CREATIVE BIRMINGHAM PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Creating the Profile for Birmingham's Creative and Cultural Industries:

Marketing Creative Birmingham

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Contents

1. Executive Summary

i. This study was commissioned by the Creative Birmingham Partnership Board to help raise the profile of the creative and cultural industries in the context of its stated mission to position **Birmingham as the leading regional capital for the creative industries by 2008.**

ii. The aim of the Project was to develop a marketing framework, with particular emphasis on an inclusive approach to marketing; analysis of competitive and comparable cities and assessing the desirability of introducing a Creative Birmingham branding model.

iii. The key methodologies used were desk and internet research; a series of interviews and discussion groups and a survey of UK creative cities.

iv. Birmingham's Creative City strategy was published in June 2002 to **establish and promote Birmingham globally and nationally** through building *sustainable* businesses, developing jobs and enhancing the city's profile.

v. The report includes a snapshot of other UK creative cities and brief case studies on three international locations. Their strategies and experiences are useful in tracking and developing Creative Birmingham's progress. We looked at a wide variety of creative projects, schemes, initiatives and organisations in Birmingham, with an overview of some in the Appendices section.

vi. Interviews with CBPB members and others provided a large degree of information and opinion, summarised in this report under a number of themes.

vii. Three lively discussion groups took place with the Key Agencies Group, creative marketers and cultural practitioners. A particular focus was on Creative Birmingham's USP....what became this project's 'Holy Grail.'

viii. This report presents 19 findings and recommendations, alongside suggesting eight 'task and finish' groups to continue the work.

ix. The proposed taskforces are:

    A. Cultural & Space Audit
    B. Connectivity
    C. Eastside Creative Vision and Strategy
    D. Creative Portal
    E. Film Office
    F. Festivals and Events Strategy
    G. Inside Out
    H. Branding and USP

2. Introduction

As much as setting out what this study aimed to achieve and what this final report contains, it is similarly worth explaining what this document is not. This is a research-based approach to setting out a framework for marketing the city of Birmingham as an international cultural and creative location. It is the basis for a strategy to position Birmingham as a place where creative-based enterprises are developed and where high quality cultural activity is staged for the benefit of the city's various communities and audiences.

Urban has interpreted this brief *not* as a full mapping exercise or the creation of a new cultural strategy for the city; but sees the challenge as sketching a masterplan and creating an informed marketing framework. Some involved in this study believe a new cultural policy is required. Urban would not dispute such a call; indeed, it is one of our recommendations. However, this report comes from a marketing perspective – we looked at what we have to exploit and what potential exists, before suggesting the steps to market and communicate those assets and opportunities.

We do not attempt to set out in any detail the economic case for investing in the development and growth of the creative economy. As many research respondents pointed out, Richard Florida and others have developed and written such theories in a highly compelling manner. The Creative Birmingham Partnership Board signs up to the importance and potential of realising the value of creativity – in economic and cultural terms. However, there are significant groups who do need such as case set out in a more clear, articulate and exciting manner than has hitherto been the case.

The research for this study was undertaken within a relatively short timescale, with speed of the essence. It was never intended to be scientific, but based on evidence and professional opinions, experience and judgement. Sample sizes were small, but Urban was very pleased with the range and quality of contributions.

At the beginning of this study, we issued general information on the scope of the work and called for general information. The speed and volume of responses says something about Birmingham's potential to inform and engage. Whilst our introductory approaches were extremely general and open in nature – rather than specific in request – we were nevertheless surprised by the relatively small response and missed opportunity on the part of individuals and representatives. A sector with good and well resourced communication professionals would have filled more postal boxes and taken up more server capacity.

Two organisations faced widespread denunciation in the early stages of the research for their lack of engagement in the business of marketing Birmingham as a 'creative' city. For many, Advantage West Midlands should be taking a much greater role in developing and promoting the city and region's creative and cultural sector, both in strategic and financial terms. Meanwhile, Marketing Birmingham should be forming and implementing more marketing activity centring on Birmingham's creative scene. However, there was little evidence of the sector or its lead institutions having made a clear case and presented a practical plan to the regional development agency on what it should do over and above its current activity, principally based on its clusters strategy. In the meantime, it should be remembered that Marketing Birmingham's resources have been focussed on a number of longstanding or inherited commitments, with little scope

for discretionary expenditure. New leadership is in place and a new approach from the organisation is emerging, with the Chief Executive highly experienced in and appreciative of the value of promoting a creative city and its cultural assets. There is significant potential and the timing has never been better to involve these two important organisations.

There was an issue, in Urban's view, of different expectations from this study. For some, this project was about the first stages of developing a marketing/ communication framework and strategy. For others, however, it was about creating noise and achieving quick hits. The really demanding participants wanted both!

There was also a desire to introduce new and more powerful branding for Birmingham's creative and cultural sector. However, what most really wanted was a new form of badging for Creative Birmingham. At a very early stage of this study, Urban determined that the city and sector were not ready for the rapid introduction of some new, bespoke brand identity. Such a badge would not resolve the issues we believe exist and the work required as set out later in this report.

It was never our view or approach that overnight solutions would emerge from this report. This document is not a final answer to the issues. Rather, it lays out the considerations, explores the issues and recommends real and practical steps to assist the Creative Birmingham Partnership Board in meeting its stated mission.

As ever, the plan for such a project changes during its course. We focussed less on the brand and evaluating the Creative Cities scheme, for example, and undertook what might be described as real marketing groundwork.

In terms of defining the sector in question in this report, we use the "creative" and "cultural" terms on an interchangeable basis. For some, they can mean different disciplines or approaches, but for the purposes of clear understanding in this work we use either or both to encompass:

> *software, printing and publishing, advertising, design, the visual arts, architecture, screen-based media including games, multimedia products, film and video, radio, performing arts, creative writing, craft industries, music in all its diverse forms, and heritage activities including fine art and antiques.*

A key offer of Birmingham is its breadth, depth, range and diversity. However, this also represents a problem. It is difficult to discover and reach all creative and cultural activities, practitioners, artists, commissioners, companies, organisations and agencies. This relatively short and quickly executed study cannot do justice to everyone or the whole sector. It can be but a taste or snapshot, but we believe our research – and the facts and opinions gathered - are enough to set out the next steps needed to achieve Creative Birmingham's aims and ambitions.

The Urban Project Team would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributed to the study. The passion, commitment and professionalism of those involved in the research is enough, alone, to convince us of the potential offered by Birmingham's creative and cultural industries. In particular, the author would like the opportunity to thank Urban's Project/Research Assistant Sue Gee whose determination to discover information was invaluable; Anita Bhalla, Chair of the

Creative Birmingham Partnership Board, Jan Rowley and Paul Cantrill from the Development Directorate at Birmingham City Council who all made the commissioning of this study possible.

Urban Communications Limited submits this report to the Creative Birmingham Partnership Board and suggests early consideration is given to its findings and recommendations.

3. The Brief

The Creative Industries are recognised as a major high growth sector at national, regional and local levels. The industries consist of a diverse basket of sub-sectors. The industries offer good opportunities for strengthening and building on cultural diversity. They offer the potential for comparatively open access routes into employment and self-employment. The industries also contribute to the added value chain in manufacturing; for example, through product design and branding. They offer a potential route for business diversification.

The development of the Creative and Cultural Industries is now recognised by the leading agencies as a critical component in the renaissance of the City of Birmingham. Strengthening the competitive position of the Creative Industries in Birmingham is vital to the future economy of the City and plays an important role in retaining and attracting the skilled workforce. There are also implications for the Tourism development agenda and the ability of the city to attract inward investment.

Several initiatives involving major and specialist agencies are now in progress around the City drawing on European, partner and regeneration funding to address some of these challenges. These include:

- The Creative City Initiative – a package of projects to support business, encourage start-up activity and promote entry into the Creative Industries (City Council, Business Link and partners)
- The Learning & Skills Council ESF Objective 2 action plan which has specific strands aimed at developing the creative workforce
- Projects established under the aegis of the Regional Cluster Opportunity Groups by Advantage West Midlands
- The Arts Council England investment plan for the West Midlands

These programmes amount to a significant impetus and offer the opportunity for Birmingham to make a step change in the economic growth of the industries over the next five years. If consolidated and orchestrated by the major partners, *Birmingham could demonstrably position itself as the leading regional capital for the creative industries by 2008* (author's emphasis).

The major partners have come together to form a new strategic Board, Creative Birmingham, to ensure that this ambition is realised. The Board has concluded that a focussed programme of work is required to significantly raise the creative and cultural profile of the City.

Specifically, the Board believes action is required to:

- Showcase and celebrate the excellent work that is being done
- Co-ordinate the existing marketing resources which exist around the City
- Provide a clear focus and points of contact for stakeholders and potential investors
- Identify and characterise the existing product with a view to branding and brand development
- Develop, communicate and target clear messages
- Evaluate and learn from Birmingham's competitors

The Board wishes to conduct a discreet, concerted and focussed programme of work to create a quantified framework for action in which the following tasks should be addressed:

Birmingham's competitive position

The Board objective is to nurture creative and cultural enterprise to demonstrably position **Birmingham as the leading creative economy in the UK regions by the end of 2006** (author's emphasis).

Whilst it is recognised that the benchmarking of Birmingham's position in the UK is a major piece of work in its own right the report should include an outline SWOT of major cities to provide the competitive context and a provisional benchmarking. This will indicate where Birmingham currently stands and what action needs to be taken in what areas in relation to marketing and promotion.

The report should make recommendations as to how Birmingham can best measure its competitive position and communicate this to its stakeholders and businesses.

Marketing Programme

There has been much debate as to how the City can best market itself.

Defining the options for a marketing programme for Creative Birmingham and its partners and stakeholders, including:

- framework
- specific actions to strengthen Birmingham's image as a Creative City and support the development of cultural quarters
- organisation and resources
- responsibilities
- internal and external relationships
- meeting the needs of specific creative sectors and clusters (e.g. film office concept)
- the role of, and opportunities within, national media organisations
- links to Professional and Finance, tourism and other aspects of Birmingham's business development which can inform and reinforce profile

The Creative Birmingham Brand

The report should consider the following:

- Whether there is a need for branding
- What branding could mean for the creative economy in Birmingham and how could this benefit local businesses
- The branding model and its relation to the wider City brand in the care of Marketing Birmingham
- What could be the role and value of a Creative Birmingham brand in international, national and regional context
- Identification of the steps to create a Creative Birmingham brand – mechanisms, content development, and communication.

- Survey of past case studies demonstrating good practice in the City (and elsewhere) relating to this area
- Evaluation of the existing marketing infrastructure, its fitness for our purpose, effective engagement and exploitation together with any essential developments.
- The role of the private sector and what needs to be done to engage them in a City brand

4. Approach and Methodology

The potential of the sector and the commitment of Creative Birmingham partners are not in doubt. However, the co-ordination of effort; awareness of access and support, and issues of marketing and communication are generally agreed to require attention.

Urban set out to assess the potential and recommend a framework for marketing. It looked at some specific developments, including the Eastside quarter; the Urban Culture Programme; ArtsFest and other festival activity; and the current infrastructure of established world-class creative and cultural venues and companies. The study set out to identify the missions, aims and specific schemes of partners and outline opportunities for further integrated effort with (among others):

• Advantage West Midlands (incl. Advantage Creative Fund)
• Arts Council England West Midlands
• Audiences Central
• Business Link Birmingham & Solihull
• Birmingham and Solihull Learning and Skills Council
• Screen West Midlands
• West Midlands Life

Urban sought to assess, in outline form, the progress and impact of the Creative City Initiative. Through Competitor Analysis and Benchmarking exercises, we looked at the successes and progress of other UK cities with an established commitment to developing the creative and cultural industries. This helped us to point to valuable lessons elsewhere and identify the positive points of difference in Birmingham's favour. Cities originally identified included:

• Manchester & Liverpool
• Leeds & Sheffield
• Edinburgh
• Newcastle-Gateshead
• Bristol

Not in our original list, but we also looked at Brighton which has developed a reputation in the UK's creative industries sector. Whilst not viewing it as a directly comparable city, we also looked at London and in particular the recently published London Mayor's strategy. Comparable international cities were studied, including Barcleona and Bibao in Spain together with Melbourne, Australia.

The study, due to its commissioning body, had to be Birmingham focussed, but nevertheless regionally inclusive. Even major cities can not act alone, whilst regional organisations are key participants in Creative Birmingham. We looked at the potential for a creative and cultural sector 'one-stop shop' which might provide advice and access to finance and other support. Urban also commenced the study with the intention of looking at the introduction of a web portal across Creative Birmingham partners.

Developing film and the screen media in the city has long been a strategic ambition of the City, for both economic and image-related purposes. We therefore considered the establishment of a Birmingham Film Office/Screen Commission.

It is widely recognised attaining major events significantly enhances the attraction of cities, whilst a diverse cultural offering improves the chances of securing business tourism. In addition, good relationships with the local, regional and national media are vital to profiling activity within the sector. Major events (cultural and otherwise) and festivals were also the subject of this research.

The new Chairman and Chief Executive at Marketing Birmingham, together with the fresh impetus in city marketing and communication, provided an ideal opportunity for assessing the potential and practicality of developing a 'Creative Birmingham' brand. In addition, the roll out of the regional marketing strategy by AWM provides another useful backdrop to improved marketing and promotion. Against this backdrop, we assessed the desirability of developing a 'Creative Birmingham' brand.

The Regional Economic Strategy points to the rapid growth potential of developing *clusters* in the creative and cultural industries along with a number of other sectors. Urban studied the benefits so far accrued from investing in physical, geographic and virtual clustering in the sector and further potential for a pro-active policy of creating and supporting the establishment of cultural quarters and villages.

Future funding for business support has already been identified by the Board as a key issue. The brief did not call for specific work in this area, but Urban was alive to the medium and long term requirements for public and private finance and the importance of identifying the messages which will help support the economic case for new and continuing public intervention.

A mix of thorough desk and internet research, one-to-one interviews, telephone surveys and structured discussion groups formed the basis of the approach to this project.

We did not carry out a specific study of businesses supported through the Business Support for the Creative Industries scheme as originally intended. Instead, a number of these businesses were involved in general research activity and in the discussion groups. The awards event for these businesses also took place during the period of this research, with the winners resulting from a thorough judging process. Appendix I presents ten case studies from the scheme, prepared by its Account Manager.

As ever in a project of this kind, as the study rolled out we modified the approach and methodologies used. The interviews and discussion groups drew out a great deal of useful reaction and material, and quickly generated common strands of opinion and evidence. We undertook a great deal more desk research than originally anticipated, only a small amount of which can be reflected in this report. This has resulted in an extensive database of creative projects and information on other creative cities.

5. Birmingham: The Creative City

Birmingham's strategy for supporting and developing the creative industries was launched in June 2002. It is based on an economic model, rather than specifically marketing driven. It is impressively broad; ambitious in scale and in its stated delivery outputs; is thoroughly researched in identifying the key issues and setting out objectives and aims.

