



Destination Birmingham

Birmingham, A Music City



A report from Overview & Scrutiny





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Front cover photo courtesy of Jim Simpson, Big Bear Records.



Preface

By Cllr Philip Parkin, Chairman, Leisure, Sport & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee



Popular music is a key part of our culture, both past and present, and there are real benefits to be had from supporting and promoting it. The benefits for Birmingham lie not only in direct spend but as a means of enhancing civic pride and supporting further economic growth by augmenting the marketing and financial value associated with the city. Importantly, it would also go some way to rebalancing investment in cultural activities that appeal more to the young, diverse population of the city.

In 2011, UK Music published a report that quantified spend by overseas and domestic music tourists and laid down a challenge to public bodies “to realise the potential of this considerable economic asset”. This report sets out the response from the Leisure, Sport & Culture O&S Committee to that challenge.

The key recommendation is to ask that a “Music Birmingham” be set up, partly to act as a clear point of contact for those in the sector wishing to put on events or gigs or develop their music business in Birmingham, but also to act as a champion for the city in the sector. It was noticeable during our evidence gathering that those involved in the independent music sector were not generally looking for direct financial support from the City Council, but rather support “in kind”, such as making contacts and support with promotion.

It is also important that we do more to celebrate Birmingham's rich musical heritage. Following the success of the Home of Metal exhibition, and in the year that Black Sabbath reform, we should celebrate Birmingham's role in the origins of heavy metal. We should also be celebrating other music events and genres – bhangra and reggae also have their origins in Birmingham

I would like to thank all those who gave their time to talk to us throughout this Review for their views and insight. Thanks also to Councillors McKay and Waddington for their participation in this Review, and to Cllr Ernie Hendricks, whose earlier work on this issue provided us with invaluable information and support.



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Summary

On 13th July 2011, the Leisure, Sport and Culture Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee agreed to undertake a Scrutiny Review exploring:

What role can and does popular music play in improving perceptions of Birmingham, both in attracting visitors to the city and in enhancing the quality of life of residents? How can this role be strengthened in Birmingham?

We chose to focus on popular music as there is interest in Birmingham in making more of this cultural and economic asset that reflects the diversity of Birmingham's past and present.

We spoke to a range of people involved in music heritage projects and the current industry including a local band and local promoters, current venue owners/managers, festival organisers, relevant Council officers and Marketing Birmingham.

We found that there has been little work done to quantify the value of popular music to the city or the region. There have been evaluations of the impact and benefits of cultural activities in general and classical music in particular, but there has been no comparable study for other types of music. However, the figures that are available do suggest that there are considerable potential advantages in examining the impact and benefit of popular music. Some facts include:

- UK music industry revenues totalled £3.8bn in 2010. The UK strengthened its position as a net exporter of music and is growing its trade balance three times faster than the U.S.;
- More than 100,000 people in the UK derive their main source of income from the music industry; 7% of those are based in the West Midlands;
- The major concerts and music festivals that take place across the UK attract more than 7.7 million visitors, who spend £1.4 billion in total during the course of their trip. Music tourists in the West Midlands spend at least £138 million a year;
- Five independent festivals bring a combined total of more than £5 million into Birmingham's economy each year by earned income, visitor spend, council income and the proportion of their budgets which is spent locally.

The other reason to focus on popular music is its diversity and appeal to a wide range of people, particularly in Birmingham:

Birmingham is a hub for British culture, birthplace of groups such as UB40, Duran Duran, The Beat, Steel Pulse, Judas Priest and Black Sabbath. A strong underground culture around drum and bass, punk, reggae and dub, hip hop, graffiti, jazz, folk music, cinema and visual arts exists within the city.¹

¹ Espirito Mundo – www.espiritomundo.com/espirito_brum.php (see Chapter 5 for further details)



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Our findings fall into two main areas: valuing popular music culture and music heritage.

Valuing Popular Music Culture

We found that Birmingham has a varied, vibrant and independent music scene. This is backed up by a good live music scene, with the right mix of venues and a good collection of independent festivals. There is a range of industry professionals at all points of production; however these tend to be small and largely unrecognised. Collectively there is little recognition outside Birmingham of what the city has to offer (both to fans/visitors and promoters/professionals).

We also recognised the value of popular music to Birmingham's residents: particularly as Birmingham is one of the youngest cities in Europe. However the culture that they are most interested in is sometimes seen as undervalued.

We agreed that there is a need to promote an understanding of the role popular music plays in the perceptions of a city and to embed this understanding in the cultural offer of the city, both its cultural value and tourism value.

A clear statement of policy would clarify and strengthen the City Council's objectives, giving reassurance and encouragement to private investment as well as ensuring we attract and get the most value out of any public investment.

Having a strategy is only a first step, there then needs to be a mechanism to deliver the outcomes of that strategy. From our discussions, it was clear that the independent music sector is well represented in Birmingham but not presenting a coherent voice. Co-ordination and the ability to articulate the sector's needs are needed to help support new bands and retain talent in the city.

Where the City Council can clearly assist is in having a clear point of contact for those in the sector wishing to put on events or gigs, or develop their music business in Birmingham. We therefore propose that the City Council should install a single contact for the industry and venues, who could bring together different aspects of the City Council as necessary, and be a link into the Council for the industry. They would also act as the external face of the city in this area. In essence, they would take responsibility for providing support (advice, guidance, networks) to the music sector within Birmingham, as well as be a champion or ambassador figure to make connections across the sector and advocate for the sector.

It would of course require some funding: but this is an important industry – culturally and economically – and it receives very little attention/funding at the moment. UK Music's report (see Chapter 2) quantified spend by overseas and domestic music tourists and laid down a challenge to public bodies: "there is a role for policy-makers and tourism bodies to realise the potential of this considerable economic asset". We know from our discussions with UK Music that other cities are responding to this challenge.

Heritage

There is strong evidence that heritage attractions are a significant component of a tourism "offer" to visitors, and that this is equally true with regard to music heritage. The visitor and economic impact figures



from national and international attractions and from the Home of Metal exhibition here in Birmingham demonstrate that this is an area that is worth serious investigation.

And whilst it is true Birmingham does not have a Beatles or Elvis equivalent, we should not underestimate the value of Birmingham's musical past – its role in the birth of heavy metal and British reggae and bhangra, the bands such as Black Sabbath and Duran Duran, and the diversity of Birmingham's "melting pot" music scene.

In Birmingham we have individuals committed to Birmingham's music heritage and plenty of ideas about how to celebrate it. The barriers seem to be prominence, strategy and infrastructure. There is no strategy in place, and little of the infrastructure needed to deliver a good visitor experience.

Some put that down to the inertia and indifference of the city's leading institutions; others to the fragmentation of the music sector in Birmingham. There's also no doubt that the diversity of Birmingham's musical heritage is both a strength and drawback.

