.thecreativeindustries.co.uk/media/367095/final-version-july-5.pdf
[34] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-strategy-building-a-britain-fit-for-the-future from page 203

government's local industrial strategy sector review.[35] This confirms the European Creative Industries Alliance (ECIA) policy recommendations report[36], which states how essential it is to develop both existing and new cluster organisations, enabling them to take on a greater and more professionalised role in providing specialised sector services.

- *West Midland's digital and tech strengths increase the opportunity for cross-sectoral innovation, for example, there is a lot of interest in 'immersive tech' from government and private investors, both for entertainment, other high growth sectors (e.g., advanced manufacturing & engineering, transport and logistics, health and life sciences) and the visitor economy. The right brokerage will be required to maximise the full potential of this creative and digital synthesis across the region*

10.1 Launch a **West Midlands Design & Maker Bureau**, the first of a number of nimble 'Creative Bureau's' that will act as a coordinated voice for the many facets of the design industries, clarifying and amplifying opportunities by bringing together often disconnected intermediaries from different parts of design, advertising and designer-making. A two-year pilot phase will be funded, after which longer term actions can be defined, in a similar way to the West Midlands Screen Bureau. It will report into the *WMCA Creative, Culture & Tourism Group*. The existing **West Midlands Screen Bureau** will be further funded, with its work extended based on the findings of its *Design Labs* and industry consultations.

10.2 Set-up a network of 'intelligent' brokers that work together forming a ***Creative Super Cluster*** – a virtual network that identifies new opportunities for creatives across the region through new collaborations with industry, business and cultural groups. Connect this super-cluster and all of its ideas and passion to big regional opportunities like Coventry City of Culture and Commonwealth Games.

10.3 Run a **training programme to professionalise sector intermediary management**. Pilot this with the Cluster Manager Toolkit being developed and disseminated by GBSLEP. This will build on existing EU work around increasing cluster intermediary impact through, e.g., the use of targets. Use workshops to share best practice and multiply the impact of our creative strengths, regionally, nationally and globally.

Action 11: Invest in the promotion of our creative industries regionally, nationally and globally

Rationale for intervention:

- *There is a lack of understanding of the real market strengths and capabilities of the West Midlands creative businesses, which is stopping the sector taking full advantage of national and global opportunities.*

- *In Birmingham the cities self-image is defined by a lack of self-confidence amongst creative businesses and cultural organisations.[37]*

- *A failure to recognise the quality and full value of the creative sector within the region means that huge opportunities are missed every day to bring the very best creative excellence to our other business sectors and industries.*

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[35] UK government commissioned 'Independent review of creative industries' to develop industrial strategy sector deals
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-the-creative-industries
[36] 'Create, Innovate, Grow' policy recommendations report from ECIA http://eciaplatform.eu/newsarticle/experts-set-agenda-for-future-of-creative-industries/
[37] https://gbslep.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Creative-Economy-Mapping-GBSLEP-Dec17-full-report.pdf

11.1 **Develop a Creative Sector Promotion Plan,** led by West Midlands Growth Company (WMGC) working with the super-cluster, LEPs, WMCA Creative, Culture & Tourism Group and industry bringing together combined intelligence on what world class creative assets we have that provide an opportunity for promotion

11.2 **Run a series of Creative sector Promotional campaigns,** based on the above sector promotion plan, led by WMGC and targeting our regional creative strengths and cultural offer to potential investors and customers locally, regionally, nationally and internationally

Places

Invest in our world-class creative production, innovation and cultural offer.

Rationale for intervention:

- *The region has arguably one of the strongest cultural offers outside London, including Royal Shakespeare Company, Royal Ballet, Hippodrome, Motionhouse and Warwick Arts Centre, that provide strong potential to leverage new ideas and ambitions to increase our profile on the world stage*

- *Cultural investments that improve quality of life also stimulate economic growth by encouraging students and workers to want to study, work and bring up their families in our regional cities and towns rather than reside elsewhere*

- *There is huge opportunity to invest in our regional cultural assets in the context of Coventry City of Culture and Birmingham Commonwealth Games*

Action 12: Launch a Cultural Action Zone Investment Programme

12.1 Launch a ten-year investment programme into **Cultural Action Zones** that moves the focus away from thriving (or failing) *individual* cultural institutions to a model that encourages a portfolio investment approach by *many* funders into *many* cultural institutes grouped around specific geographies and places. These could be a town centre, a neighbourhood shopping centre, a post-industrial regeneration area or a city centre development zone.

These new action zones will be locally defined, industry and politically led and place equal value on small scale interventions and non-city centre regenerations as they do on higher profile institutional brands and places.

The Investment programme will align multiple public sector funding pots with private, third sector and commercial investment opportunities. It will enable our culture to flourish in a multitude of ways by developing break-through business models and new ownership structures, such as asset transfers and Community interest companies.

Examples of potential Action Zones include:

- Digbeth, Birmingham – *Garden Viaduct (National Trust, Custard Factory, HS2), projects* that blur the boundaries between private, third sector and public money
- Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham - *Designer-Maker Live/Work Incubation network*
- Birmingham, Centenary Square & ambitions like a new *Science & Heritage Museum*
- Coventry – *linked to City of Culture*

- Wolverhampton - Arts Corridor
- And specific parts of Dudley, Solihull, Leamington Spa, Stratford-Upon-Avon, etc

These action zones will include broader testing of new cultural business models, for example:

- City View: *Combined cultural/ leisure/ tourism ticketing including utilisation of emerging 'big' date sets to power a regional ticket portal (in conjunction with TicketFactory)* and physical New York style ticket booth operation in Grand Central (budget c £750k)

A process of collaboration, with the support of the WMCA Creative, Cultural & Tourism Group, will work-up a pipeline of priorities with a variety of budget asks.

Instigate improved cross-regional collaboration between East & West Midlands around the proposed Midlands Engine Cultural Investment Programme (Culture Central, ACE)

Defining ambition will be a key part of this in future iterations of this plan with pipeline proposals amounting to £100m+

12.2 Develop a **Unified Region-wide Festivals Strategy** including convening and commissioning events of scale

Examples of potential Action Zones that involve events and festivals include:

- Birmingham - *Weekender Festival* (2019-21 budget £4million for 3 years)

End.