The original strategy and subsequent reports and plans do touch on marketing and in particular the development of dedicated branding for Birmingham's creative sector. As the original strategy set out, it wanted to "**establish and promote Birmingham globally and nationally**" (June 2003, Birmingham Creative City). However, it is clear the resource level and mechanisms have not been sufficient to achieve this aim on any major scale.

The Creative City strategy benefits from a range of European funding streams, although the implementation of some of this finance was delayed by the process of finalising funding agreements.

The strategy concentrates on building *sustainable* businesses, developing jobs and enhancing the city's profile. Led by the City Council, it centres on economic support for business, infrastructure and knowledge.

The Council recognises the benefits of investing in the creative industries with Birmingham's rich cultural diversity and positive community cohesion. It also recognises the potential in the sector for access to employment, new business start ups and self employment. Encouraging and exploring creativity is also seen to be important in respect of community engagement, social inclusion and the development of young people.

The stated objectives of the strategy are to:

- Secure a critical mass of 500 creative businesses Birmingham with good prospects for sustainability by 2006.

- Engage and retain creative talent connecting creative people to business and employment opportunities in conjunction with the education and learning sector leading to 500 new jobs in the Creative Industries by 2006.

- Develop sustainable identified clusters in the Cultural Quarters Eastside, City Centre and Jewellery Quarter with strong links to the communities.

Other aims identified in the 2004/05 business plan include:

- A pilot project to develop the creative economy of Aston
- Supporting A38 Technology Corridor Healthcare/MedTech initiative
- Moseley village pilot

Separate Business and Innovation Teams within the Creative Development Unit in Economic Development manage the various strands of the plan, working closely with a range of partners including the Arts Council England West Midlands, Birmingham and Solihull Business Link, the Learning & Skills Council, Advantage West Midlands and Screen West Midlands.

The strategy's key action programmes include investment in:

- Incubation
- Business Development
- Feasibility
- Knowledge bank and web route maps and e-enablement
- Organisational infrastructure, development
- Routes of entry into employment

Case studies of businesses supported by the Creative Cities scheme, supplied by the scheme's Account Manager Mohammed Zahir, is contained in Appendix I. This was received relatively late in the study period and was subject to data protection provisions.

In addition to supporting businesses, the Council and its partners have developed a range of innovative projects to initiate new approaches, including those focussing on:

- engaging with talent
- showcasing
- access to information and support through portals (eg. the routemap), use of new technologies and software
- support for a Birmingham Music Network
- the bringing together of creative professionals with more traditional industries to discover new approaches to business, engineering and manufacturing
- exploring models for virtual business and contracting

We decided not to undertake bespoke research with businesses which have been supported by the Creative Cities scheme. Instead, we used general research, interviews with Paul Cantrill and Sylvia Broadley, a range of general discussions with individuals operating in the sector and we invited a number of 'Creative Cities' beneficiaries to the Practitioner Discussion Session.

The initiative has undoubtedly generated interest and demand among creatives for support and assistance in starting and developing creative enterprises. It is likely that there would be fewer companies and less economically active creatives without the Creative City scheme. The policy has also helped to fuel private sector investment. Meanwhile, business and management skills have been developed which otherwise may not have been acquired. The partnership behind the scheme has led to better institutional relationships, including between the traditionally cultural and economically driven bodies. The City and its Council are established as having a pro-active approach to the cultural industries.

However, more work needs to be done. Arguably, the Creative City scheme and the various market development initiatives have been too wide. Would all of the companies supported by the BSCI scheme not have made the progress they have

without the relatively modest grant? Would these and future organisations benefit more from investment in the infrastructure – including marketing and branding – rather than small one off gifts? Now is the time for focus and priorities. It is also the moment to ensure the cultural infrastructure and creative capacity in the city is sustained, most importantly through developing awareness and exposure. Successor schemes might also focus on creative talent that is not yet ready to start up a business, but needs earlier development support.

6. Desk Research

Creative Birmingham

Appendix II (iii) gives an overview of organisations and projects approached and briefly investigated in this study. As referred to elsewhere in this report, the depth and breadth of creative and cultural activity in Birmingham is impressive. Without the Creative City initiative and other recent schemes and partnerships, many of the projects listed would not have been possible. However, it is clear the collective story of these activities – their development, success to date and future potential – is not breaking through in terms of wider awareness.

During our research we used the internet to a large extent, discovering information on institutions, policies, schemes and cultural organisations. Finding contact details for many people was difficult, whilst a large number of requests and enquiries via info@ or contact@ addresses never found reply. Meanwhile, a number of websites would benefit from the introduction of search engines to help those visitors unsure of exactly what they are looking for and what they might usefully find.

We conducted a small exercise with a number of Creative Birmingham's public institutions, posing as a jewellery maker seeking assistance.

> Business Link has become, in effect, a single point of contact for business support enquiries by creative entrepreneurs. A number of other institutions we approached referred us to it. When contacted, its operator was very polite and displayed a very helpful manner. He said that the relevant information would be sent by first class post that day. Indeed, a very comprehensive package arrived within two days.

> On approaching Arts Council England, West Midlands we were met by a recorded message from which we had to choose from three options. On being connected, the person was very helpful and said that relevant information would be sent as soon as possible. Unfortunately, the information has still not arrived.

A large element of the desk research focused on our competitor creative cities and international comparisons. This included looking at specific developments in areas such as festivals and film offices.

UK Competitive Cities

Below is a brief snapshot of other UK cities that have a stated ambition or established reputation for developing creative and cultural industries. We draw out activities and developments which are of particular interest in the context of Birmingham's current positions and plans.

Brighton

Has a newly developed Arts Commission to initiate and deliver projects in addition to advisory and advocacy roles. Won £750,000 under the Urban Culture Programme. Brighton Media Centre has been running since 1992, facilitating the growth of the local cluster by offering serviced accommodation, facilities, events, exhibitions, electronic networks, business support and information services. Claims

the city of Brighton & Hove is now a UK "*centre of excellence for all forms of media practice.*"

Bristol

Bristol Cultural Development Partnership formed by the City Council, Chamber of Commerce and South West Arts. It won a UCP award of nearly £1.5 million. At-Bristol is the city's science, nature and art attraction. Festivals include Animated Encounters and the Brief Encounters International Short Film Festival. The Bristol Film Office helped secure the Channel 4/E4/Endemol 300 hour block of commissions at the Bristol Studios.

Edinburgh

Well established international profile for its festivals ranging from Hogmanay through Science, Books, Jazz & Blues, Film, Belatane, Mela and the famous International Festival covering opera, theatre, music and dance – thought to be the biggest of its kind in the world. Outside of the festivals, it is a lively cultural city across music, theatre and the media. The Council states its view "*that culture is not an optional extra, but an essential element in lifelong learning, economic development, social regeneration, and in the quality of life of and personal well being of individuals. This is why this Cultural Policy is central to our strategic vision for Edinburgh in the new millennium.*"

Leeds/Sheffield

Leeds started a new biennial music festival – FuseLeeds – in March this year, boasting an eclectic mix of jazz, rock, folk and classical music. The Regional Development Agency claims the city is the fastest growing media and new media centre in the UK and that its education software industry is second only to Boston, Massachusetts as a global centre of expertise. Leeds Media provides networking, information and advocacy service for the sector. The city is also home to the nationally recognised West Yorkshire Playhouse and Opera North.

The RDA is developing an e-campus project in Sheffield, with the aim of being one of the most technologically developed business parks in Europe. The RDA's Digital Cluster is a partnership with industry "*dedicated to ensuring that the Yorkshire and Humber region becomes a globally recognized centre of digital industries.*" It comprises "telecommunications, manufacturing, service and creative companies, whose products and services are derived or implemented utilising digital means of communication, delivery or development".

The Cultural Industries Quarter in the heart of Sheffield is home to the largest concentration of creative production in Yorkshire and the Humberside. The Agency behind it was created in 2000 with a remit including championing the creative industries at local, regional, national and international level; encouraging investment in the Quarter and the creative industries; the physical and business development of the CIQ including environmental improvements, helping companies obtain suitable accommodation and improving business services. The Agency also leads on issues such as providing business networking opportunities and developing effective communications, aiming to keep creative organisations up to date with activities within the sector and making the broader business community and general population aware of the value and opportunities in the

creative industries. The CIQ Agency's principal funders include ERDF and Sheffield City Council.

Sheffield is host to the now well established Documentary, Film and Television Festival and the Off the Shelf Festival of Writing and Reading. The city is also home to the largest independent cinema complex outside of London. A number of its venues and museums are operated by independent charitable trusts.

In screen media and technology, the region is host to Kingston Interactive, set up as a telephone network within Hull Council at the beginning of the last century and now providing broadband and interactive TV services; and the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television in Bradford, the 'most visited national museum outside London'.

Liverpool

European Capital of Culture 2008 and already home to a number of festivals including the Biennial, the largest contemporary visual arts event in the UK. Liverpool, a World Heritage city and birthplace of the Beatles, believes the Capital status will help create 14,000 new jobs, attract an extra 1.7 million tourists and encourage £2billion investment. It has created a dedicated Culture Company and brand to develop and promote the project.

FACT Centre – The Foundation for Arts and Creative Technology – is the UK's "*leading organisation for the support and exhibition of film, video and new media projects*." It includes two galleries, three cinemas and a Medialab. The £10m centre opened in 2003.

Manchester

The city boasts a range of festivals including the Irish, North City, Europa, Jazz, Comedy, Fashion and Poetry events. In September it hosted the public art event CowParade and its International Festival has won £500,000 under the Urban Culture Programme. It is also home to a number of impressive facilities including Bridgewater Hall, The Lowry, the MEN Arena, G-MEX and Urbis which 'explores urban culture and the cities of today and tomorrow' with its galleries and exhibitions.

Arts about Manchester is the city's marketing and audience development membership-based organisation and is at home with the city's destination management company, Marketing Manchester.

Manchester is proud of its status as England's "second media city," with its key sub-sectors noted as design, broadcast media, music, new media and the new leisure economy. This extract from the city's Culture Strategy (overleaf) has a certain resonance:

"Manchester has a unique history and over two centuries has been a world leader in many spheres. Its wealth and power derived from its position at the heart of an industrial region and as a communications hub. Manchester was at the centre of the evolution of the modern city and made its mark on the world stage by contributing to scientific discovery, technological innovation and to political and social change. The City's cultural life was integral to this development: the architecture and fabric of the City itself; the museums, art galleries, libraries, orchestras; the publishing and media industry; public parks. Through the 20 century, Manchester was at the forefront of new popular culture: television, football, music.

"Culture is central to promoting the continued renaissance of the City and has a role to play in creating a more inclusive and sustainable community. Culture creates jobs, attracts investment and enriches the lives of people who live and work in and visit the City. Culture brings distinction to the image and profile of the City; it enriches the experience of the city centre and makes each community unique in its history or sense of place. Culture is an essential creative force in the new knowledge based economy and helps to build skills and confidence in people. Cities like Manchester generate the people and ideas which influence and determine the culture, fashions and way of life of the country as a whole. It is the rich mix of academic, commercial and cultural elements which provides the environment for this to happen. The vitality of these cities is critical to the success of the region and the nation."

Newcastle-Gateshead

Whilst this study has noted the close physical and working proximity of UK cities, Newcastle and Gateshead operate most closely in unison. Building Bridges is their joint ten year cultural strategy. Culture[10] is the successor development to the city's capital of culture bid. Described as a new programme of "*cultural ideas, innovation, investment and promotion*", its vision is a region benefiting from "*double the investment in culture, double the number of jobs created through culture and tourism, double the number of people taking part in cultural programmes and informal learning in libraries and museums.*"

Newcastle-Gateshead are host to The Sage – "*home to music and musical discovery*;" the Baltic international centre for contemporary art with five galleries, artists' studios, cinema/lecture space, a media lab, library and archive; and the Angel of the North, Britain's largest sculpture.

Film Offices

North West Vision and Northern Film & Video, the regional screen agencies, have notably more extensive support and information services on locations, crews and facilities than is on offer in Birmingham and the West Midlands. North West Vision, for example, has five film offices in the region providing "*FREE, comprehensive one-stop-shop film liaison service, covering all aspects of filming production.*"

International Creative Cities

London, New York, San Francisco, Boston, Amsterdam, Florence and Milan are just some of the most renowned cities of creativity and cultural tourism. However, Urban looked at three cities more directly comparable to Birmingham which have used creativity and culture at the heart of their urban regeneration strategies.

Barcelona

The Culture Institute was created in 1996 by Barcelona City Council, with the objective of situating culture as one of the principal elements in the development and projection of the city, through the running of municipal facilities and cultural services and by promoting and facilitating the emergence and consolidation of the numerous private-sector cultural platforms and projects in the city. Specific actions include to:

- consolidate culture as a basic strategy in the development of the city of knowledge
- assist Barcelona in becoming a centre for the production of cultural content
- support popular and traditional culture, and the activities of Barcelona's cultural associations
- complete and remodel the city's network of heritage facilities and improve the effectiveness of these
- promote the educational dimension of culture
- facilitate the incorporation of the cultural sectors into the flows of the digital age
- articulate metropolitan strategies in the field of culture
- implement the libraries plan
- articulate actions to improve cultural provision in the districts and neighbourhoods of the city
- contribute to the preparation and realisation of the Universal Forum of Cultures 2004

The financial investment in culture by Barcelona is impressive. The funding of cultural activities underwent "*a major transformation in the last decade of the 20th century as a result of modernisation and the adoption of new methods of public administration, the increased presence of culture in people's daily lives and the capacity to generate income from cultural projects.*"

- The budget of the Culture Institute increased from €581 million in 1996 to €76 million in 2002.

- Direct income doubled in the five years (1996-2000) and amounted to €12.5 million in 2000.

- Expenditure on culture in 2000 represented 4.2% of the overall budget of the City Council.

Across Architecture and Heritage, Contemporary Art, Films, Festivals, Literature, Libraries and Museums, Music, and Theatre and Dance, Barcelona boasts an impressive array of cultural facilities and activity.

The city's own view of its modern history highlights the importance of its heritage and diversity, hosting the world's biggest event and the importance of harnessing cultural energy.

> "The Barcelona of the 21st century is a city shaped by the '92 Olympics, a city transformed for and by the need to do justice to that great international event, with the effort involved in carrying through this transformation allowing the city to overcome a series of historic disadvantages and make major quantitative and qualitative advances in its services and its physical fabric.
>
> The Barcelona we see around us now, the Barcelona we enjoy today, is a new Barcelona, Mediterranean in keeping with its traditions, with its face to the sea and its arms open to other cultures and peoples, giving and receiving, happy to make and to share its riches.
>
> At the same time the Barcelona of the 21st century, for all its transformations, has not severed its ties with a proud history in which so many generations of cultural diversities have built the firm foundations on which the innovations of modern times have constructed an utterly unique city with a personality that is all its own.
>
> The Barcelona of the 21st century is a European capital of astonishing cultural energy and a passion for progress, a city whose day-to-day life brings together every imaginable facet of the most diverse activities: these are the potential that has fashioned the city's present and give it the impetus to move forward into the future."