We believe that Birmingham could and should do more to celebrate its diverse musical heritage. From our discussion, the benefits broadly fall into two interlinked categories:

- Tourism: to provide a focal point for visitors and celebrations and improve external perceptions of Birmingham and what the city has to offer;
- Community education: so Birmingham residents (in particular young people) know what there is to celebrate here and improve internal perceptions and augment civic pride.

There is plenty to celebrate here in Birmingham and plenty of people who not only want to celebrate but would be willing to put in work to do so. One recent example is the Home of Metal exhibition, which garnered national and international attention. We recommend that the City Council should support efforts to find a permanent home for a part of the exhibition, and explore other options for a space to celebrate music heritage.

We also recommend that the City Council work with potential partners to develop a heritage plaque scheme for the city; and set out how this would be backed up with city wide marketing/events.



Summary of Recommendations

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R01	That the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture and the Cabinet Member for Transport, Environment and Regeneration work together to ensure that the cultural and economic value of music heritage and popular music sector to the City is recognised and embedded in cultural and economic policy. This should include: a - Working with the partners in the Cultural Partnership to ensure explicit reference is made in the Cultural Strategy; and b - Better representation from independent music sector on the Cultural Partnership - Working with the partners to ensure explicit reference is made in any future Creative Industries Strategy.	Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture Cabinet Member for Transport, Environment and Regeneration	September 2012
R02	That the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture work with Marketing Birmingham to set up a "Music Birmingham" contact/office for the independent popular music sector within Birmingham and outside. This role would: - Work with stakeholders in the popular music sector to implement a 'Music Charter' to progress actions to support the Cultural and Creative Industries Strategies; - Be the face of the City Council for the popular music sector; - Work across different areas of the City Council to progress actions.	Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture Cabinet Member for Transport, Environment and Regeneration	September 2012
R03	That the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture (and partners) support efforts, over the next 6 months, to find a temporary exhibition space for a music heritage exhibition in Birmingham which focuses on the local roots of heavy metal music, following the recent success of the Capsule-curated Home of Metal exhibition at BMAG. Options include: - Using BMAG's Waterhall in summer 2012, subject to its availability and the exhibition's compatibility with the venue's essential income generating requirements; - Working with partners to assist in finding a commercial home.	Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture	September 2012



	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R04	Building on the experience in R03, that the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport & Culture explore other options for a space to celebrate music heritage. These include supporting the inclusion of displays about Birmingham's musical heritage in BMAG's plans for post-1945 Modern Birmingham History galleries, which form part of a later phase of its long term masterplan. As part of this, the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture should work with partners to celebrate the reunion of Black Sabbath in 2012.	Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture	June 2012
R05	The Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture should work with potential partners (e.g. PRS) to develop a heritage plaque scheme for the city; and set out how this would be backed up with city wide marketing/events.	Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture	December 2012
R06	The Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture should continue to explore opportunities to develop a music digital archive linked to the Library of Birmingham.	Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture	June 2012
R07	That the Cabinet Member for Transport, Environment and Regeneration work with the International Trade Team at Birmingham Chamber of Commerce to provide advice and support to enable Birmingham businesses, who meet the eligibility criteria, to have a presence at MIDEM.	Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture Cabinet Member for Transport, Environment and Regeneration	December 2012
R08	That the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture investigate bringing a high profile music event to the city, such as Heavy Metal Awards, IPSA or Womex.	Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture	December 2012
R09	That the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture (and partners) explore opportunities to support smaller venues, festivals and promoters to market and promote live music in the city. This could include options for controlled advertising display areas.	Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture	September 2012



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	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R10	That the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture work with the Cultural Partnership and Marketing Birmingham to • Produce a stocktake of local music industry; • Support re-development of visitbirmingham.com to include more user generated content.	Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture	December 2012
R11	Progress towards achievement of these recommendations should be reported to the Leisure, Sport and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2012. Subsequent progress reports will be scheduled by the Committee thereafter, until all recommendations are implemented.	Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture	September 2012



1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Review

- 1.1.1 On 13th July 2011, the Leisure, Sport and Culture Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee agreed to undertake a Scrutiny Review exploring:

What role can and does popular music play in improving perceptions of Birmingham, both in attracting visitors to the city and in enhancing the quality of life of residents? How can this role be strengthened in Birmingham?

- 1.1.2 The Committee was keen to examine this question in the context of the development of the city's cultural identity and sense of place. This in turn will help to ensure that "Birmingham is a city where business can thrive and recruit and retain key staff because it is a place where people want to live and work" and enhance "our reputation and influence as a global city, positioning and profiling Birmingham as a vibrant, cosmopolitan, modern and desirable destination with a strong international, community and sports event programme."²

Why Popular Music?

- 1.1.3 There have been a number of attempts to define "popular music", but our approach in this report has been to focus on the commercialised popular music from the latter half of the twentieth century through to today, including "pop"³, rock, rap, bhangra, reggae and many others.
- 1.1.4 We chose to focus on popular music as there has been much interest in Birmingham (and the West Midlands) over the last few years in making more of this cultural and economic asset that reflects the diversity of Birmingham's past and present. There has been some work in this area in Birmingham, however much of the activity has been ad-hoc and little progress has been made. In contrast, classical music is widely recognised as a valued cultural asset, supported and promoted with public funds.
- 1.1.5 There has been little in terms of quantifying the value of popular music to the city or the region. There have been evaluations of the impact and benefits of cultural activities in general⁴ and classical music in particular⁵, but there has been no comparable study for other types of music. However, the figures that are available do suggest that there are considerable potential advantages in examining the impact and benefit of popular music, for example:

² Annual Report of the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture; December 2010

³ "Pop music" refers to a specific musical genre and is not interchangeable with "popular music"

⁴ *Cultural Impact Study: The impact of the arts in Birmingham*, Birmingham Arts Partnership, September 2009

⁵ *Making a Noise, The Economic Impact of Classical Music in the West Midlands*, Arts Council England, 2007



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- UK music industry revenues totalled £3.8bn in 2010. The UK strengthened its position as a net exporter of music and is growing its trade balance three times faster than the U.S.;
- More than 100,000 people in the UK derive their main source of income from the music industry; 7% of those are based in the West Midlands;
- The major concerts and music festivals that take place across the UK attract more than 7.7 million visitors, who spend £1.4 billion in total during the course of their trip. Music tourists in the West Midlands spend at least £138 million a year;
- Five independent festivals bring a combined total of more than £5 million into Birmingham's economy each year by earned income, visitor spend, council rates and the proportion of their budgets which is spent locally.⁶

1.1.6 The other reason to focus on popular music is its diversity and appeal to a wide range of people, particularly in Birmingham:

Birmingham is a hub for British culture, birthplace of groups such as UB40, Duran Duran, The Beat, Steel Pulse, Judas Priest and Black Sabbath. A strong underground culture around drum and bass, punk, reggae and dub, hip hop, graffiti, jazz, folk music, cinema and visual arts exists within the city.⁷

1.2 Terms of Reference

1.2.1 The terms of reference set out three key lines of enquiry:

- Heritage: how do we celebrate our musical past? How does this compare to other local authorities?
- Current industry: what are Birmingham's strengths and weaknesses; where are the gaps?
- Future: what can the City Council do practically to help? How can it most effectively deploy its resources, expertise and position?