Bilbao

Home to the world famous Guggenheim Museum, the city has also developed the Euskalduna Palace Conference Centre and Concert Hall, the Bilbao International Exhibition Centre and extended its Fine Arts Museum.

The city claims to be a model of urban redevelopment. The following paragraph from the city's literature is instructive.

> "For Bilbao, the 1980s were a time of recession and decline. The outlook for the future appeared bleak. The city needed a revitalisation plan to rouse local people from their pessimism, generate new hope and confidence in the region, create focuses of interactivity abroad and sell its emerging international position."

Melbourne, Australia

The city launched its blueprint policy – 'a city for the arts' - in 1999, outlining its commitment to arts and cultural development. Maintaining expression of the city's indigenous culture and celebrating its multicultural community lie at the heart of the policy, as do commitments to public art, heritage, community development and community festivals. Its 'Per Cent for Art Policy' dedicates one per cent of the City's capital works commitments to the commissioning of new public artworks, integrated at the earliest stages in public construction projects. The following extract highlights its vision.

> *"The City of Melbourne believes in the importance of culture in ensuring the vitality and prosperity of city life. Not only does the strength of a city's cultural environment provide opportunities for its residents and visitors to reflect, explore, learn and play; culture plays an important role in the economic vitality of the city.*
>
> *"There are many dimensions to culture and cultural development and the arts are at its core and fundamental to its full and free expression. The arts may be entertaining and commercially successful, but can also explore, reflect, critique and sometimes challenge society. A vibrant, and independent arts sector, stimulating imagination and critical thinking about who we are, where we've been and where we are headed is an essential ingredient in the Council's vision for the future. The Council must develop its cultural role and promote its achievements in order to secure its national and international reputation as a city of innovation, cultural diversity and artistic excellence.*
>
> *"Culture is essentially about a way of life. It is a celebration of what a community is, where it has come from and where it is going - its identity and memory. It is also about how the City and its community do things and what they value. Melbourne life is greatly enriched by the contributions of people from diverse cultures and nationalities, starting with its indigenous people, and Council celebrates the city's multicultural society in Melbourne and throughout Australia. Fostering a diverse local culture based on these building blocks is important."*

7. Interviews

We are grateful to all those who agreed to be interviewed for this project. All members of the Creative Birmingham Partnership Board granted interviews lasting around one hour. Only the CBPB member from Advantage West Midlands was unable to participate in this process after a number of attempts to schedule the appointment. Whilst this was disappointing, an AWM colleague with responsibility for one of the clusters in the creative and cultural sector took part and made an important contribution.

Interviews were also conducted with other key individuals with leadership roles in the sector. A full list of interviewees can be found in Appendix II (i).

This section of the report does not present specific write-ups of each interview. Instead, we aim to capture the facts and opinions from these sessions on the key issues, hot topics and overriding themes. Interviewees were all open in wide-ranging discussion and Urban wishes to respect the confidence in which comments were made. Therefore, not all quotes and reactions are directly attributed here.

Themes

Developing the Creative and Cultural Industries

The West Midlands region has a "phenomenal" cultural offering, one contributor suggested. There is significant investment in culture in Birmingham and the West Midlands commented one cultural agency, with another noting the "breadth and depth" as being considerable.

There is wide agreement on the value of developing the creative and cultural industries among those interviewed. Its economic growth potential – delivering new businesses, more and better jobs, increased wealth and prosperity – is a rationale all agencies rally round. The links to other clusters (notably tourism and leisure, technology and business and professional) and benefits to the supply chain are often quoted, demonstrating the wider economic impact of the creative sector. The data to support such a view is increasingly available with consultations including DCMS's 'Culture at the Heart of Regeneration' pointing to case studies such as Brindleyplace/Ikon Gallery and the Jewellery Quarter.

Beyond the economic, creativity is an important agent in developing strong communities, in new approaches to learning, in health and social care and harnessing the potential of diverse cultures and populations. The creative and cultural sector is also of greater significance than simply its size due to the image benefits, visitor attractions and associated economic impacts.

That such agreement on the role and importance of the sector is so overwhelming among those we spoke to in this research is perhaps not surprising. However, it does lead to questions about the lack of success in making such a case to important target audiences and through the media.

Commerce v Art

We asked all those interviewed to comment on whether the broad spectrum of creative-based businesses and cultural activities and organisations should really be

treated as one coherent sector. Without variation, the answer was an emphatic yes. However, differences of approach were highlighted. Different disciplines could often be characterised by being a lifestyle choice or a business, some rooted in their contribution to social well being and community richness, others driven by the profit motive. However, everyone recognised the importance of developing an even greater pool of creatively-oriented individuals in the city with the potential of multidisciplinary working and creatives moving between commerce and culture.

Supply v Demand

Birmingham has invested in capacity building. It has supported the infrastructure, backed learning, skills development, business support services and assisted through start-up, feasibility and incubation funding. Cultural provision is, relatively at least, well resourced. Birmingham's ambition to be seen as a 'creative city' is well established. The issue highlighted by a number, though, is should we be switching focus from capacity building to developing demand?

Creative and cultural activity and services needs to deliver to a market. Awareness, expectation and excitement need to exist. Birmingham has to take advantage of demographic trends, notably through graduate retention and harnessing its rich cultural make up even further. We need to encourage more people to come to Birmingham, building their businesses in Eastside for example, to participate in both creating and acquiring in the sector.

Industry and Learning

There are closer relationships between industry and the education and training sector as a result of partnerships in the last few years. However, there remains work to be done in aligning the available provision of learning and skills development with the current and future needs of the creative and cultural industries.

Long Term Strategy or Short Term Headlines?

The CBPB was unanimous in believing a greater profile for Birmingham's creative and cultural sector was the single most important challenge it faces, which in turn led to this Project Brief. As the research progressed, it was clear "profile" – what it is, what it delivers and how to gain it – means different things to different people.

More often than not, many people in the creative sector – both agency representatives and practitioners – want to see their work reflected in the news media more often, receive more recognition and generally attract greater exposure. The short term answer is to invest more in dedicated Marketing and PR resource (eg. press officers), perhaps through a joint agency initiative.

However, as the professional marketers involved in this study pointed out, such a short term solution will not reap the long term benefits. 'Creative Birmingham' is only starting the marketing process with this study. Much more work must follow. What is Creative Birmingham's USP (unique selling proposition), what is our market positioning; what are the messages we wish to portray? On such questions, we are some distance from answers on which consensus can emerge. As one highly respected marketer put it, "Birmingham needs to stop shouting and start communicating."

The priority and resources given to marketing by Birmingham's creative and cultural agencies and organisations is minimal. Few organisations, said a number of participants, have effective marketing strategies or resource levels. Even beyond the creative sector, one source commented on the lack of quality and depth among PR and marketing professionals in Birmingham. As one agency contributor put it, there is a public sector ethos "not to shout" even about success, but to quietly get on with the job. Both at 'big picture' level across the sector and on the ground, radical action is required to place marketing more prominently on the agenda.

Marketing is the process which identifies markets and creates demand. Applied properly, it will highlight and mark out the products and instruments to help build the sector. The Newcastle Building Society's artists' mortgage and the same city's Talent Tourism in London initiative were two such examples quoted of how professional marketing was playing an important part in the sector's development in the North East.

Joining up "content and communications" was a particularly good description used by one contributor. To date, PR is largely an after thought rather than marketing and communications being integral within creative organisations and agencies.

The Holy Grail

We asked everyone involved in this study to tell us their USP for 'Creative Birmingham'. That there were so many answers was, in itself, instructive.

"For too long Birmingham has been trying to say everything. We need to get the message right first." What is it, asked this same respondent, which is distinctive and unique about the city's creative offer? "Other cities know what their messages are." We need to define the Birmingham offer, said another contributor. "Birmingham needs to articulate how it wants to be portrayed" said a further source.

Listing possible USPs did not lead to an elimination process with participants, but usually a call for other disciplines to be considered! However, keywords which recurred most included:

- Diversity
- New Media/Digital Media
- Interactive software/e-learning/gaming
- Music

Other disciplines which participants thought worthy of celebration included:

- jewellery
- design
- photography
- crafts
- dance
- participation and involvement

Language

Several contributors mentioned a language gap between institutional representatives and creative practitioners. Creatives like people who talk their own language. In turn, it was suggested, this led to both misunderstandings about the needs of the creative sector and less effective marketing and communication strategies. The answer, it would appear, is for more creative practitioners to be involved in the strategies, structures and delivery of agency services, the development of more creative champions and better resourced marketing effort.

As one contributor put it, we must stop using the '2nd City' term when describing the city. The report author could not agree more!

Developing a 'Creative Birmingham' brand

The new leadership at Marketing Birmingham clearly sees the benefits of using the creative industries as a key platform for marketing and promoting the city. It also recognises the breadth and quality of the cultural offer which can be exploited for positive advantage. The experience of the new Chief Executive in Newcastle-Gateshead, in particular, is testimony to the appreciation of the role and contribution the creative sector can make in communicating the Birmingham offer.

Marketing Birmingham will be retaining the 'b' branding and there is therefore potential to develop a 'Creative Birmingham' aspect to the city branding palette.

However, as marketers who contributed to the research highlighted, at present it is not the badge which is important, but the values and messages of Creative Birmingham which need defining.

'Creative Birmingham' is not ready to have its badge designed and made just yet. This report later identifies some of the next steps which might then lead to such a programme.

Diversity

There is wide agreement that cultural diversity and multiculturalism is a key strength of the Birmingham offer. The melting pot of cultures, the city's strong position in terms of social and community cohesion and the exciting products of people from different cultural backgrounds and interests working together in creative processes are all bringing benefit to Birmingham.

Diversity and tolerance are often quoted as being vital to building attractive cities. Cities such as Brighton are taking advantage of its vibrant gay and lesbian community. Brixton (London) and New York are used as examples by many for diverse cities, although these urban centres do not necessarily use the term themselves to promote their values.

However, there are different perspectives on how unique is Birmingham's claim to being the UK's most diverse city. Meanwhile, people mean different things by diversity – for some it's the breadth and depth of the offer; for others it's in relation to cultural diversity and for others again there is a broader definition in terms of different backgrounds, communities, interests, lifestyles and points of difference to traditional social norms.

There is some consensus that a new language for diversity is needed. The term is becoming tired and indistinctive. We need to express better the different interpretations of diversity. Whilst diversity was used a key pillar in the capital of culture bid, there is some agreement that we have not fully articulated the positive products and tangible rewards of diversity.

Events and Festivals

Many surveyed value the role that major events and festivals play in marketing creative and vibrant cities. The most successful, said one contributor, are those "with clear focus and which invest heavily in PR."

Festivals in Brighton and Cheltenham, said one contributor, just give a good excuse to visit a nice place. All those involved in this study have anecdotes about how impressions of the city alter dramatically when they bring visitors into Birmingham.

However, Birmingham has few festivals which achieve impact on any significant scale. Fierce – 'the international performance festival that bites' is held up by a number of participants as one with real growth potential. ArtsFest now needs a wider and bolder creative brief, it is said, whilst the Urban Culture Programme backed series of events in 2005/06 provides new opportunities to showcase quality and attract new visitors.

Music

Many participants pointed to the importance of music in marketing successful creative cities. Places like Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow have all benefited with sounds and places synonymous with the city.

A number of people pointed to the absence of a good mid-sized music venue in the city. It means bands and artists emerging in the city are not then able to grow their audiences and be enjoyed by them in the city. At the same time, it means parts of the cultural offer are missing with Birmingham people effectively cut off from seeing certain groups without travelling.

Birmingham is not seen as 'hip' or 'cool' or 'trendy, ' with many respondents highlighting the role that music plays in building such attractive imagery.

The very diversity of Birmingham music – and the 'fusion' of new music it creates – means, in one contributor's view, there is no longer a distinctive sound or "mind picture" of music emanating from the city. The cities referred to earlier have distinctive sound styles and genres. That was once the case with Birmingham – for example in rock and metal - but the richness of genres such as R & B, Hip Hop and Bhangra mean no particular label is attached in the minds eye to Birmingham.

A number of agencies are supporting the development of the Birmingham Music Network, the success of which and other projects such as Musik Links could be crucial to re-establishing music as a key identifier in the city's creative offer.

Graduate Retention and Youth Marketing

Making Birmingham a place which students and young people want to stay in remains a big issue for many. As a number of people highlighted (and a number of written works have explored, not least Richard Florida's 'The Rise of the Creative

Class') it is creative cities in modern economies which are attracting young people to the regenerated urban centres with their more demanding and complex tastes and access to transport and technological communications.

Birmingham on Screen

Birmingham's TV industry has seen major changes at both principal broadcasters, whilst the growth of the independent sector is not as vibrant or marked as some other UK cities. However, it remains a crucial part of the creative economy with significant rewards beyond the economic by bringing Birmingham to the screen. A number of respondents identified the BBC as being a critical target, with charter review in process and an announcement imminent about re-location of personnel, departments and channels. There is a strong feeling the city and region have not approached the BBC with a co-ordinated and compelling offer to build further on the Corporation's Mailbox and Drama Village developments at such a sensitive time.

As mentioned earlier, new media, digital imaging, interactive leisure and educational software are cited by many as being valuable growth areas for Birmingham. As the Chairman of Screen West Midlands commented, it is content, not technology, which is the key.

As one contributor suggested, with so many digital channels being developed and launched every week, Birmingham should be attracting new digital TV and broadband channels and services. The author is aware of at least two such developments in Birmingham and these should be strongly encouraged. Meanwhile, Ofcom – the broadcasting and telecommunications regulator – is consulting on plans for developing a new Public Service Publisher as part of its Public Service Television Broadcasting Review. Again, it is an opportunity Birmingham would be well placed to capitalise upon.

During this study, we looked at the issue of a city film office. A fully co-ordinated effort is not in place across Screen West Midlands, Birmingham City Council and other agencies as is the case with other cities and regions, notably in the North West. A number of those involved in this study see an integrated 'film friendly' strategy being crucial to making real progress in attracting film and television production to the city.

Connectivity

The quarters-based approach – Eastside, Jewellery Quarter and City Centre – has wide support. Clustering is seen to have worked well in practice, notably at the Custard Factory and in the Jewellery Quarter. However, there are a number of concerns.