1.2.2 The Scrutiny Review was conducted via a series of informal meetings between July and November 2011. The Review Group consisted of three Councillors led by Cllr Philip Parkin, with Cllrs James McKay and Margaret Waddington.

1.2.3 Our witnesses included those involved in music heritage projects and the current industry including a local band and local promoters, current venue owners/managers, festival organisers, relevant Council officers and Marketing Birmingham. A full list of witnesses and sources is set out in Appendix A. We would like to thank them for their time and input.

⁶ Ian Francis, *Independent Festivals Group Needs Analysis*, prepared for Birmingham City Council, October 2009

⁷ Espirito Mundo – www.espiritomundo.com/espirito_brum.php (see Chapter 5 for further details)



2 Background

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 There were a number of starting points for this Scrutiny Review, but a key catalyst was the publication of UK Music's "Destination Music: The Contribution of Music Festivals and Major Concerts to Tourism in the UK".⁸ The report professes to be "the most comprehensive study ever undertaken on the power of music as a tourist draw, and to give this a value in economic terms."
- 2.1.2 We also looked to build on research undertaken by Cllr Ernie Hendricks over the last three years. He was asked by the then Cabinet Member for Regeneration to lead consultations with the independent sector to inform the creation of a music policy. A report is being finalised which assesses how Birmingham City Council and its partners in the public and private sectors can best support the independent music sector.
- 2.1.3 In this chapter we summarise some of the work that has been done and assess the available evidence on the economic value and social value placed on popular music in the city. We then go on to consider recent reports on Birmingham's independent music sector.

2.2 Valuing Popular Music

- 2.2.1 There are a number of reports, plus evidence received from our witnesses, that assign some value to popular music, both in economic terms and in terms of social value. We will consider this under three headings: economic value, music tourism and cultural impact.

Economic Value

- 2.2.2 As noted in Chapter 1, there has been no economic impact study conducted in Birmingham or the West Midlands which is comparable to that completed for classical music in 2007. There is some data available in the Cultural Impact Study, which examined the impact of the arts in Birmingham. The UK Music report, although reported on a national and regional basis, also provides valuable information. In addition, there is national data on the industry from PRS for Music.⁹ Both Cllr Hendricks' report (2012)¹⁰ and A Vision for the Music Industry in the West Midlands (2008)¹¹, presented figures as to the economic worth of the sector. Some facts include:
- UK music industry revenues totalled £3.8bn in 2010. The UK strengthened its position as a net exporter of music and is growing its trade balance three times faster than the U.S.;⁸

⁸ UK Music, *Destination Music: The Contribution of Music Festivals and Major Concerts to Tourism in the UK*, May 2011

⁹ Will Page and Chris Carey, *Adding up the UK Music Industry 2010*, PRS for Music, August 2011

¹⁰ Cllr E Hendricks, *Punching Below Our Weight*, 2012

¹¹ Clare Edwards, *A Vision for the Music Industry in the West Midlands*, Advantage West Midlands, June 2008



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- More than 100,000 people in the UK derive their main source of income from the music industry; 7% of those are based in the West Midlands and around 25% are based in London;⁹
- There are almost 14,000 music-based businesses in the UK and 12% of those have an annual turnover in excess of £1 million.⁹

2.2.3 People's listening habits are changing but, as record sales decline, the live music scene has been growing over the last decade.

2.2.4 The Cultural Impact Study found that city based cultural organisations contributed £271m to the region's economy per year. They calculated a Return on Investment on Birmingham City Council's funding for cultural activities generally and estimated that for every £1 of funding, £29 is generated for the region's economy. Including the Arts Council England's investment, this translated to £11 for every £1 spent.

2.2.5 A report completed in 2007 found that classical music creates a direct value to the region of at least £55 million annually. With the addition of income generated by promoting venues and ensembles (their annual turnover) and work done overseas, the annual impact figure is boosted to more than £67 million. The study found that for every £1 of public sector investment in classical music, it is estimated that £10 is generated.¹²

2.2.6 The indirect value is also important. Throughout our evidence gathering the importance of popular music in the reputations of Manchester and Liverpool were emphasised. The "Madchester" era in Manchester (late 1980s to the early 1990s) is credited with pushing the University of Manchester to being one of the most sought after universities in the country, boosting the city's media and creative industries and, more recently, generating interest in Manchester's musical heritage. As the Financial Times noted in 2010:

The music and nightclub scene that put the city on the global map in the late 1980s bankrupted its creator, the Hacienda club. But it stimulated a creative and cultural renaissance that has brought in billions of pounds of business ... It also has a pull. The universities remain among the most popular in the country. Many students get hooked on the place and stay.¹³

Music Tourism

2.2.7 The figures on music tourism are particularly compelling. We were told by Marketing Birmingham that the visitor economy accounts for 10% of the local economy; supports 60,000 full time equivalent jobs; and has seen a 57% increase over last 6 years.

¹² *Making a Noise, The Economic Impact of Classical Music in the West Midlands*, Arts Council England, 2007, p3

¹³ FT.com *Manchester: The 1980s generation was not so mad after all – it is running the place now* by Andrew Bounds, 25 May 2010



- 2.2.8 Nationally, music ranks highly as a reason for visitors to come to the UK: a National Brand Index survey, based on interviews with 20,000 individuals worldwide, ranked the UK fourth in the world for being an “interesting and exciting place for contemporary culture such as music, films, art and literature”. Another study conducted in 2008 estimated that destination-driven trips account for 75% of all music tourism and approximately 55 million annual visits worldwide (including domestic and international travel).¹⁴
- 2.2.9 There are a number of facets to music tourism, including live music events and heritage:
- [Music tourism] relies on evidence of cultural activities, incidents from the past, and tangible artefacts that can be photographed.¹⁵
- 2.2.10 UK Music¹⁶ defined two types of music tourist for the purposes of their research:
- Domestic music tourist: someone who booked a ticket to a live music event in advance, and who travelled outside their home region (or home nation in the case of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) to attend the event ;
 - Overseas music tourist: someone who booked a ticket to a live music event in the UK from their own country, prior to travelling as a means of differentiating them from those overseas visitors who happen to attend a music event once in the UK.
- 2.2.11 They noted the consistent growth of the UK’s festival season and concert circuit and the UK’s considerable heritage, and the fact that the Government, in its Plan For Growth, had specifically recognised the UK’s creative industries and tourism as two key economic sectors with growth potential. They therefore investigated the economic value of music tourism to the country.
- 2.2.12 UK Music took data from over 2.5 million ticket purchases to concerts and music festivals that took place in every part of the UK in 2009 from a variety of national ticketing agencies.¹⁷ Bournemouth University’s International Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Research analysed this data.
- 2.2.13 The report stated that:
- ... the role of music in terms of creating jobs, in terms of sustaining businesses and in terms of attracting visitors to all regions of this country comes over loud and clear.

¹⁴ Mintel, Music Tourism – International (2008) cited in David Leaver and Lawrence Green, ‘*Not Fade Away*’: *Popular Music Heritage and (re)Modelling the Development of Cultural Tourism Industries – the Case of Buddy Holly*, Manchester Metropolitan University Business School, 2011

¹⁵ developed by Connell and Gibson (2003), cited in David Leaver and Lawrence Green, *ibid*.

¹⁶ An umbrella organisation which represents the collective interests of the UK’s commercial music industry: artists, musicians, songwriters and composers, record labels, music managers, music publishers, studio producers and music licensing organisations.

¹⁷ Therefore excluded those that didn’t charge entry fee; also excluded niche/special interest; performances/events where music was not the sole or main element (e.g. ballet, opera, street festivals) and events under 5,000 capacity.



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2.2.14 The major concerts and music festivals that took place across the UK attracted more than 7.7 million visits from those defined as a music tourist, overseas and domestic combined. They spent £1.4 billion in total during the course of their trip. While overseas visitors accounted for 5% of music tourists in terms of numbers, they accounted for 18% of spending. UK Music calculated that, on average, music tourists made up 41% of the audience at large concerts and 48% of people at music festivals.

This great music migration is boosting the UK's economy to the tune of at least £864 million and sustaining the equivalent of at least 19,700 full time jobs.

2.2.15 Music tourists in the West Midlands spent at least £138 million¹⁸ a year, benefiting the West Midlands economy by £48 million a year in terms of GVA (Gross value added) and sustaining the equivalent of 1,202 full time jobs.

2.2.16 However, there were some warnings:

- No one organisation has strategic oversight for music-driven tourism - music tourism is not currently a defined segment within the tourism industry;
- The United Nations World Tourism Organisation does not offer any criteria for what does and what does not constitute a 'music tourist'. And with a few notable exceptions, the music industry does not have a strong history of working with formal tourism bodies.

2.2.17 UK Music therefore proposes a series of recommendations (see Appendix 2), primarily:

UK Music strongly recommends that a national strategy is required to unleash the full potential of live music to contribute to the UK's tourism economy. Our aim should be that music fans the world over choose the UK as the most favoured destination for live music events and music attractions.

2.2.18 Whilst they note that it is the primary role of the music industry to invest in this country's talent and provide a base for it to succeed, there is a role for policy-makers and tourism bodies to realise the potential of this considerable economic asset.

Cultural Impact in Birmingham

2.2.19 The 2009 study of the impact of the cultural sector across Birmingham asked 1,000 residents of the West Midlands about the impact of cultural provision on them:

- 75% believed that the cultural offer makes Birmingham a truly international city;

¹⁸ The UK Music report notes that the "amount of spending directly attributable to each nation and region is limited to measurable elements such as ticket price, on the night spending, and some transportation costs. A substantial proportion of spending cannot be allocated to specific regions. For example, an overseas music tourist staying in the UK for 7 days might spend 3 nights in one region and 4 in another. In total, £155 million of spending in the UK by overseas music tourists, and £36 million of spending by domestic tourists, is unallocated to any particular nation or region. But all nations and regions will, in actuality, share in this £191 million of unallocated spending."



- 48% agreed that the city's cultural provision is an extra reason for friends and relations to come and visit them;
- 73% said the cultural provision makes the city vibrant and exciting;
- 49% believed that the arts makes the region unique and different;
- 64% were proud of the skills, imagination and creativity in the city;
- 76% agreed that the cultural provision reflects the city's diversity and different cultures and 54% believed it celebrates the city's rich heritage;
- 76% believe the arts provide opportunities for people to come together and share experiences.

2.3 Birmingham's Independent Music Sector

2.3.1 Work undertaken by Cllr Hendricks aimed to assess how Birmingham City Council and its partners in the public and private sectors can best support the independent music sector. The report made recommendations for stakeholder interventions for the independent music sector in Birmingham based on the views of local music personnel, business and employers, initiatives from national agencies, priorities from local and regional agencies, market and sector trends and opportunities. The research was informed and driven by a small stakeholder group chaired by Cllr Hendricks.

2.3.2 This group looked at the music sector in Birmingham across all points of production (studios, producers, musicians, labels, promoters, venues, media, freelance activists, publicist), noting that:

Too often ... this vast grass roots focus on making music, and for many that means original content, is perhaps not reflected at a local level through a co-ordinated effort of agencies to smooth the path to progress, growth and development as if this sector more than other is something elusive or hard to hold on to.

2.3.3 The work was also prompted by the fact that initiatives in this area were spread across a number of subject areas and disciplines. Within the City Council, support had traditionally come from three different portfolios – Leisure, Regeneration and Corporate Communications. At the time, a mirror-image pattern was discernable across key stakeholders at the time such as Advantage West Midlands (AWM), Arts Council England and the Chamber of Commerce who were responsible for funding a number of support packages and projects with different criteria.

2.3.4 Whilst there were some successes, there was no coherent plan, with each working independently from the other, which resulted in duplication of effort and limited value gained for the money spent. In addition, those who needed support or guidance did not know where to go.

The sector in Birmingham is diverse and is as likely to network nationally or even internationally as it is locally.



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2.3.5 The report, *Punching Below Our Weight*, listed six key recommendations:

- The independent music sector must be recognized as a major cultural asset and an economic opportunity for the city;
- A clear five-year plan is required, articulating sector ambitions;
- The city should create a credible Independent Music Action Group drawn from the sector;
- The action group must work at a strategic level with stakeholders continually monitoring, updating and implementing;
- The city must collaborate more closely with business, cultural and educational sectors to enable and support start-ups, SMEs artists, entrepreneurs and innovators;
- A long-term approach to the branding and profile of Birmingham in an independent music context must be established and maintained.

2.3.6 Other reports have come to similar conclusions. The 2008 *Vision for the Music Industry in the West Midlands* made four recommendations, focusing on:

- Creating all activities with a longer term goal in mind;
- Information flow and dissemination;
- Networks, Mentoring and Learning;
- Raising the Profile of the West Midlands and its Music.

2.4 Summary

2.4.1 A 2007 economic study provided evidence that classical music creates a direct value to the region. No comparable study has been completed with regards to the many other types of music enjoyed by residents of, and visitors to, Birmingham. However, there is a growing evidence base of indicative data that suggests that the popular music sector can and does have a significant economic impact and is valued by residents of the city.

2.4.2 Most recently UK Music's report, which quantified spend by overseas and domestic music tourists, laid down a challenge to public bodies, noting that "there is a role for policy-makers and tourism bodies to realise the potential of this considerable economic asset". We know from our discussions with UK Music that other cities are responding to this challenge.

2.4.3 The benefits for Birmingham lie not only in the direct spend identified but as means of enhancing civic pride and supporting further economic growth by augmenting the marketing and financial value associated with the city.