The development of Eastside is still at a relatively early stage. The decision over the Central Library is currently under review by the Council and this could have a big effect on the development of the quarter, not least in terms of footfall. Other developments such as the proposed Needle and the Media Village are also in developmental phases. Many participants agreed that the development and presence of iconic buildings and landmarks is important to Eastside's success. There is, perhaps surprisingly, little detail to the vision of Eastside as a creative-based quarter. However, the potential and willingness certainly exists and work in progress – including the appointment of an arts ambassador – will begin to flesh

out the creative vision. A number of contributors also pointed to the need to develop more incentives – financial and otherwise – to attract existing and new creative enterprises to Eastside. The vision, capacity for development and – as one participant describes it – the economies of proximity are all real advantages, but more will be required to realise the ambitions on any major scale.

The Jewellery Quarter is 'off on a limb', and for some in more ways than geographically. Routes and corridors into the city centre and to other strategic points are not clear and obvious. The Quarter is characterised by micro and small businesses, many without significant ambitions for growth and not using modern business management methods. The area, to quote one contributor, is investment ready (a good marketing term meaning there are lots of dilapidated buildings) and with many businesses in need of re-engineering. Its profile and access is - for an area of such heritage and intrinsic attractiveness – surprisingly weak. The Council has positive ambitions for the quarter, wanting to develop fashion, art and design together with bars, eateries and venues in addition to increasing the number of designer-makers in the jewellery craft.

Connections between the quarters and around the city centre environment deserve attention, but there are not easy, quick or inexpensive solutions. The A38 in particular provides a concrete collar blocking open and attractive access to the Mailbox development, now home to the BBC, and through to Brindleyplace.

Whilst not designated quarters, other areas are important in promoting Birmingham as a creative city. Moseley – home to so many artists – is one of the most obvious and already has recognition as a living creative neighbourhood well beyond the city boundaries. The Council has already supported a feasibility study into developing Moseley as a Creative Village and further work would be beneficial.

Inevitably, a number of respondents made reference to London. For some, that the capital is so close is a disadvantage, although many believe more should be done to exploit Birmingham's proximity to a global cultural centre. However, as one source put it, we should "stop worrying about London" and recognise that Birmingham is an international city, often receiving more recognition and credit in European terms than in the city itself or the nation at large.

Many of the UK's leading locations in the creative and cultural sectors are port cities, a number of people highlighted. As well as water, others also pointed to the role of music, football and popular TV in these cities helping to put them on the 'Cool Britannia' map. However, Birmingham's transport connections – road, rail and air – are among the best in Europe; its canalside developments are award winners and in areas such as TV and music it enjoys both heritage and potential.

People and Heritage

The capacity of Birmingham's people to celebrate success and demonstrate pride and confidence received wide comment. "Parochial" was how some described the culture of some sections of the population; "lacking self esteem" said one. "Civic pride is too institutional" said another, with Birmingham suffering a lack of 'cool.' However, as many also recognised this is perhaps largely due to the lack of communication and engagement with Birmingham's citizens in relation to creative and cultural activity and plans. The inability of the Capital of Culture bid to engage with the people it was representing, and its impact on the final selection, is well documented. A new vision for Marketing Birmingham should help to create the

platform from which to improve on the involvement and awareness of Birmingham's citizens.

As the home of the industrial revolution and the city of 1,000 trades, Birmingham's past presents threats and opportunities. For many, the industrial heritage and declining manufacturing base takes too much focus. Perhaps the industrial nature of the area and the work ethic it created means 'brummies' are born into a culture of manual skilled labour and self-deprecating wit.

The Council, Business Link and AWM all pointed to current research into the need to enable engineering and manufacturing sectors take advantage of more creative skills and values as technology and communication becomes ever more important to modern businesses and the economy.

Birmingham has been built on innovation; a range of trades; exporting knowledge and products all at the hub of national, European and global crossroads. There is, all respondents agreed, huge potential to benefit from a natural transition from this heritage if we can find a new language and grammar to reflect how old values are taking a new form in a modern city.

We are "holding onto the past too much" said one source. Arguably AWM's new regional marketing strategy also relies too heavily on past achievements rather than relating the benefits of heritage to the present and future. However, with a creative and well resourced approach to marketing the creative sector, it is possible to connect Birmingham's heritage to its post-industrial vision.

Developing a creative-based quarter in the shadows of the home of the industrial revolution and Birmingham's newest and most famous landmark (Selfridges), the symbols for Eastside are good if the ambition remains bold.

Creative Champions

All respondents noted that Birmingham has few recognised leaders, ambassadors or champions for the creative and cultural sector. This is, rightly in the view of this report's author, a major issue and means Birmingham is losing opportunities for visibility, exposure and presence. We do not have the ear of enough political leaders and policy makers in the capital whilst the city is not quoted often enough on major platforms. Lobbying and advocacy for Creative Birmingham is minimal.

That Birmingham has things to say or have said about it is not in question. Neither is there a doubt over the existence of high quality cultural activity or visionary artistic leaders, but too often the confidence, encouragement or structure for assuming a championing mantle is not in place. Some do not want the profile of being a champion or ambassador. Collectively, Creative Birmingham must raise its game to identify and enable more people actively engaged in the sector to help lead its development.

Partnerships

There is wide agreement that the creative sector is now on the map as a result of the Creative City initiative and other partnerships. There are closer working partnerships, relationships and common effort across the key agencies including the Creative Development Team at Birmingham City Council and the cluster based teams at the Learning and Skills Council and Business Link/Chamber of Commerce.

However, because of different funding bases, targets and outputs and the missions of each organisation (economic development, cultural, skills development or business support) approaches and pictures of success will always look and vary to some degree.

Business Link at the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce and Industry has worked with nearly 300 companies in the creative sector and now takes the primary role for responding to business support enquiries from creative entrepreneurs on behalf of all partner agencies. It has built up a bank of business advisors which appreciate the particular risks and methods present in creative businesses.

As one participant put it, there are a confusing "plethora of agencies." Birmingham often considers itself as a place where partnerships flourish, but as some described it the city is also a place where many people gather for lots of meetings.... with few tangible results to show for the time invested. "Dysfunctional" was how another described some of the partnerships, with loops and silos the result.

Structuring for Success

At present, development and promotion of the creative and cultural industries is shared across a number of agencies. Moreover, at both Birmingham City Council and Advantage West Midlands, the sector is represented and managed in different divisions and departments. We did not find a consensus on how big a problem this is and, if it is, how to solve it. However, there is certainly an appetite for looking at new approaches – new agencies (although not necessarily additional), more co-ordinated partnerships and shared resources. Looking at the City Council, agreement exists that there is probably a better way to structure the approach to the creative and cultural sector at political leadership, management and administrative levels.

There is not an appetite for <u>additional</u> agencies. As a contributor suggested, one model could be series of 'task and finish' time-limited organisations, with tightly focussed objectives and drawing seconded staff at relatively senior levels to deliver key projects, including marketing. Other RDAs, it was pointed out (notably the North West Development Agency and One North East) allow creative and cultural agencies to work at arms length in a more supportive and less hands on approach.

There is a desire to see more joined up working. "We need machinery outside of the city council to bring together stakeholders" said one source; "more collaboration, less duplication" was the cry of another.

In the Firing Line

Many, if not all participants, used the opportunity of this review to comment on the need for two key agencies to play a greater role as investors and executing marketing of the creative sector. This report provides the author with an opportunity to redirect some of those observations.

Marketing Birmingham now has new leadership in place with a new vision and strategy being developed. There is legitimate criticism of the agency in its previous guise and its narrow focus on tourism. However, its funding base is tightly drawn and prescriptive in the delivery and outputs required. As referred to earlier, the new team will take a different view and approach with Birmingham's creative offer well placed to take advantage. However, those leading the creative sector must do

their own marketing groundwork first and then collaborate with Marketing Birmingham to identify the financial and other resources needed to deliver a marketing strategy for Creative Birmingham.

References have already been made to the Regional Development Agency for the West Midlands. "Doesn't engage," "too rigid," "doesn't recognise the importance of the creative and cultural sector" were typical comments. That AWM was not able to take part in this research at director level was disappointing, but the author hopes it does not reflect the agency's approach to Creative Birmingham.

As one contributor highlighted, AWM's objectives are around jobs and wealth creation. However, its focus has been disproportionately taken by the automotive and manufacturing sectors where the issues are most evident and from where much of the agency's collective experience is drawn. Other RDAs have not had such single focus, with many participants pointing to the positive stance taken by the North West and North East agencies.

However, many respondents also agreed that Birmingham's creative sector has not articulated and promoted a clear and compelling, economically driven case for AWM taking a greater role in developing the region's creative and cultural industries. There is capacity within the agency to hear and react to such a case. Progress has been made at AWM in the three clusters which cover the creative disciplines, with music, screen and new media having moved up the agenda in recent months.

Birmingham needs to make the case. It needs to engage AWM's leaders to achieve a higher level understanding of the opportunities which the sector provides. We need to position and direct our creative champions toward key AWM representatives. Events and profile will attract attention and possibly support from AWM. With the agency's new regional marketing strategy in mind, creativity, innovation and international profile are the very features which the cultural sector can provide.

8. Discussion Groups

<u>Key Agencies Group</u>

At a meeting of the Key Agencies Group involving partners in the City Council led Creative City initiative, we took the opportunity to update them on the research in progress and co-ordinate a discussion on three key issues.

The Vision

Describe Birmingham, the Creative City, in 2008. What will visitors and those looking at and into Birmingham say about the city?

Future Funding

Dream that European, National or Regional Funding is (almost) limitless with surprisingly few parameters and criteria. Where would we invest the money?

Putting Vision and Finance into Practice

If a new agency was to be created, what should it be?

**One stop shop/integrated support and information services
Commissioning and Execution (eg. events and festivals)
Marketing
Internal (developing infrastructure, practitioners, companies and venues) or External (marketing/promotion; inward investment)
Stand alone v Co-ordination v Joint Venture
'Task & Finish' or Standing**

Key points from the discussion included:

- Birmingham requires a "big thing", something iconic and of scale – beyond the retail offer and commerce - that would demonstrate it 'means business'.

- There was common agreement Birmingham needs a dedicated film/tv location service. To deliver such an outcome, Creative Birmingham will need to identify a funding stream and how such a partnership – particularly between the Council, its arm length agencies (eg. Marketing Birmingham and Locate in Birmingham) and Screen West Midlands - might work. Visual art, museum and gallery services (including a photography gallery) deserve further investment and promotion.

- The intangibles of marketing 'Creative Birmingham' were the subject of some debate. Why is Birmingham not perceived as cool, have the buzz or

the 'street cred' of comparable cities, even though the reality of Creative Birmingham deserves such appeal?

- Does the answer lie in ensuring our marketing is less official or institutional in style and tone? Our marketing and promotion should be creative led. Glasgow, it was said, has a model which is publicly funded, but creative led.

- We need to create the demand and desire for management and professional skills development, as well as technical, now that the learning sector has put courses in place. The agencies responsible for Creative Birmingham need to increase engagement with creatives.

- The issue of mid-sized, quality music venues and other cities success at 'claiming' their own music was highlighted in this forum. Birmingham also needs to build on current projects with a 'Creative Lab' for nurturing talent, developing ideas and skills.

- Creative Birmingham needs to make the case for supporting and developing the creative and cultural industries to AWM. We need to develop Creative Champions and improve advocacy and lobbying for the sector. We need to articulate the offer and messages of Creative Birmingham.

- Lack of focus, ambition and priority setting are the sector's principal challenges – not finance.

- Information and communication on the cultural scene is poor, with a fragmented magazine market. A gateway or access point (should not be termed a 'one stop shop') is needed, perhaps building on the route map being developed at Birmingham Interaction.

- The next step for Creative Birmingham is to develop a totally integrated support service for creatives thinking of coming to Birmingham. The agencies need to be more joined up, offering a "holistic", "seamless" and "coherent experience."

- There was an appetite to build on the KAG, to help fill the gaps. The focus should be on the external offer and shaping hearts and minds. Such a body should be strategic – perhaps a 'Creative Hub.'

Marketing

We gathered a group of marketers and 'marketing savvy' professionals from Birmingham's creative community. We endeavoured to conduct the session with a creative, engaging and fun approach. It focussed on three key issues in this study.

- The Holy Grail (USP)
- Shared Vision and Joint Working
- Investment Priorities

To explore these, we painted two imaginary scenarios and asked for collective responses:

> Damien Hirst, Sam Mendes and Microsoft/Orange are considering Birmingham as the place to launch a unique creative celebration, combining visual and performance art with new media and digital installation.
>
> The BBC is likely to take a special media rights package. It's set to be the UK's biggest artistic and media event of 2007. Birmingham is being considered strongly, but Glasgow, Manchester and Bristol are also in the frame.
>
> What are the three arguments which will convince these unusual partners that Birmingham should be their host...?

Key approaches, considerations and selling points identified by the group included:

- Innovative use of space
- Urban landscape; rural scenery close by
- Unusual backdrops (eg. Spaghetti Junction painted orange!)
    - Not Victoria Square or Centenary Square
- Multiple venues
- Connectivity, transport and accessibility
- Birmingham and the region offer the UK's largest regional market in a 1.5 hour drive/rail time, with young and diverse audiences.

- Engagement, linkage and communication
- City has international networks and international perspective
- Opportunity to make Birmingham centre of the world – again
- Engage with local people
- Local media partners (BBC and all commercial stations)
- Need to look at segmenting audiences
- Target national and exploit local media
- Reviews – attracting local people: needs new innovative stuff that is topical

- Quality, breadth and diversity of offer
- Sheer number of creative industries
- Centre of innovation
- Promote strong cultural champions
- Look at national context (outside view of Birmingham)
- Invest in marketing of Birmingham
- Need to recognise what we are good at.... and where we're average or less
    - Capturing quality – who is the judge?
- Need to build and develop ArtsFest with more innovative content

- If we win, do not deliver it through the Council!

In summary, the group concluded that Creative Birmingham's three arguments would be:

- Spaces and Market
- Engagement
- Quality & Innovation

> The Guardian, Creative Review and the Voice are combining to run a competition to find which is the most diverse, tolerant and creative city in the UK. There's £2 million of free advertising space across the partner titles during the course of a year on offer to the winning city. Entry is via a "top ten things you might not know" list.
>
> The most convincing and creative wins.
>
> What are Birmingham's ten points and what are the priorities for the media 'expenditure'?

The Group's top ten was:

1. Heritage and history
2. Geography; size and scope; the city centre
3. World class venues and companies (The Rep, BRB, CBSO/Symphony Hall, NEC etc.)
4. Demography (more students than Manchester?)
5. Diverse cultural mix, tolerant, understanding and engaging resulting in creative 'fusion' (largest Sikh temple, Bollywood, Bhangra, Bally Sagoo etc.)
6. 'Can do' attitude; entrepreneurial; confident , grounded and real community spirit
7. Creative/cultural infrastructure and media channels; festivals & events
8. Affordable
9. Assets and jewels (eg. writers, Jewellery Quarter, Custard Factory, micro businesses)
10. People and Cultural Champions (should focus on innovative imagery of Birmingham's people, rather than relying on words)

The group also wanted to highlight and see further work on two areas:

Birmingham's quality

> ➢ Exports quality (people outside the city are often more aware of our asset and jewels that people and institutions inside)
> ➢ Imports experience (Birmingham attracts creatives from all over the UK and the world...and they stay)
> ➢ Trophy cabinet (need to win and celebrate more prestigious awards)

> ➢ Investment (need to fund development and showcasing of sector)
> ➢ Focus (need to target more; spread of effort is too thin)
> ➢ Marketing talent (need to see marketing – investment and professionals – as a long term priority)
> ➢ Bravery and risk (creative cities are the ones who accept and overcome challenges, not play safe)

Practitioners

We drew together participants from different sub-sectors of the creative and cultural industries. A structured discussion took place on six key issues.