2.4.4 The previous studies that have looked at Birmingham's independent music sector remind us that the issue is not a new one. In our evidence gathering, we explored some of the themes to emerge from this work, and asked how best we could take this forward.



3 Birmingham's Music Heritage

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 One of UK Music's recommendations in "Destination Music" is:

Tourism authorities and local economic partnerships should capitalise on the unique musical strength and heritage of each region and nation with specific campaigns and packages including transportation and accommodation.

3.1.2 This prompted us to ask: how do we, in Birmingham, celebrate our musical past? How does this compare to other local authorities? What role could musical heritage play in improving perceptions of Birmingham?

3.1.3 There is plenty of evidence that heritage is a significant component of the tourism industry: according to UNESCO, cultural and natural heritage tourism is "the most rapidly growing international sector of the tourism industry".¹⁹ The most famous examples of music destinations attract millions of visitors each year: for example Nashville 'Music City', (epicentre of the country music industry) has 11 million visits each year; and Memphis (rock and roll, Elvis Presley, Blues and 1960s Soul heritage) has 11 million visitors annually, with Graceland (Elvis' home in Memphis) receiving 520,000 visitors annually (second only in attendance volume to the White House).

3.1.4 Closer to home, around 225,000 people visited the Beatles Story Museum in Liverpool in 2010 (an increase of 14% on the previous year) and 35,000 took the Magical Mystery Tour, a bus trip around the main Liverpool Beatles sites. 40% of all tourism to Liverpool is Beatles based.

3.1.5 There is further evidence that music heritage trips are "more frequently undertaken by middle-aged and older consumers" with "strong representation among more affluent socio-economic groups".²⁰

3.1.6 We held one evidence gathering session specifically on heritage, speaking to witnesses who were involved in music heritage projects in Birmingham. The value of music heritage also came up in subsequent sessions: witnesses emphasising Birmingham's diverse and unique musical heritage.

3.1.7 In this chapter we will explore the issues raised during our discussions on Birmingham's heritage: what is being done, what are the barriers to celebrating heritage in Birmingham, what options are there for doing more, do other cities celebrate their musical heritage better?

¹⁹ Mintel (2010) Cultural and Heritage Tourism – International, Mintel, London; quoted in David Leaver and Lawrence Green *'Not Fade Away': Popular Music Heritage and (re)Modelling the Development of Cultural Tourism Industries – the Case of Buddy Holly*, Manchester Metropolitan University Business School, 2011

²⁰ David Leaver and Lawrence Green *ibid.*



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3.2 Current Projects

3.2.1 All our witnesses were proud of Birmingham's musical heritage and wanted to celebrate it. We heard about current or recent projects which celebrated Birmingham's varied musical heritage:

- Home of Metal ;
- Birmingham Music Heritage Foundation;
- Birmingham Popular Music Archive.
- Made in Birmingham: Reggae Punk Bhangra.

Home of Metal (HoM)

3.2.2 Capsule (an organisation which curates and presents live music, events, exhibitions and the annual Supersonic festival) created and produced a series of events under the banner "Home of Metal" in 2011, in partnership with organisations including Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, New Art Gallery Walsall, Wolverhampton Museum and Art Gallery, Walsall Leather Museum, Bilston Craft Gallery, and the Black Country Partnership.

3.2.3 It started in Walsall in 2007, when a symposium was held (funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund) to explore and celebrate the heavy metal heritage of the West Midlands. This money also paid for training in archiving, digitalising memorabilia and events management. A website and digital archive were set up:

... an opportunity for fans from all corners of the globe to share their passion for Heavy Metal music and contribute stories and memorabilia by uploading images, sound files and film footage.²¹

3.2.4 Research conducted by Capsule (funded by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council) had shown that there was very little information or memorabilia in West Midlands' museums and libraries. So a series of "open days" were held to collect fans' memorabilia and stories, and to record and digitise them – a sort of "Antiques Roadshow" for Heavy Metal fans.

3.2.5 In June 2011, the Home of Metal exhibition opened at Birmingham's Museum and Art Gallery. The exhibition was part of a programme of events, which involved exhibitions at Wolverhampton Art Gallery and The New Art Gallery Walsall plus a conference, concerts and film programme. The exhibition contained memorabilia and oral histories contributed by fans from all over the world (largely from the open days referred to above).

3.2.6 The exhibition was funded by £50,000 from the Arts Council, £50,000 from the Esme Fairbairn Foundation, £17,600 from Birmingham City Council, £3,730 Museums Libraries and Archives Council, £1,500 from BMAG Patrons and the rest from ticket sales income.

²¹ www.homeofmetal.com/the-project/about/



3.2.7 Creating a sense of civic pride was important to the curators, so the exhibition was located in the Gas Hall in Birmingham. Around 16,000 people visited the exhibition, and generated £1.6m for the local economy. The press coverage was unprecedented – it was one of the big events in Birmingham this year that made it into the national media and consequently reached international audiences. The diverse media coverage included national newspapers, the BBC and a 30 minute documentary on Sky. Some of the comments generated included:

Full Metal Racket: Birmingham has been slow to celebrate its heavy mob. A new showcase should change all that

Heavy metal was born in the Black Country when its furnaces still blazed. Now the area is celebrating its heritage – with a raft of gigs and exhibitions²²

3.2.8 The exhibition itself has come to an end, though we are aware of discussions, on-going at the time of writing this report, to find a home for the exhibits that do not have to be returned to private owners. The project itself continues: with the digital archive and events (including Reverberation: The Art Of Bashing Metal Then And Now, at the Bilston Craft Gallery in November).

Birmingham Music Heritage Foundation

3.2.9 The Birmingham Music Heritage Foundation is a Community Interest Company (i.e. a business with primarily social objectives where surpluses are reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community) focusing on Birmingham's music heritage between the years 1965 and 1985.

3.2.10 It started in 2009 with a £50,000 Heritage Lottery Grant and has since created:

- A website and artist guide with video and audio interviews (with volunteer engagement and support): Birmingham Music Heritage - Untold Stories, looking at Birmingham (1965 to 1985);
- Duran Duran video documentary;
- Five short documentary films, including interviews with artists from The Move, UB40, Duran Duran, Toyah Wilcox, Joan Armatrading and Steel Pulse;
- A radio documentary, transmitted on Radio WM;
- Soho Community Museum exhibition 'Handsworth Evolution' and a community heritage project in Handsworth: a series of community workshops were held with residents and musicians, interviewed with the assistance of young people trained in media skills.

3.2.11 A tourist trail is being developed, with video and audio quotes from celebrated artists for use with smart phone applications. The foundation has also uploaded several heritage edits via Youtube.

3.2.12 The Birmingham Music Heritage Foundation is seeking further funding and development partners for more work across the city with young people and the community at large to engage with more music projects both creative / new music and heritage interest initiatives.