• Birmingham's distinct offer
• Public Support, Assistance & Information
• 'One Creative'
• Clusters and Quarters
• Competitor Cities/External Perceptions
• Marketing & PR – Priority and Expenditure

The first debate centred on 'the holy grail' – Creative Birmingham's USP. Suggestions made earlier in the research phase were put to the group. Participants were reminded of the definition of 'unique' (ie. '*being the only one of its kind*').

Sub-sectors	*Cross-sectoral*
• Digital	• Diversity
• Jewellery	• Participatory
• Crafts	
• Photography	
• Design	
• Music	
• Dance	

There was some consensus that the 'diversity' term was overused and misrepresented. Too often it was meant in terms of ethnic or racial diversity, but it should be used to reflect the breadth of cultural offerings and communities. The Council, it was said, used the term to refer to the Asian population and art forms whilst more should be done to cover other cultural forms originating from other ethnic groups, such as reggae.

As highlighted elsewhere in the research, problems could be found in three Ps – lack of *pride*, *parochialism* and *prejudice*. One participant used another P to describe some attitudes he had met on arrival in the city – *philistine*. Another contributor suggested the working class background and mentality of the city held it back from celebrating quality and success. Birmingham does not make heroes of its people; it does not create recognisable champions and does not encourage

pride. Again, the issue of an independent magazine covering creative and cultural activity was raised, with the need for a strong, quality, single title to emerge.

Writing, literature and film should, it was suggested, be added to the list of potential USPs. Birmingham's literature and writers are currently enjoying success, but the city is not claiming or achieving credit for such triumphs.

It was agreed digital media was strong and has further potential in the city. Birmingham's distinctiveness, it was said, could be found in the fact it is an exporter of cultures and creative products. However, quality and success are more likely to find reward outside the city.

Perhaps the city's USP, said one, lay in the sheer scale of the potential market and availability of opportunity. The size enables market segments or niches to be developed.

We then moved to the issue of support and advice available, focussing on the quality of the agencies and partnerships.

- Where do you find support?
- Creative Cities beneficiaries - experience?
- Is advice of good quality/does it understand your business?
- Is financial assistance/skills development available at the right level?
- What improvements would you like to see?
    - Portals & Gateways?
    - Single Brand?
    - …or just more money!?

A lack of vision, ambition and risk-taking were representative comments from this discussion on the performance and approach of the public agencies leading Birmingham's creative sector. A 21st century library was essential to the success of Eastside, thought one.

Is Birmingham still suffering a hangover from its industrial, manufacturing and automotive dominated history wondered some of the group. Vision and ambition seemed to exist 20 years ago, but have been watered down in the intervening period.

Good intentions were not questioned. Improved communication skills, better co-ordination and a more forward-looking approach are required.

The network of creatives, companies and the artistic forms backed by the agencies are too limited. "The same people always benefit from the money" was the cry of one participant; for another, too many young people "do not fall into the compartments in the agencies." The agencies need to be more responsive to the market, trends and new ideas. Too often agencies, such as AWM, are only offering support on its own terms. UB40 has enjoyed success, it was commented, *despite* Birmingham.

Increasing demands of accountability are inhibiting risk taking. "We have replaced activity with the process of activity," "the process takes over" and there is "too much bureaucracy in the agencies" were just some of the comments.

One person commented that she wanted to see some "serious PR," but she did not want to be sent on a course, preferring to concentrate on exploiting her creative skills. More resources are required, suggested another, to promote locations in Birmingham.

The group signed up to the idea of the creative and cultural industries being part of one sector. We therefore focussed on the strategy around clusters and quarters.

> • Jewellery Quarter, Eastside and City Centre
>   – Experiences
>   – Vision
>   – Incentives
>   – Infrastructure

Successful quarters are based on distinct and reflective identities. Eastside must attract people – it needs buildings and constant activity. The future of the Library and Millennium Point's situation attracted the attention of the group.

Connectivity between quarters and key locations is the cause of some concern to participants – for example across Eastside, Digbeth (Custard Factory), Jewellery Quarters and the Midlands Arts Centre. "The corridors have to be opened – Birmingham people do not know where the jewellery quarter is" said one contributor.

More support is needed by creative businesses in the Custard Factory and the Jewellery Quarter which are growing beyond the start up and micro business level.

Whilst the quarters-based strategy remains well supported, there is a desire to see surprises and enigmas around the city. You do not experience a city if you are confined to zones. "I'd like to see more jumbling up of the city" commented one participant. Birmingham too often presents a corporate image, aimed at middle managers. To be seen and grow as a creative city, we need to target young people.

Finally, we looked at internal and external perceptions of Birmingham from a creative and cultural perspective and impressions of other creative cities. Can Birmingham really claim to be a world class city?

> • Before & After
>   – Competitors, Collaborators, Customers
>   – Friends, Employees, Suppliers
> • The UK's most creative city?
>   – What puts them there?
> • Competitive Ad/Disadvantages

We started this section by asking about the participants' perceptions of Birmingham past and present, particularly as most have re-located to the city during their careers and many continue to spend much of their working lives out of the city. Here are some of the comments which are a fair reflection of the discussion.

"A challenging city… if you had incentive, patience and willingness"
"No comparison of the city with how it was in 1970. From a business point of view it has everything for visiting clients. Millennium Point is tragic. But, the city has improved dramatically. The external perception is better than the internal perception."
"Arrived from Florence and thought it was terrible, but the architecture and vista have improved. It needs to be promoted properly."
"Birmingham has vibrancy and energy, but it is a secret only brummies know about."
"Birmingham is focussing on what it is lacking rather than what it has got. There is racial harmony; cultures co-exist and interact."
"I was shocked when I came to Birmingham – a concrete jungle. However, it is now a completely different city. Internal appreciation of quality does not exist here. Bern is a concrete jungle, but the quality of work there is amazing. Lots of people slip down the drain….to London. Appreciation is not here so designers are not here. There is more money available in London. Birmingham does not have the same level of support. We are exporting people and importing design and it should be the other way around."
"It is a remarkably small centre for the size of the city. The proximity of the jewellery quarter to the city would be nothing in London. We need to work on connections."

As one contributor put it, there is "opportunity for niches but Birmingham is not mythological enough. It apologises continually. Performance-led activities have benefited, but screen-based media is less well supported. Film attracts people and makes a city more exciting. The city's culture is not reflected on TV."

We asked each of the respondents to name their top three creative cities in the UK. (Note: some participants had left the session by this point).

UK'S TOP THREE CREATIVE CITIES		
First	Second	Third
Newcastle/Gateshead	Glasgow	Manchester
Manchester/Liverpool	Glasgow/Edinburgh	Newcastle/Gateshead
Newcastle	Edinburgh/Glasgow	Liverpool
Glasgow/Edinburgh	Manchester/Liverpool	Newcastle/Gateshead
Glasgow	Edinburgh	Gateshead
Glasgow	Edinburgh	Gateshead
Glasgow	**Edinburgh**	**Newcastle/Gateshead**

9. Competitive Cities

Introduction

In looking at Birmingham's competitors as the UK's leading regional capital for the creative sector, we used three principal methods of research:

- Desk/Internet Research
- Questions as part of interviews and discussion groups
- Survey of key individuals in leadership positions in competitive cities.

We viewed our main competitive cities as being (in alphabetical order):

Brighton
Bristol
Cardiff
Edinburgh
Glasgow
Leeds
Liverpool
Manchester
Newcastle-Gateshead
Sheffield

Note: London was deliberately excluded from the list. Leeds/Sheffield; Glasgow/Edinburgh; Manchester/Liverpool were often viewed as a single entity in this regard. Newcastle-Gateshead is almost always interpreted as a joint location.

Other Research

The subject of competitive cities was one of the key debates in the Practitioners' Discussion Session. Details can be found in Section 8. A number of the interviews covered the relative merits, strategies and successes of other creative cities (see Section 7). Meanwhile, Section 6 provides an overview of the information gathered on UK and international competitive cities through desk research.

Survey

Five people took part in the telephone-based competitive cities survey. Full summary and analysis of the responses can be found in Appendix III (excel spreadsheet). Whilst this is a relatively small number, we were unlikely to receive a significant response due to its very nature and the time window available. Unfortunately, there was no involvement from the North West or Scottish representatives we approached. Here, we look at some key issues drawn out by the survey.

On a scored basis, the league table for the most creative city is:

Position	City
1	Manchester
2	Glasgow
3=	Birmingham
3=	Edinburgh
5=	Newcastle-Gateshead
5=	Brighton
7	Sheffield

Note: This result could be skewed as a result of two Newcastle-Gateshead representatives taking part, but with no Manchester responses. With a base including Manchester individuals, Newcastle-Gateshead may well have picked up more points as Manchester would not have been able to nominate itself.

Interestingly, no respondent ranked Liverpool – European Capital of Culture 2008 – in their top three.

USP

Looking at the features, sub-sectors and landmarks which other cities see as their flagships may help Creative Birmingham locate its USP on a market map.

City	Defining feature or characteristic	Symbolising discipline	Iconic building or project
Newcastle-Gateshead	Growing, dynamic, diverse	No	Sage Music Centre; Baltic Contemporary Art Gallery
Newcastle-Gateshead	Quality of life	Visual Arts	"not short of buildings…a single [one] is not sufficient"
Brighton	Cosmopolitan, racial harmony, tolerant. Attractive to young people. ICT. 2 universities – hot houses. Multi-faceted city. Brighton Festival.	Not one thing - eclectic	Royal Pavilion
Bristol	Media & creative industries	Media & the visual arts	'At-Bristol' project (Science and Environment Centre)
Sheffield	Growing; priority sector	e-learning	"No…but e-campus under development"

Diversity (in every sense) and iconic buildings/landmarks would seem to be important in developing and defining a creative city from this snapshot survey.

Sector and Clustering

There was wide agreement that all the industries – artistically and commercially based – were indeed part of one sector. Developing the sector with a cluster based approach was well supported.

Access

A single access point or gateway attracted some attention as a strong idea; although not favoured by everyone, it was seen as useful step along with financial

assistance for creatives. Such a development in Birmingham could see the city steal a march.

Partnerships

Effective partnerships – including the active engagement of the RDA - have clearly been important in Newcastle-Gateshead's progress to date. As in other cities, specially-created agencies have had a positive impact. Just as indicated by Birmingham practitioners, the Brighton respondent described his challenges at the hands of political considerations and too much bureaucracy to allow creative people to flourish.

Events/Festivals

Securing or developing major events and festivals is seen as a priority by everyone. Newcastle-Gateshead's approach on events has clearly been a significant success in its own mind.

Branding

Development of a single, consistent brand to work across the city's creative sector does not appear to be a major priority for respondents, but is clearly rising up the agenda. Rather strangely, the two Newcastle-Gateshead respondents seemed to differ on whether they had a single brand at present!

Marketing Resource

Nobody ever believes they have enough money for marketing!

Summary

Whilst this survey is limited, it does identify a number of issues for consideration. More importantly, it also gives some hints as to where Birmingham can gain ground on its rivals if it is brave and ambitious enough.

- The cluster and single creative/cultural sector based approach remains sound
- Diversity (possibly in a new form of presentation) should remain at the heart of Creative Birmingham
- Buildings and landmarks are key catalysts
- We need to build on partnerships – perhaps through new or merged specialist agencies
- We need to put in place a major events and festival strategy
- Creatives need to be fully engaged in the sector's strategic development and delivery process
- A single and well promoted access point or gateway could be a considerable operational and marketing benefit
- Serious, but not necessarily immediate, attention should be given to a dedicated branding strategy
- By investing in marketing, we could gain further perceptual and real competitive advantage

10. Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Introduction

In this final section, we set out the key findings from the study and make a series of recommendations. Among these recommendations, we suggest the establishment of a small number of 'task and finish' groups. These time-limited, job-specific taskforces under the auspices of the Creative Birmingham Partnership Board will provide answers to the questions this research initially set out to explore.

Creative Birmingham needs to invest time and funding in the issues this report describes and the taskforces we strongly recommend. Only with such an approach will the long term solutions be found to the brief this project was commissioned to consider.

Findings

1.   Short Term or Long Term?

The Creative Birmingham Partnership Board must decide if it wants to treat raising the profile of Birmingham's creative and cultural industries with a long term approach and investment strategy, or simply to gain more acknowledgements and headlines in the short term. The real answer to the brief posed in this study is not with a few more press releases or the introduction of a Creative Birmingham pin badge. The solution lies in a professional marketing approach, starting at the beginning with defining the city we want to develop and communicate to our various audiences.

2.   The Holy Grail

The most difficult challenge in undertaking this study has been in identifying Creative Birmingham's unique selling proposition (USP). It became the holy grail of this project, a marketing problem which seemed to expand every time the answer came into reach. In many ways, the easiest route for the report author would have been to hit upon an idea which attracted the most available consensus and thus defined Creative Birmingham's USP. Whilst it is certainly attractive to a marketer, enabling the rest of the marketing strategy then to be developed, we do not believe the consent and support is there for any one concept without further work. The fundamental vision and messages of Creative Birmingham are too important to be decided on such a whim.

Later in this section, we detail the scope for a dedicated taskforce to continue work on this issue and suggest the basis of an answer to this important question.

3.   Diversity and Fusion

Notwithstanding our comments made above, diversity remains - in the author's opinion - at the heart of Birmingham's offer. However, the term has become overused and devalued. It means different things to different people. Too often, it is used as a catchall, politically correct word without real resonance or impact. However, Birmingham can claim to be a city where not only is there tolerance and real integration of cultures and communities, creative alliances transpire and result in new and original creative content. The city can lay reasonable claim to being a birthplace of *fusion*, particularly in music and food.

However, we need a new vocabulary to express what we mean by diversity and we have to articulate the economic – as well as social –benefits of living and working in a city which is truly diverse...in all its meanings.

4.   Not Brand Ready

It was the intention of this study to consider in some detail and lay out a branding model for Creative Birmingham. However, it soon became apparent that the city, its institutions, creative companies and practitioners are not on the verge of such a step. More work is need; perhaps more importantly, a great deal more 'buy in' is required before Creative Birmingham can invoke such a move.

As referred to already in this section, we need to take the next steps in identifying Creative Birmingham's USP. What is distinctive about our city in creative and cultural terms? Where do we see ourselves in the UK and international marketplaces. What are our messages – what do we want to say about ourselves and what do we want others to think about Birmingham. Without these fundamental questions having a settled answer, outlining a branding model would be futile.

We discussed the issue of branding with the new Chief Executive at Marketing Birmingham. There is scope for working with the agency and its 'b' brand. However, the author is in agreement with Marketing Birmingham that Creative Birmingham should first define its offer and prepare the framework for the marketing strategy.

5.   Market Segmentation

As we have said many times in this report, the depth and breadth of creative activity in Birmingham is hugely impressive. However, there is an argument that we position Birmingham as having outstanding practice in every creative and cultural sub-sector and take a blanket approach to promotion. To succeed in raising profile, we need to take a more focussed approach. The Board needs to take a hard look at those areas where we excel most, where we can really say we possess unique or distinctive qualities and where most opportunity for growth and attention exists. From that platform, we then need to target those channels, media and audiences which have an interest in or can affect the growth and development of that discipline and the wider aspirations of Creative Birmingham.

6.   Language and Engagement

A number of participants in the research pointed to the language gap between practitioners and agency officials and their communication materials. One factor in this equation is the separation and lack of engagement in the leadership and direction of Creative Birmingham and its partner institutions. As a result, the language – the grammar and vocabulary – used in promoting Creative Birmingham and its initiatives is at odds with practice on the ground and how creatives express themselves.

The answer lies in more inclusion and engagement, not for its own sake, but to develop a communications style more synonymous with the reality and ambitions of Creative Birmingham.

7.   People, Heroes and Creative Champions

In areas beyond the creative sector in Birmingham, the city has a unique ability to undermine its own successes. Indeed, there are many who believe the external perceptions of Creative Birmingham are actually better than the perceptions we ourselves believe are held outside the city. As we highlight in this report, some contributors suggest this may be due to our style of humour, our grounded attitude (which today might be termed 'keeping it real') and the area's industrial heritage.

There are three strands to improving this position. The first is to engage and increase awareness of creative and cultural activity in Birmingham, to both increase demand for it and generate pride among the city's citizens. In so doing, we will develop use of the most effective marketing instrument – positive word of mouth. Whilst not wishing to cover old ground, for many the single biggest failing of the capital of culture bid was that we did not win the hearts and minds of Birmingham's people. It is time to learn that lesson. Secondly, we need to identify and celebrate our cultural heroes. Too often, they remain unsung in their own city, sometimes receiving greater tributes and acclaim outside the city's boundaries. We should support them, celebrate them and – to use a marketing term – exploit them. Lastly, we need to encourage leading creative practitioners to become the sector's recognised champions, helping to lead the development of Creative Birmingham and acting as spokespeople for it.

8.   Graduate Retention and Youth

As one participant in a discussion session put it, our marketing and inward investment activity is aimed at the middle – middle class, middle managers, middle aged. However, it is young people who are attracted by and then build cities in the new creative economy. Young people who are leading creative content delivery and consumption; who look for rewards outside the framework of a 9-5 salary existence; whose lifestyle and cultural interests have taken on a greater significance than previous generations; who marry and have children later in life; who enjoy greater mobility and communication than ever before; who are marketing savvy and can distinguish true from dishonest messages.

A number of respondents also pointed to the problem of graduate retention. One discussion group member also suggested that the city and region enjoy the greatest number of students in the UK. True or not, the fact remains that it is an area rich in learners.

These two issues are inextricably linked. If Birmingham can harness and retain its young people and attract others, it has a real opportunity to reap the economic and social benefits. However, it will not succeed on such an aim with what some described as 'institutional' or 'corporate' styles of marketing and promotion.

9.   Music & Magazine

Whilst the author is not able to highlight music necessarily as Birmingham's USP with absolute conviction, the potential of this sub-sector and its importance in marketing is beyond doubt.

Birmingham has, without argument, a rich musical heritage. It has given birth – and continues to give birth – to artists and styles which set new levels and create whole

new musical sub-genres. However, many of Birmingham's most recent and current artists have not attracted acclaim or attention for the city. Other locations – Glasgow and Manchester were most often cited – have grown artists of national and even international repute, with the city's brand benefiting in return. Such success, particularly in respect of the two examples given, has acted as fuel to further hits with the record industry targeting such locations to discover and develop additional talent.

There are a number of contributory factors which have possibly led to this situation. Our collective mindset in respect of celebrating success and the institutional approach might well be among them. However, a large number of participants in this study pointed to the lack of mid-sized music venue in the city where developing musical artists can develop their craft and their audience. Between the small gig scene and the arena and stadium settings, there is a vacuum where musicians can not only perform but develop a creative base.

Music, perhaps along with screen media, is the genre which can most develop the image of a city. This is particularly true among younger audiences which, as we have established, need to be targeted more actively by Creative Birmingham. It is music which is, perhaps, most responsible for making a location 'cool,' 'hip' and possess a 'buzz.' As one participant expressed it, there is no 'mind picture' of Birmingham through its music. In part, this may be due to the very diversity of sounds generated by the city. So, whilst a city cannot invent musical talent or ensure its success, it can develop the infrastructure to encourage artists to emerge and improve the marketing framework to help promote them and, in turn, the birthplace of their music.

The lack of a single magazine which represents and reflects Creative Birmingham was singled out on a number of occasions for concern. Publications do exist in the marketplace, but in the opinions of many none have cut through to the same degree as similar titles in other cities. Whilst intervention in the proper business of the market is not suggested here, it is an area which Creative Birmingham might explore to assess if it can remove any barriers which are preventing such a publication to achieve greater impact.

10.   Connectivity

Policies based on clusters and quarters were backed by almost all participants in this study. However, for many the issue is connectivity. Not just between the quarters - Jewellery, Eastside and the city centre - but also important locations such as mac and the new pUBLIC. Overnight and inexpensive solutions are not at hand for such significant challenges. However, Creative Birmingham needs to consider this issue in some detail – what impact does internal geography have on the success of elements of the sector and what can be done, physically and in marketing terms, to address connectivity in the short, medium and long terms.

11.   Iconic Developments

As our work in competitive cities identified, the importance of landmark buildings and structures cannot be underplayed. Even with venues such as Symphony Hall, successful creative cities like Birmingham need to continue to develop their facilities and urban landscapes. Such developments are particularly important to Eastside and projects such as the move of the Central Library and the Needle are

currently under consideration, whilst we have already pointed to the importance of developing a mid-sized music venue.

Iconic developments attract attention, symbolise the offer and ambition of a city and can fill gaps in the cultural infrastructure. To maintain its progress, Creative Birmingham must identify the right projects, be ambitious and invest. The short term benefits may be intangible; the long term advantages can be significant.

## 12.	Quality

At the Marketing Brainstorming session, we touched on an interesting debate around quality. Who decides on what, in creative and cultural terms, is of high quality; what are the thresholds and standards; and what deserves investment and promotion? We did not have time to complete that particular strand of discussion, but the matter deserves attention. If we are to identify the distinctiveness of Creative Birmingham's offer and segment the market in order to target sub-sectors and audiences, what measures do we use to make such judgements? Does Creative Birmingham need a Creative Director?

This is a difficult issue. The public sector institutions cannot, alone, be the arbiters on the taste and quality of provision by the private and not-for-profit sectors. Creative artists and entrepreneurs – our Creative Champions - should be involved in the frameworks for such judgements.

## 13.	Capacity to Demand Focus

As we discussed in relation to the Creative City initiatives, there is a case that we need to focus on generating demand, raising expectations and excitement levels, thus ensuring the capacity built in the sector is sustainable in the long term. As in all industries, organisations will succeed and fail. Fashions and trends will move on. Technology and macro-economics will alter markets. However, enabling growth and encouraging demand are the best methods at this stage of the cycle to absorb the available supply and continue investment in cultural capacity.

## 14.	Marketing Birmingham: Standing Ready

Early in this report, we noted that two key bodies often find themselves in the firing line for not having done more to support and promote Creative Birmingham.

Marketing Birmingham, in the author's view, is not the problem. Neither is it the whole solution to marketing Birmingham's creative and cultural offer. However, it is better placed than ever before to appreciate the value of the sector in achieving its core purpose and to play a role in devising and implementing such a strategy. First, though, Creative Birmingham must define its vision and objectives for the sector. Secondly, and perhaps most fundamentally, it has to identify the resources to fund such plans.

## 15.	Advantage West Midlands: Articulate the Case

The regional development agency has somewhat fragmented approach to the creative and cultural sector. Its focus has been elsewhere, notably on major capital projects and the manufacturing sector. However, there is little evidence of the sector having made a concerted effort, backed by an articulate case assessment, to encourage the agency to adopt a particular strategy and back it with an

investment programme. The benefits of investing in culture are harder to assess in terms of job assists and business supported than some other sectors, but at the same time the social and image advantages are arguably wider. Creative Birmingham needs to prepare such a proposal and seek to engage AWM to a much greater degree in mapping its vision and strategies. It must use its Creative Champions and Heroes wisely in this process, highlighting successes to date and the potential of the creative and cultural industries to market the region.

16.   Invest in Marketing

Marketing should always be an integral discipline, never an after thought or ancillary operation. It also requires real investment, not leftovers from the budget.

The sector's lead agencies and creative organisations can be accused (with few notable exceptions) of not investing in marketing – in strategy, talent and financially – anywhere near seriously enough.

To successfully market Creative Birmingham, a bright strategy or a shiny new badge is not first on the list. A new mindset is needed, where marketing Creative Birmingham receives as much attention (and funding) as skills training and business advice. As one participant put it, we need to join up content and communications. In pursuing the next round of funding opportunities, we must position marketing as a priority.

17.   Creative Led

To take the next steps towards achieving the stated mission of becoming the leading regional capital for the creative industries by 2008, Creative Birmingham must engage the very talents it aims to develop. There is little creative marketing and promotion for Creative Birmingham in evidence. As we heard, much of it is deemed 'institutional' and 'corporate' in nature and style.

Rhonda Wilson, Creative Director at Seeing the Light and winner of the main Creative City award, is a prominent ambassador for the importance of creative and visual imagery in branding a city. She was unable to participate in our discussion sessions, but nevertheless made a useful contribution to the debate elsewhere: "we haven't got a brand that has a language we can own. So, if it's the creative sector that requires marketing, it needs to be done creatively, not by people who don't understand the nature of creativity." This author could not put it better.

18.   City Council Structure

We noted earlier that the approach to the creative and cultural sector did not benefit from AWM's structure. We also found that there is widespread agreement that the culturally and economically driven disciplines do form one coherent sector. So a question arises over the current structure and approach of the city council. On the Creative Birmingham Partnership Board, there are representatives from the Arts and Creative Development teams, as well as Eastside.

This study has not considered this issue in enough detail to make a recommendation for re-organisation. There are many factors to consider before countenancing such a move. However, there are clear advantages to be had from a coherent approach to culture and creativity and a single, powerful voice for Creative Birmingham in cabinet.

19.   Vision, Ambition, Focus and Priorities

Above all, the call we heard most often – particularly in the discussion groups - to the leaders of Creative Birmingham could be summed up in these four words.

To become the UK's leading regional capital for the creative industries by 2008, it must articulate a clear vision; it must demonstrate ambition; it must focus on its strengths and opportunities and should prioritise its resources to achieve this vision.

In summary of our findings, Urban believes significant potential exists to achieve the mission set out in the brief. However, the final answer cannot be found here. Instead, more marketing groundwork is required to make the long term progress required.

Recommendations: 'Task & Finish'

These eight taskforces are proposed to take forward specific strands identified in this report with a view to developing a marketing framework for Creative Birmingham.

For each, we set out its scope and objective, background to the issue, suggested lead bodies and timescale for delivery. To succeed, appropriately qualified members of Creative Birmingham partners (both public and private organisations) will need to be seconded and given a clear brief in terms of the priority of the taskforce's work. The investment of time and energy must be encouraged, not squeezed. Membership should not be constituted just by public agencies and every effort has to be made to involve a wide variety of creatives – not just the 'usual suspects'.

Funding will be required, to varying degrees, to enable the 'task and finish' groups to undertake and complete their work to a satisfactory level. Financial support may be required to enable taskforce participants to do their work away from normal duties, in both public and private sectors. Meanwhile, groups may require funding for commissioning external agencies to complete some areas of work. It is anticipated that these groups could form and have resources allocated in time to commence work in April 2005 at the latest.

Taskforce A: Cultural & Space Audit

Scope/Objective: To map Birmingham's current creative and cultural offering.
Background: A similar exercise took place as part of the Capital of Culture bid process. Such information is also more readily available due to recent initiatives (including BCC's Routemap and Knowledgebank projects) and because of the availability of web-based information. The process will provide an asset base to develop a full cultural strategy and, within it, a marketing strategy.
Lead Institutions: BCC Arts with Arts Council England, West Midlands
Timetable: 4 months

Taskforce B: Connectivity

Scope/Objective: To build a map of creative activities – hot spots – in and around Birmingham; to identify routes and corridors which require improvement in order to increase access to and awareness of cultural provision and creative enterprise locations; and plan short, medium and long term programmes of structural and marketing based enhancements.
Background: The flow of people, ideas, information and finance between the quarters and other creative hotspots is crucial to the success of Creative Birmingham. Many renowned creative cities, national and internationally, are traditional port locations. Creative Birmingham needs to take greater advantage of its central location, connections and heritage.
Lead Institution: BCC Creative Development (R&D) with Eastside, Jewellery Quarter Regeneration Partnership, BCC Arts, Arts Council and AWM
Timetable: 6 months

Taskforce C: Eastside Creative Vision and Strategy

Scope/Objective: To further develop the creative vision and strategy for Eastside, with particular focus on landmark buildings and structures and on incentives to attract creative enterprises.
Background: As Eastside enters its next phase, with its arts ambassador in place and as a decision emerges on the Central Library, the quarter needs a revitalised and detailed strategy to communicate and achieve its creative ambitions.
Lead Institutions: Eastside with BCC Arts, BCC Creative Development, AWM and LSC
Timetable: 4 months

Taskforce D: Creative Portal

Scope/Objective: To examine current internet based information sources and those being planned to determine how such data and online facilities can be maximised and best promoted.
Background: At present, there is no single website or portal which creative artists, entrepreneurs, investors or cultural visitors are directed to for information, advice and support. The www.becreative.info site is being developed, with tentative plans for a launch in early 2005. It is an opportune time to look at the scope of this portal and how it can be expanded and launched for maximum impact and usage.
Lead Institutions: BCC Creative Development (R&D) with Business Link, Marketing Birmingham, Audiences Central and the LSC
Timetable: 3 months

Taskforce E: Film Office

Scope/Objective: To undertake a feasibility study into the funding and running of a Film Office for Creative Birmingham.
Background: Birmingham does not have a dedicated office to promote to and service film and television location, facilities and crew enquiries. A service is provided by Screen West Midlands across the region, but adequate funding levels are not in place for a pro-active strategy region or city-wide. Other cities and regions, notably the North West, have much more accessible offers. Such a service must be placed to cut through bureaucratic, information and financial barriers to the benefit of producers.
Lead Institutions: Screen West Midlands with BCC Creative Development, BCC Arts, AWM and Marketing Birmingham

Timetable: 4 months

Taskforce F: Festivals and Events Strategy

Scope/Objective: To develop a single strategy for attracting major events and festivals to the city over the next 5-10 years; to identify opportunities for creating new events and festivals and to assess the potential for developing a new infrastructure to support (fundraising, administration, marketing) existing and emerging events and festivals.