²² Sunday Times magazine, 19th June 2011; The Guardian, 10th July 2011



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Birmingham Popular Music Archive (BPMA)

3.2.13 The Birmingham Popular Music Archive is a digital hub and has been created to recognise and celebrate Birmingham's rich musical heritage. The Archive was set up in 2008 and people can send content – stories, pictures, ticket stubs, videos – to be uploaded (which is done in the creator's own time) or comment on stories with their own experiences:

Our rather big ambition is to capture the entire history of popular music in and from the city.²³

3.2.14 The site has over 360 user-generated pages of content, adding to knowledge about Birmingham and its music, with an active community approaching 500 individual users. Funding received by the project totalled £5,000.

3.2.15 The BPMA is also developing with the Civic Society a new scheme to identify places of musical historical importance (similar to Blue Plaques) and hopefully this will lead onto the development of tourist trail incorporating such sites.

3.2.16 The BPMA has also been involved with two BBC broadcast radio productions about local music; Phil Lynott of Thin Lizzy (born in Selly Oak) and UB40.

Made In Birmingham: Reggae Punk Bhangra (2010)

3.2.17 The film *Made In Birmingham – Reggae Punk Bhangra* (a sister project of the BPMA) explores the social, political and cultural issues that gave rise to music emanating from the city using rare archive footage and interviews to shed new insight into the city and its music.

3.2.18 The film has been shown around the world, including being played to over 70,000 people at the 'plug in' exhibition and at selected cinemas across the country. It has also been chosen to screen at International Film Festivals with the latest one at NXNE in Toronto, Canada and is currently being shown at the London Underground Film Festival and as part of The Public's Art of Noise exhibition.

3.2.19 However, although shown at Artsfest, there will be many residents in Birmingham who have yet to see the film.

3.3 Birmingham's Diverse Heritage

3.3.1 Much of the focus on Birmingham's musical heritage in recent months has been on heavy metal, because of the success of the Home of Metal Exhibition. However, one of the things that stood out during our evidence gathering sessions was the diversity of music that has originated in Birmingham. Witnesses told us that Birmingham is the birthplace of British reggae and bhangra.

²³ birminghammusicarchive.com/?page_id=177



- 3.3.2 There are also certain parts of the city associated with international artists, such as Steel Pulse, Apache Indian, Swami, who originate from Handsworth and those that have made the city their home such as Punjabi singer Malkit Singh. The melting pot of cultures in the area has fuelled a strong music scene with artists bringing to their music their ethnic and British identity.

Bhangra

- 3.3.3 Bhangra is based on the fusion of Punjabi sounds with western and broader styles of music such as reggae, soul, rock and hip hop. With a large concentration of Punjabi people in Birmingham the city is recognised as the centre for bhangra music in the country.
- 3.3.4 Birmingham has been home to some of the most influential bands and promoters in the scene and has created a worldwide appeal and international export market, although it has been a predominately underground industry since inception. It is estimated that Birmingham is home to approximately 50 international performing bhangra acts²⁴ and is responsible for producing almost 90% of the UK's bhangra music²⁵

The bhangra industry has been known as an industry since the early 1980's as it creates, performs, promotes and preserves music.²⁶

- 3.3.5 The city also boasts a number of recording and distribution companies, producers and record labels and band managers. Furthermore the BBC Asian Network, which has responsibility for promoting the British-Asian music scene across all its genres, has been based in Birmingham.
- 3.3.6 The influence of bhangra can be seen furthermore with the inclusion of bhangra tracks on computer games and involvement of bhangra acts in international events such as the G8 summit, Eurovision Song Contest and the Commonwealth games. Birmingham based producers have also worked with mainstream chart acts and have played with bands such as UB40.

Reggae

- 3.3.7 Like the origins of UK bhangra, British reggae has made its home in Birmingham. The 1970s saw the rise of reggae and ska in the city, with local band Steel Pulse paving the way for a number of commercially successful, reggae influenced acts, such as UB40, Musical Youth and The Beat.
- 3.3.8 Children of the first generation of migrants settled mainly in areas like Handsworth and as such much of the reggae music produced by the city has come from this area with its own distinctive sound fuelled by the experiences of the young people making the music.
- 3.3.9 The city has its own reggae festival, 'Simmer Down', which has been running for 3 years. The event is held annually in Handsworth Park and showcases mainly reggae artists. Furthermore in

²⁴ www.sohoroadtothepunjab.org/downloads/Bhangra-In-Birmingham-PS-Jutla.pdf

²⁵ McEwan, C. and Pollard, J. and Henry, N (2005) *The 'global' in the city economy: multicultural economic development in Birmingham*, International journal of urban and regional studies, 29 (4). pp. 916-933.

²⁶ www.sohoroadtothepunjab.org/downloads/Bhangra-In-Birmingham-PS-Jutla.pdf



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2012 the city will be hosting Jamaican athletes as they prepare for the Olympics and a number of initiatives are being worked on at the time of writing this report that will see the city celebrate Jamaica's 50th year of independence.

- 3.3.10 Reggae has evolved over the decades into several subgenres and fusions including dubstep and drum and bass.

3.4 Barriers

- 3.4.1 Each of the projects discussed in section 3.2 contribute to a growing sense of the importance of Birmingham's musical heritage. However, although each involved a number of partners, they have been operated largely independently from each other.
- 3.4.2 This is partly the result of the haphazard nature of funding – as we noted above, each has been funded in a different way, with different criteria to meet. Witnesses believed that with “no-one flying the flag for Birmingham's music heritage” there was therefore no overarching plan or coherent strategy to guide any such activity.
- 3.4.3 Each project has been created and promoted by individuals with a passion for Birmingham and music. However, they all reported the sense that there was a lack of interest from influential organisations such as the City Council and Marketing Birmingham. This lack of interest was defined both in financial terms and in terms of a lack of understanding of music culture, which led to a reluctance to celebrate. A number of witnesses reported “positive meetings” but with no or little outcome. There was even a suggestion that the city's public institutions are embarrassed by some aspects of our music heritage. One example quoted was the refusal, in 2003, to award Ozzy Osbourne “freedom of the city”.²⁷
- 3.4.4 However, witnesses also raised another issue related to the nature of music history in Birmingham. It is true that Birmingham has much to celebrate: however its very variety means there is no single obvious strand of heritage to emerge and so has not had the recognition that other cities such as Liverpool and Manchester have received.

3.5 Benefits of Celebrating Musical Heritage

- 3.5.1 We also considered what the benefits of any investment in musical heritage might be. From our discussion, the benefits broadly fell into two interlinked categories:
- Tourism: to provide a focal point for visitors and celebrations and improve external perceptions of Birmingham and what the city has to offer;
 - Community education: so Birmingham residents (in particular young people) know what there is to celebrate here and improve internal perceptions and augment civic pride.