Background: The Urban Culture Programme in 2005 is a major opportunity to promote Birmingham's cultural offer, whilst a number of study participants suggested ArtsFest needs to move to a new level to continue its success. Birmingham enjoys some of the best facilities in the UK, but it has struggled to punch at or above its weight with its festivals (with notable exceptions). Other cities, notably Newcastle-Gateshead, are already benefiting from a focussed approach to events and festivals.

Lead Institutions: BCC Arts with Audiences Central, ACE WM and Marketing Birmingham

Timetable: 4 months

Taskforce G: Inside Out

Scope/Objective: To build a structure for engaging the people of Birmingham in the city's cultural offer and success; to identify and celebrate the heroes of Creative Birmingham and to encourage the emergence of Creative Champions to lead and represent the sector.

Background: Sometimes, we are unaware of the assets we possess; we do not celebrate and learn from success and often external audiences are more appreciative of our qualities. If we start from the inside, we will be more successful when we look out.

Lead Institutions: ACE WM, with Business Link, BCC Arts, BCC Creative Development (R&D) and Audiences Central

Timetable: 3 months

Taskforce H: Branding and USP

Scope/Objective: To progress work on identifying Creative Birmingham's distinctive features and messages and then to develop a brand-led approach to marketing the sector.

Background: The section below (The Holy Grail) provides a summary of findings which may help to determine the core USP and messages of Creative Birmingham. However further work is needed, not least to ensure a degree of consensus and 'buy-in' lies behind the strategy. At the same time, we should resist the temptation to compromise for the sake of agreement. To reflect reality and achieve future direction, such core marketing decisions need to be honest and ambitious. It is likely a specialist brand agency will be required to facilitate and support this work.

Lead Institutions: Marketing Birmingham with Audiences Central

Timetable: 6 months

The Holy Grail

From these elements, Creative Birmingham's distinctive offer and the basis of its core messages may be found.

- Diversity: Birmingham is diverse – in the breadth and depth of its offer; in the cultural make up of the city and the products which emerge from a city which is not just tolerant but embraces and 'fuses' new cultures. The language of diversity, however, has become devalued.
- Space & Market: A simple statement, but the size of available audience in the area and the spaces available to develop and stage creative activities is a key asset.
- Connectivity & Internationalism: Birmingham's outlook is international, is accessible and well placed nationally and internationally. Whilst it has challenges to overcome in terms of city planning, its position is a major plus.
- Infrastructure and Iconography: Birmingham has invested in its cultural infrastructure and has developed creative facilities. Such assets are at the heart of a successful city and the basis for aggressive promotion.
- Export & Import: The city of 1,000 trades continues to be at the crossroads, exporting creative products and importing new creative influences. The 21st century's most successful cities will be those which trade, invest in creativity, are diverse and tolerant. Birmingham has a head start.
- Music: In a variety of its forms, Birmingham has a rich musical heritage. Perhaps more importantly, promoting the city's signature themes could be one of its most important marketing tools.
- Digital Media (content led): All regions are targeting new, electronic and digital media as a growth sector. Birmingham and the region are well placed, particularly in the fields of games, interactive and learning software, web, design and screen based entertainment. Like music (and not entirely unconnected), the importance of digital media will only grow.
- Creative Champions: The most important branding tool is people. We must recruit and facilitate the characters that provide new creative thinking and symbolise Creative Birmingham.

Creative Hub

As this study commenced, developing a bespoke agency to lead the creation of profile for Birmingham's creative and cultural industries seemed a distinct possibility. As this the finishing touches are applied to this report, it still is. But not yet, there is further work to do. However, the success of the Creative Birmingham Partnership Board may lie in whether it accepts the challenges identified in this study and has the vision and ambition – in partnership - to see them through. Depending on the outcome of the 'task and finish' groups, establishing a 'Creative Hub' (as it was described by the Key Agencies Group) might then be the next step.

Cultural Strategy

As we said at the beginning, this was never intended to be a Cultural Strategy for Birmingham. But, the time might be right for such a document – as long as it is a working and representative paper, not a publication which exists for politicians to wave and put on their shelves. The outcome of the 'task and finish' groups will provide a number of the elements on which such a strategy should be built. A separate marketing strategy for Creative Birmingham will then not be needed. The cultural strategy will form one and the same purpose.

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Business Support for Creative Industries, Ten Case Studies

Company 1

Company 1 is a Birmingham based animation company, which was set up 2 years ago. The BSCI programme assisted the company with the development of a strategic business plan and support to make a show reel DVD.

As a result of this support the business has improved its strategic thinking and achieved a significant growth in business. Following the presentation of the showreel to the BBC, the company won its biggest ever contract, amounting to £2.7m, to make a new 3D animation series of Bible stories due to be aired on the BBC next year. The project will result in the company employing more than 40 new jobs over the next 2 years.

Company 2

Company 2 is a young dynamic IT company which designs websites. When the company joined the BSCI programme, the two directors were working out of their home in Moseley. Creative Space assistance enabled the company to move into business premises in Digbeth, and put them on a more professional footing. The move also resulted in the company employing an additional member of staff.

Company 2 have grown from strength to strength, and earlier this year - in the face of international competition - was commissioned to design a website for the fashion designer Vivienne Westwood. More recently, they have just landed a contract for the V & A in London and increased their workforce from 5 to 8 people.

Company 3

The two Partners established the Architect's practice in May 2001. It now enjoys an enviable reputation for quality, innovation and the imaginative design of spaces for children particularly in the design of early years educational buildings. The Jewellery Quarter Regeneration Partnership referred the Practice onto Creative Development where they were able to access Creative Space support in January 2004 towards the relocation and expansion in long-leasehold premises in Tenby Street in the Jewellery Quarter. The project leverage included a £161,000 loan towards the purchase of the property and other set-up/installation costs. The business has also been assisted with business planning support through Business Link Birmingham under the BSCI Programme. The company has, following relocation, increased turnover by approximately £50k and created a further two jobs.

Company 3 were winners of the Outstanding Innovation award at the 2004 'Creative City Awards'.

Company 4

This is a screen based media business developing broadcast and corporate television programmes. The Company was formed in July 2001 but traded on a very limited basis until June 2003 when, with the help of Creative Space, the two directors relocated the business from Sheffield to the Custard Factory in Birmingham. The Company has attracted some high quality clients in this first full year of trading including: Motorola, Travel Inn, World Tourist Attractions

(Birmingham Wheel), Redrow Homes. From a virtual standing start last June, the Company has produced turnover of over £100,000, created one further job plus employing over 40 freelance personnel. The Directors have also benefited from Business Planning support from Business Link and Feasibility grant towards producing a high quality promotional CD-ROM already used in pitching for a contract worth in the region of £50k which they are in the latter stages of negotiation.

Company 5

Company 5 was established in May 2000 and is owned and managed by a female entrepreneur. The business focuses on designing bespoke clothing. It has developed an impressive list of established clients including Fiat, Nissan, Lego land, Marlboro Cigarettes, Vauxhall, and many of the Company's designs were in evidence at the Motor Show. The Company has been supported with the development of a strategic business plan by BABA and has received Creative Space support to move to larger premises within the Custard Factory. Larger operating space has been taken on to enable a growth strategy based on increased sales and from being a sole employee business to recruit 7 additional staff over two years 'tapping' into the latest talent from UCE's fashion design course. The company is recent winner of the 2004 'Small Business of the Year' at the Birmingham's 'Creative City Awards'.

Company 6

Company 6 was set up in 1998 and had 1 full-time and 1 part-time employee. It provides a mix of services including PR planning and implementation, media planning and buying, events management and production, digital marketing, direct marketing and creative design and realisation. The company is based in Ladywood.

Clients include South Staffordshire Council, Coventry University, My Travel, Urbium plc, First Leisure, London and Cambridge properties and Aston University. It has also worked in partnership with Crimestoppers, the Youth Justice Board, South Staffordshire Reduction Unit, Kic FM and Warped Sports.

In October 2003, company 6 was assisted with a Feasibility grant towards running a free outside music festival called "Subsonica" at a location in Birmingham city centre. The event showcased local talent and raised the profile of existing public spaces within the city. Other benefits were increased trade for local businesses and raising the profile of the city centre as a music festival venue. Since Feasibility, "Sunsonica" has become a separate business and the business has achieved increased sales of £10,900 and created one job.

Company 7

Company 7 is a multimedia production company working to promote creative education through arts and media. Its work encompasses projects that it generates as well as projects delivered through commissions. The company was established in 1996 with sole trader status after the director spent 30 years developing and delivering arts projects within and beyond educational establishments, community arts organisations and as an independent writer/musician/artist. Since April 2004, the company has been trading as a limited company. The company is based in the Bournville ward.

Recent work for the Birmingham Youth Offending Service saw the company begin to develop online learning resources relevant to the Citizenship Curriculum.

In May 2004, the company was assisted with a Feasibility grant to establish the marketability of on-line learning materials. This has led to the company becoming engaged with a range of organisations in developing broadband TV products including ICA (London), British Council (Japan), RPO, QCA, OCR and Sesame Workshop (New York). The company is also in dialogue with UNESCO regarding the development of Broadband TV by young people for young people to address the deficit in children's television within developing countries.

The company's turnover has increased and the workforce has gone from 1 to 3 full-time jobs. The company's focus has shifted from local to national and international. The company's aim of becoming a publisher of on-line curriculum content is currently being realised with Japan. Links with key academic and arts institutions is enhancing the company's profile and capacity. The company is now exploring the potential for combining video conferencing and broadband TV, which will have a significant impact on its future work.

Company 7 was runner-up for the Outstanding Innovation Award.

<u>Company 8</u>

Company 8 is a multimedia, 3D modelling and software solutions company based in the Nechells ward. It specialises in producing innovative and cost-effective marketing solutions for businesses using the latest advances in technology. The company was voted Enterprise of the Year by Business Link in 2000 and was also awarded 5th place in the West Midlands and 41st nationally in the Deloitte & Touche Fast 50 Awards in 2001, an award for the country's fastest growing IT companies. Before being assisted with Feasibility grant in January 2004, the company employed 11 people and had a turnover of approximately £71,000.

The Feasibility grant was for developing a showreel to promote its visualisation, animation, video and interactive CD-ROM abilities as part of a company brochure that detailed the complete service range.

For the period February-April 2004, the company's turnover rose to approximately £145,000 and they took on 2 extra staff. The Feasibility project accounted for £70,000 of increased sales to June 2004.

In August 2004, the company was assisted with Creative Space to move into larger premises on the same site on which it was based in order to provide more space for extra staff.

Company 8 was one of the sponsors of the 2004 Creative Industries awards.

<u>Company 9</u>

Initially the business was established in Berkshire and is involved in development and marketing of on line software for website generation and content management.
The business was assisted through Creative Space to relocate from Berkshire to the Jewellery Quarter. It has created 9 local jobs and has developed good links with the

Jewellery Quarter Regeneration Partnership. As part of its work in the quarter it has been commissioned to develop an on line portal for the quarter. Company 9 is forecasting a £1m increase in the first year of its operation in Birmingham.

Company 10

Company 10 is involved Video production for the music, corporate and media sectors. It was one of the first beneficiaries of the Programme.

The business was assisted with the development of a business plan and support from Creative Space to set up in a more professional environment in Digbeth in 2003. It has developed an excellent reputation for producing video including a music video for Bally Sagoo (award for best music video on Zee TV), corporate videos for George Wimpey Homes and Mencap.

Company 10 has created 2 full time jobs and achieved £80,000 of sales in the first 14 months of trading. It has also created employment opportunities for 15 freelancers engaged on a project basis.

Appendix II: Research & Communication (i)

1.   <u>Birmingham</u>

1.1   Projects and Schemes

Dedicated phone and internet research took place in identifying missions, aims and specific schemes and projects through the following:

- DCMS Contacts
- Industry Contacts
- Other Government Departments
- Sponsored Bodies

Contact was made with:

- Advantage West Midlands
- Arts Council West Midlands (including Creative Partnerships)
- Audiences Central
- Birmingham City Council (including Eastside)
- Business Link Birmingham & Solihull/Birmingham Chamber of Commerce & Industry
- Birmingham Forward
- Learning and Skills Council Birmingham and Solihull
- Marketing Birmingham
- Screen West Midlands
- West Midlands Life
- Skillset

1.2   Introductory letter

An introductory letter was sent to cultural and creative industries contacts explaining the aims of the Marketing Creative Birmingham project and requesting general information on policies, strategies and funding. A similar letter was also issued to Creative Birmingham Partnership Board Members, Key Agencies Group and Creative City Partner Members.

1.3   Interviews

1.3.1   One-to-one meetings took place between Kevin Johnson and the following members of the Creative Birmingham Partnership Board to discuss key issues:

18th October:	Anita Bhalla (Chair; BBC)
18th October:	David Draycott/Billy Carslaw/Lara Ratnaraja (Business Link)
21st October:	Richard Green (Birmingham City Council, Eastside)
21st October:	Paul Kaynes (Audiences Central)
21st October:	Sally Luton/Caroline Foxhall/Ian Danby (West Midlands Arts)

21st October: Julie Robson/Michael Ryan (Learning and Skills Council)
25th October: Paul Cantrill (Birmingham City Council, Creative Development)
27th October: Andrew Ormston (Birmingham City Council, Arts Development)
5th November: Mary Matthews (Advantage West Midlands)

1.3.2   Interviews were also held with:

15th October: Sylvia Broadley (Birmingham City Council, Creative Development)
19th October: Neil Rami (Marketing Birmingham)
1st November: Jonnie Turpie (Screen West Midlands)
9th November: Councillor Ken Hardeman (Birmingham City Council Cabinet Member, Regeneration)

1.4   A meeting of the Key Agencies Group was held on Wednesday 3rd November. Attending were:

Paul Cantrill (Birmingham City Council)
Patrick Cross (Learning & Skills Council)
Lara Ratnaraja (Business Link)
Krysia Rozanska (Screen West Midlands)
Mohammed Zahir (Birmingham City Council)

1.5   Marketing Discussion Group

People from the creative industries with a professional background or strong interest in marketing attended a brainstorming session on Friday 5th November:

Bron Eames
Managing Director, Haslimann Taylor

Mark Ball
Festival Director, Fierce Earth

Alison Finn
Marketing Manager, Birmingham Repertory Theatre

Paul Kaynes
Chief Executive, Audiences Central

Dave Roberts
Creative Launchpad

1.6   Practitioner Consultation

Creative and cultural industries practitioners who participated in a
discussion group on Monday 8th November were:

> Melissa Nisbett
> *Marketing Manager, Ikon Gallery*
>
> Nigel Edmondson
> *Deputy Design Manager/Arts Ambassador-designate,*
> *Eastside, Birmingham City Council*
>
> Simon Woods
> *Chief Executive, Birmingham School of Speech &*
> *Drama*
>
> John Dixon
> *Tall Order Productions Ltd*
>
> Roger Shannon
> *Swish*
>
> Stef Lewandowski
> *Managing Director, 3form*
>
> Abigail Fleissig
> *Co-ordinator, Centrepiece*
>
> Francois Bignon
> *Unison Strings*

Appendix II: Research & Communication (ii)

2   Competitive Cities

2.1   Dedicated research through desk, internet and phone was made through
         the following:

- DCMS Contacts
- Industry Contacts
- Other Government Departments
- Sponsored Bodies

Including:

- City Council Creative Development Teams
- Regional Cultural Consortia
- Regional Development Agencies
- Business Links
- Creative and Cultural Partnership Bodies
- Arts Council England
- Learning & Skills Councils
- Film Offices
- Festivals

In the following cities:

- Barcelona
- Bilbao
- Bristol
- Edinburgh
- Leeds/Sheffield
- Liverpool/Manchester
- London
- Melbourne, Australia
- Newcastle/Gateshead

2.2   Competitive Cities: Phone Survey

         Key contacts were established and a survey completed with representatives
         of some of the cities listed above. Analysis can be found in Appendix III.

2.3   Contacts database

         A database has been created of cultural and creative sector contacts.

Uncovering Creative Birmingham

Listed are just some of the organisations and projects looked at during the course of this project, many by the suggestion of those involved in interviews and discussion groups. It is by no means an exhaustive list of creative activity in Birmingham, but serves to demonstrate the depth and breadth of creative enterprise, many directly supported by Creative Birmingham partner organisations.

Advantage Creative Fund	Venture Capital Fund for creative businesses, set up to address the equity gap faced by companies in the sector. Supported by Advantage West Midlands, European Regional Development Fund and Arts Council England. Invests for a commercial return, but distributes profits into new investments. Largest creative industries development programme in Europe.
ArtsFest	UK's largest free arts festival takes place across various venues in September.
www.bereative.info	City Council's portal site with information on the Creative City initiative; a RouteMap database for creatives; a talent showcase; a Music Platform; and a KnowledgeBank of creative industries information.
Birmingham Music Network	Association of independent music organisations set up in 2002 which seeks to promote music in the region to local, national and international audiences. Acts as a gateway to new and emerging contemporary acts, provides an infrastructure for the regional music business, and supports the assistance and development of musicians and performing artists in all genres.
Black Voices	Highly successful collective of powerful women's voices. Has hosted and presented its own a cappella series with BBC Radio 2, performed for radio and television around the world, produced six CDs, researched, produced, directed and performed in several international collaborations. Black Voices Ltd has been established to provide a range of creative opportunities in music and music technology from the CMAT (Centre for Music and Arts Technology) in Handsworth, acting as a 'one stop' resource and facility centre for musicians and offer challenging and stimulating paths to support and encourage more young people to become engaged in a cappella. Supported by ACE and GOWM.
Brilliantly Birmingham	Season of contemporary jewellery events and exhibitions at venues across Birmingham during November and December. Now in its fifth year celebrating the talents of locally based designer

	makers as well as acting as a showcase for jewellers from further afield. Offers the public unique opportunities to see and buy original work and gain a unique insight into jewellery design and manufacture. Co-funded by City Council.
Centrepiece	Group of designer jewellers and silversmiths. Acts as a showcase for designer makers based in the Jewellery Quarter. Stages an annual Christmas show in the main foyer of Symphony Hall.
ContentLab	"Unique hot house" two-day event for interactive content professionals staged by PACT and supported by Screen West Midlands.
Creative Launchpad "Getting Ideas of the Ground."	Developed by Tribal Dundas and supported by the LSC and ESF programme and based at the Custard Factory. Assists people with creative ideas by means of advice, help, contacts and information free-of-charge. Responded to over 500 enquiries since March 2004.
Custard Factory	Home to Sir Alfred Bird's invention, 200,000 square feet of buildings are now the base for 100s of artists and creative entrepreneurs together with theatre, café, antique shops, meeting rooms, dance studios, holistic therapy rooms, art galleries, the Medicine Bar and Code nightclub, courtesy of owner, designer and developer Bennie Gray.
Eastside	Ten year project to regenerate the area to the east of the city centre, including historic Digbeth. Based around the principles of learning, heritage and technology. Key features include Millennium Point, a City Park and the proposed new Central Library. Creative Industry Vision publication from Maverick TV/Seeing the Light. South Birmingham College plans a Media Village at Warwick Bar.
Electric Wharf	Development in the Coventry Nuneaton Regeneration Zone due to be completed in 2005. Conversion of Coventry's original Victorian power station to create live-work loft apartments, low-energy work homes and high-tech offices. Canal frontage and a new, traffic free route to the city centre created via a new canal bridge. Aimed at creative and IT businesses, will be hard-wired for broadband access.
Fierce! International Performance Festival "that bites."	Takes place at a variety of venues in the West Midlands. Crosses the boundaries of club culture, street culture and arts activity featuring cutting-edge dance, art, design under hypnosis, sonic terror, taboo-busting spoken word and late-night voyeurism.
Fused Magazine	Published by Fused Media Limited, a free youth culture publication for the Midlands covering music, art, fashion and culture. The company also

	offers services in design - both web and print based. Organises the Clash, an exhibition of contemporary art from Birmingham and the West Midlands.
Gallery 37 'Arts Under Canvass'	Training programme for young people; takes place in a 'tented village' during July and August in Centenary Square. Working alongside professional artists, 16 to 24 year olds, who may have faced challenges such as a learning difficulty or exclusion, become 'apprentice artists' and learn new skills and develop existing ones. An allowance is paid and work created could either be sold in the on-site shop or might culminate in a performance at an arts venues. Named after Block 37 in Chicago, Birmingham's sister city, where the project was pioneered.
IdeasFactory	Web resource with insights, advice and links about careers in the creative industries – "Get In, Get On, Get Creative". Developed by Channel 4 and co-ordinated by Maverick Television in the West Midlands with support from AWM. Organised 'Creative Week' in 25-30th October based at Custard Factory. Its booklet 'Ten' is an excellent illustration of the creative scene in the West Midlands.
Ikon Gallery	Features temporary exhibitions over two floors totalling 450 square metres in its BrindleyPlace location. Developed a reputation for innovation, internationalism and excellence over 40 years. Variety of media represented, including sound, film, mixed media, photography, painting, sculpture and installation.
Jewellery Quarter - Jewellery Quarter Regeneration Partnership - School of Jewellery/JIIC - Jewellery Museum - JQ Portal.net - *Also see Brilliantly Birmingham and Centrepiece*	Home to over 1,200 businesses, majority of which are jewellery or jewellery related. Also a developing and diverse community of artists including architects, sculptors, illustrators, glaziers, graphic, furniture and web designers. Partnership aims to progress regeneration plans for the area and act as a gateway for the community to access business support, property location, community safety, health and environmental awareness. The School of Jewellery was founded in 1890 and boasts a completely re-built home. Jewellery Industry Innovation Centre provides technical support and training in the use of CAD/CAM, rapid prototyping and reverse engineering. The Museum is based in the former Smith and Pepper factory. Guides and jewellers take visitors through the story of the 200 year old Quarter and its craft skills. JQPortal - web portal for 150 designer makers – currently being developed.
mac (Midlands Arts Centre)	Most visited arts centre in the region, with over 650,000 people a year. Theatre, music, comedy,

	plays for children, literature and poetry events, courses, family shows, films, dance performances and free exhibitions. Embarking upon a major Building Development programme with sampad.
MACE Media Archive for Central England	Currently housed by the University of Nottingham at Carlton Studios. Recognised body responsible for collecting, preserving and making accessible the moving image heritage of the East and West Midlands. Collects and preserves the moving image heritage of the Midlands and maximises access to various collections.
Madhouse Rehearsal Studios	A purpose-built 12 room facility in the heart of Birmingham designed by musicians with fellow players in mind. Actively encourages the musical community to use the madhouse as a place to get together, plan gigs and share ideas and information.
Moseley Creative Village	Feasibility study published December 2003 funded by Creative Development to "better understand how Moseley could become a pilot creative industries neighbourhood and to test the 'Myth of Moseley' that there are more creatives living and working in the village." A number of recommendations were made.
Muzik Links	Developed by Grammy nominee Pato Banton to develop music in the north west and central Birmingham. Works with young people from socially excluded areas of Birmingham, Sandwell and Dudley, using music as a route back to learning and employment. Aims to develop a cultural corridor of excellence, nurturing and developing talent.
The pUBLIC (Building), West Bromwich (formerly known as Jubilee Arts)	Largest Community Arts Development in Europe due to open late 2005, designed by Will Alsop. "A place to dream and realise your creativity in an inspiring, hands-on arts space, as well as somewhere you can learn, be entertained and relax." pUBLIC works on projects with groups, eg. young people excluded from school and homeless people, to develop innovative exhibitions, performances and products which communicate issues such as health, regeneration, social inclusion and education to wider audiences.
RBSA (Royal Birmingham Society of Artists)	Formed in 1821 with the objective of establishing a museum for works of art, provide facilities for students, hold public exhibitions and extend art education in the city. Granted Royal status in 1868. Now based in St. Paul's Square, it displays the best of Midlands' Artists and Craftsmen. Two galleries display a changing programme of work by Members, Associates, Friends and Visiting Exhibitions. Also features a

	Craft Gallery, Cafe and Workshops in all mediums.
Seeing the Light/Rhubarb Rhubarb	Agency for the contemporary image maker, based at the Custard Factory. Winner of the main Creative City award. Runs Rhubarb Rhubarb, UK's International Festival of the Image.
SuperSonic Electronic Music Festival	Organised by Capsule at the Custard Factory, a sonic/visual festival of electronic based and experimental music.
Temper	Successful graffiti Artist Arron Bird. First artist of his kind to be given a solo exhibition at Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery. Based at an artist's studio in the Jewellery Quarter.
The Barber Institute for Fine Arts	Housed in one of the city's finest Art Deco buildings set within the University of Birmingham, purpose built and opened in 1939. Awarded the title of 'Gallery of the Year' by The Good Britain Guide. One of the world's finest small galleries, boasting a comprehensive collection of European art by the great masters - a "mini-National Gallery."
The Drum	Europe's first arts centre dedicated to developing and promoting African, Caribbean and Asian arts and culture featuring a 350 seat auditorium, 200 capacity studio space, exhibition facilities, multimedia training suites, and a seminar room. Venue for music (incl. live jazz), spoken word, visual art, comedy, drama and dance from local, national and international artists and companies.
Tindal Street Press	Independent publisher of contemporary fiction with a national reputation for publishing strong, regional voices. Published Clare Morrall's 'Astonishing Splashes of Colour' novel which was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize 2003.
University of Central England - BIAD - Birmingham Institute of Arts & Design - Media Lab - Technology Innovation Centre - Media Vault - *Also see School of Jewellery under Jewellery Quarter*	BIAD is one of the largest faculties of arts, design and media education in the UK. Media Lab – centre for new media production - established by UCE's Department of Media and Communication (part of BIAD) with Maverick TV, Hi8us and Birmingham Central Library and supported by ERDF. Aims to be a centre for expertise in producing content. Technology Innovation Centre (TIC) at Millennium Point established by Faculty of Engineering and Computer Technology. TIC's Media Vault – supported by AWM, ERDF and BT, provides access for SME to digital media creation, management tools, technology advice and connectivity.
Urban Culture Programme	City received second highest award at £2.1m. Bid was organised in three themes – city/region; national/international; community engagement and regeneration. Stated aim of the programme is to "achieve a level of national and international

	impact that will make a permanent contribution to the way that Birmingham is perceived."
Vivid (Birmingham Centre for Media Arts)	Focuses on experimental media arts research, development and production working across arts and technology, encouraging collaboration and learning across disciplines. Provides lab space and media suites for practitioners to research and develop ideas for future projects. Provides consultancy services and technical support and offers a wide range of video production and post production services. Develops commissions and regular public events, critical debates and presentations.
Wolverhampton Science Park - Creative Industries Centre/SPARK	Funded by Advantage West Midlands and the European Regional Development Fund, provides accommodation and mentoring for new media and design businesses.

Appendix IV: Bibliography

Some of the publications referred to during the course of research include:

Interactive TV – a learning platform with potential
Daniel Atwere and Peter Bates; Learning and Skills Development Agency

Review: Social Inclusion to the Creative Economy
The pUBLIC

Assessment of Learning and Skill Needs 2003
Learning and Skills Council, Birmingham and Solihull

A Bigger Future, The UK Films Skills Strategy
UK Film Council/Skillset

Culture at the Heart of Regeneration (Consultation)
Department of Culture, Media & Sport

The Rise of the Creative Class
Richard Florida

Creative City, Programme and Delivery Overview
Birmingham City Council, Economic Development, June 2002

A Creative Development Plan for Birmingham
Plan Update Version
Birmingham City Council Economic Development, October 2003

Creative Development Business Plan
Birmingham City Council Economic Development, 2004/5

Appendix V: Project Team Profiles

<u>Kevin Johnson, Project Director and Report Author</u>

Kevin was a director of ITV Central and responsible for public and corporate affairs for eight years. He established Urban Communications Limited in Birmingham in August and started trading in October 2004. In addition to the Creative Birmingham Partnership Board, initial clients include Birmingham City Council, the Department of Culture Media and Sport, Screen West Midlands and the University of Warwick.

He has been a director of the Birmingham Film & Television Festival and is a member of AWM's Sound Image Screen Cluster Group. He is a member of the Marketing Society's Midland Committee, the Royal Television Society's Midland Centre committee where he was chairman of its Dinner Group for three years and was inaugural chairman of the Publicity Association of Central England. He has served on committees with the Birmingham Repertory Theatre and Birmingham Royal Ballet. Earlier in his career he managed consultancy contracts with the City of Birmingham Touring Company, central government public library studies, as well as a range of broadcast and production clients. In 2001/02, he was seconded to Birmingham City Council's Economic Development Department as Head of the Campaign Unit for Birmingham & Solihull's national stadium bid.

<u>Sue Gee, Project/Research Assistant</u>

Sue has worked closely with Kevin for eight years, responsible for co-ordinating ITV Central's regional advisory council often cited as the leading body of its kind by the industry regulator. Previously, Sue was Personal Assistant to the Chairman and Chief Executive of Central Independent Television plc. She started her career in educational broadcasting with the BBC.