²⁷ www.contactmusic.com/news-article/hometown-honour-for-ozzy-osbourne-rejected



- 3.5.2 The latter point has been picked up by the Birmingham Music Heritage Foundation, in particular with its work in Handsworth which brought young and old together to create an archive.
- 3.5.3 The Home of Metal exhibition demonstrated what can be achieved in terms of the former: the national and international press reports generated enormous positive coverage for Birmingham, of the sort that public institutions could never hope to buy. It also brought fans from all over the country and Europe to Birmingham. (It is a recurring theme in evidence presented to a number of Scrutiny Reviews that poor perceptions of Birmingham are generally held by those who have never visited the city – getting people to visit is one of the best ways to change opinions²⁸).

3.6 The Liverpool “Matrix”

- 3.6.1 One of the explanations put forward for Birmingham’s little celebration of music heritage was that Birmingham has not had a Beatles or “Madchester” equivalent. Some of our witnesses believed that, whilst Manchester and Liverpool appeared to have got it right in terms of celebrating music heritage, in truth they had benefited from one or two big names and a handful of bands coming together at the same time which gave a focus for investment. However, David Leaver’s research, in *‘Not Fade Away’: Popular Music Heritage and (re)Modelling the Development of Cultural Tourism Industries – the Case of Buddy Holly*, suggests that the picture is not so straightforward:

Liverpool, especially with its recent cross marketing linkages with Memphis, has become a global super-brand. In contrast, cities such as Manchester have been relatively undemonstrative and low-key in the portrayal of their music heritage (in Manchester’s case, The Smiths, New Order, Stone Roses, Oasis etc.).²⁹

- 3.6.2 In other words, “while cities such as Liverpool and Memphis turned their musical heritage into tourist attractions, Manchester simply kept looking forward and developing new scenes and tastes. Yet the 2002 film ‘Twenty-Four Hour People (a biopic of Tony Wilson and “Madchester”)’ was probably at the point at which Manchester music fans started to look back at the rich musical history of their city”. In the case of Liverpool, as David Leaver explains:

The development of a Beatles-based heritage industry since its early days in the 1980s to its current position as arguably the UK’s pre-eminent exemplar of pop cultural tourism has not been linear: it has involved private, not for profit and public stakeholders; and has witnessed controversial episodes and trajectories.³⁰

²⁸ Scrutiny Review of Supporting the Recovery, June 2011; and Overview of Marketing Birmingham, February 2010

²⁹ David Leaver and Lawrence Green *ibid.*

³⁰ David Leaver and Lawrence Green *ibid.*



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Table 1: Key elements of The Liverpool Matrix

Class of Activity	Activity	Examples
(a) Brand Personality	1. Authenticity	Actual sites related to songs: Penny Lane, Strawberry Fields; boyhood homes of Lennon and McCartney where songs were written and rehearsed; Eleanor Rigby gravesite. http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-the_beatles.htm
	2. Support from the artist estate	Yoko Ono and Mike McCartney involved with National Trust in boyhood homes. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-merseyside-11186718
(b) Leadership and Management	3. Risk taker and champion	Beatles Industry Group formed from key stakeholders from public, not-for-profit, and private Liverpool 'Beatles' stakeholders http://board.georgeharrison.com/viewtopic.php?f=6&t=6612
	4. Partnerships	Beatles Industry Group
(c) Marketing Communications	5. Web presence	http://www.visitliverpool.com/site/music
	6. Use of PR angles: anniversaries	Unveiling of John Lennon 'Peace' statute Oct 9 2010 his 70 th birthday. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/music/music-news/8052634/Monument-to-John-Lennon-unveiled-in-Liverpool-on-his-70th-birthday.html
	7. Use of fanzines, social media	'In my life' set to images of Liverpool on youtube. 7 million hits to date (June 2011) since May 2007 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zI0Q8ytD44Y
	8. Guided tours	Cavern City Tours http://www.beatlestour.org/
(d) Infrastructure	9. Number of hotel rooms	A range of hotels at all price points http://www.expedia.co.uk/Liverpool-Hotels.d6046241.Travel-Guide-Hotels
	10. Communications	Availability of good transportation and a variety of modes of travel around sites of interest http://www.merseytravel.gov.uk/

3.6.3 He emphasised the role that public and private bodies have played in “securing, building, marketing and promoting the contemporary Beatles Heritage industry”:

- The Cavern Club is privately owned, offering free access to visitors outside performance times;
- The “Beatles Story” Museum is owned by the public sector Merseytravel organisation and charges an entrance fee to visitors;
- The National Trust owns the boyhood homes of John Lennon and Paul McCartney and again, levies an entrance charge for visits.³¹

³¹ David Leaver and Lawrence Green *ibid*.



- 3.6.4 David Leaver and Lawrence Green along with the Director of Tourism in Liverpool, developed the “Liverpool matrix”, which provides a checklist for the development of the supply side of the tourism offer. It suggests that “all [these] elements need to be in harmony to provide the best visitor contextual experience” (see Table 1).

3.7 How Should we Celebrate Music Heritage in Birmingham?

- 3.7.1 Our evidence gathering sessions generated a number of ideas and suggestions for ways in which Birmingham could celebrate its music heritage, and these are discussed below. We also set out the findings from David Leaver, Senior Lecturer, Manchester Metropolitan University Business School who visited Birmingham during August, with Jez Collins (Birmingham City University).

- **Birmingham Ballroom:** “A natural viewing gallery overlooking the original stage and dance floor. Like the Ryman Auditorium, Nashville this is also a ‘live’ venue which adds to its authenticity. As many different genres have performed at the venue there would seem to be an opportunity to provide a timeline of events here to provide an overview of Birmingham’s music heritage”;
- **Mothers, Erdington:** “What a gem and the potential to recreate it Cavern Style. A roll call of the great and good 1968-1971 played here: (Floyd, Derek and the Dominoes, Zeppelin, Black Sabbath, the Who, Van Morrison etc). An intimate place and unexpected. This is the sort of place where the fan can imagine what it must have been like to be there. The noise the Who will have generated in that small enclosed space!” (David Leaver).

- 3.7.2 Marking these places would provide a focus for tourists coming to the city. There are examples of other cities using plaques to mark musical heritage sites:

- Sheffield has Sheffield Legends, where Sheffield residents can nominate people who have brought the city recognition at a national or international level. These plaques are set in the pavement in the “Hall of Fame” outside the Town Hall. Joe Cocker and Def Leppard have been awarded plaques;
- In Liverpool a blue plaque was installed at John Lennon’s childhood home (In 1998, English Heritage extended the blue plaques scheme on a pilot basis to targeted areas: Liverpool & Merseyside, Southampton, Birmingham, and Portsmouth. This work resulted in the installation of thirty-four plaques, erected between 2000 and 2005, but only one to a musician);
- A blue plaque in Bristol has been awarded to Arthur (Art) Edward Satherley – the father of country music;
- Eleven 2-Tone plaques unveiled in Coventry in 2009, to mark various locations on the 2-Tone trail (including the pub where The Specials unique ska sound was originally created and the site of Tiffany’s Nightclub, where 2-Tone bands The Specials, The Selecter, and Madness played);



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- Rochdale has a plaque on the Kenion St Music Building where bands from Manchester, Liverpool and from all over the UK recorded. Joy Division recorded here from 1978 onwards and had their bass equipment custom built on the ground floor.

- 3.7.3 Birmingham has Broad Street's "Walk of Stars" administered by the Broad Street Business Improvement District (BID). These plaques are set in the pavement on Broad Street in the city centre. Stars in popular music include: Ozzy Osbourne; Noddy Holder; Tony Iommi; Beverley Knight; Joan Armatrading and Roy Wood.
- 3.7.4 More recently, PRS for Music (Performing Right Society) erected a plaque on the Hare and Hounds pub in Kings Heath, to mark where UB40 first performed in 1979. PRS for Music set up the Heritage Award in 2009 to recognise the unusual 'performance birthplaces' of famous bands and artists. UB40 is the eighth band to be given the honour of receiving the permanent plaque.³²
- 3.7.5 The Birmingham Civic Society has prime responsibility in the city for the erection of Blue Plaques in Birmingham, which recognise individuals connected with Birmingham who have achieved greatness through their work or work in the community. They also erect History Plaques which commemorate places of historical interest in and around Birmingham.
- 3.7.6 Most significantly for this Scrutiny Review, they are developing a Plaque scheme: this will recognise Birmingham's contribution to the pop and rock music industry. Work is being undertaken with Jez Collins of the Birmingham Popular Music Archive and Birmingham City University, to combine the static plaques with new technologies to create an interactive trail.
- 3.7.7 Whilst the idea of a plaque scheme is broadly welcomed, there were some caveats. Firstly, the scheme should have credibility within the industry and with fans. The PRS certainly has this, but some witnesses felt that the "Walk of Stars" for example, did not. This was largely because the stars are not specifically geographically linked to the person they are celebrating, for example the Ozzy Osbourne 'star' is not located at his childhood home in Aston.
- 3.7.8 Sustainable funding is an issue: Marketing Birmingham were supportive of the idea, although their current agreement with the City Council does not allow capital expenditure. Coventry's 2-Tone plaques have commercial sponsorship.

Music Tours/Heritage Trails

- 3.7.9 Another suggestion was that Birmingham could have a series of tours or heritage trails. In Liverpool the Magical Mystery Tour operated by Cavern City Tours operates a two hour bus tour that takes people to all the places associated with the Beatles. The National Trust also has a special joint tour of the childhood homes of John Lennon and Paul McCartney. Manchester has a two hour walking tours of landmarks synonymous with Manchester music scene.

³² prsformusic.com/aboutus/press/latestpressreleases/Pages/PRSforMusichonoursUB40firstgig.aspx



The role and contribution of music tourism: Birmingham

David Leaver, Senior Lecturer, Manchester Metropolitan University Business School, August 2011

Details of 'sites of production' supplied by Jez Collins

This section draws on field research limited to a one day accompanied tour of Birmingham sites. My 'guide' was Jez Collins (Birmingham City University) who has an excellent understanding of the breadth of Birmingham's heritage and importantly how this can be communicated in a digital age.

The key target audiences in my opinion are the inhabitants of Birmingham and dedicated music tourists from outside of the region.

For the people of Birmingham the effort would be directed at showing the range of music (fostered in part by different communities) that has grown within the city. A common reaction in music tourism is that the local population is unaware of what they have.

The message is slightly different for the dedicated music tourist. These are hardcore fans who are fully informed. Authenticity is key. They are interested in detail and being able to make their own connection with what is placed before them.

Within Birmingham, 'sites of production' where music was written, recorded or performed is the dominant theme of its potential music tourism. Various 'sites of production' are listed below. They provide a range of genres and artistes.

1. Birmingham Ballroom, Dale End: historic venue originally the Birmingham Ballroom, Top Rank, Hummingbird, Carling/o2 Academy and now back to Birmingham Ballroom;
2. Mothers, Erdington. Pink Floyd recorded Ummagumma here;
3. Rich Bitch studios: famous rehearsal and recording studios, Selly Oak;
4. Hollick and Taylor / Grosvenor Studios / CMAT, Handsworth: Site of famous recording studio (Thunderbirds, The Move, Jimmy Cliff, Spencer Davis Group and others);
5. Aston Villa Leisure Centre: Bob Dylan played here in April 1995;
6. Barton Arms, The Drum, Elbow Room Newtown;
7. Birmingham University site of the Student Guild: last ever Joy Division gig, and the concert was recorded for the album that became Still;
8. Walk of Stars and Rum Runner Club (venue for many of Duran Duran's early gigs) Broad St;
9. The Crown Pub, home of Henry's Blues House venue of first Black Sabbath (as Earth) gig and legendary blues club and the venue for the first ever live Folk album release.
10. HMV Institute, Digbeth: site of Jug O' Punch Club run by Ian Campbell biggest folk club in England in the 60's hosted Paul Simon and Joni Mitchell amongst others.
11. Digbeth: Custard Factory, The Rainbow and Irish Centre.



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- 3.7.10 We have already seen that the Birmingham Music Heritage Foundation is developing a tourist trail, with video and audio quotes from celebrated artists for use with smart phone applications.
- 3.7.11 Birmingham does currently have a company, Birmingham Tours, running bus and walking tours around the city. However, none focus specifically on music or artist related venues. Part of the difficulty here is that a number of buildings associated with music or artists are no longer in existence or have different uses. A trail/tour would support the need for something physical – such as a plaque – to connect people to the location.
- 3.7.12 However there are different and imaginative ways of connecting fans to music. For example a road in Melbourne was renamed ACDC Lane due to the band AC/DC's ties to Melbourne. A local broadcaster said:

... renaming this lane associates Melbourne with AC/DC, and fans, from interstate and internationally, will go there and have an AC/DC experience.³³

- 3.7.13 The lane is in the city's bar and rock district. Melbourne did not just pick any road, nor one with a purely historical connection, but one in the rock district with a bar for fans to visit. Grounding any heritage attraction with what is currently going on in the city was seen as crucial.

Digital Technologies

- 3.7.14 The pros and cons of digital archives/maps/trails was also considered. We have already mentioned that some of the physical proposals (plaques and trails) are to be linked to digital media. These could give information on buildings, for visitors to read as they go round, or show photographs. More ambitiously, there could be programmes that “re-imagine” the buildings to draw people in, for example, providing a virtual tour of what Mothers would have looked like in the early 1970s with narrative.

Table 3: Websites Celebrating the Cities Music Heritage

City	Website	Details
Birmingham	Birmingham Music Archive (BMA)	Celebrating Birmingham's music heritage
	Birmingham Music Heritage (BMH) 1965 – 1985	Official lottery funded music heritage site – see above
Brighton & Hove	The PUNK history of BRIGHTON	Punkbrighton is an online museum created and maintained by it's creator and curator, punkdaddy
Liverpool	Liverpool city of music bid	In Summer 2011 Liverpool will be submitting their application to UNESCO to become England's first city of music (they already are a UNESCO world heritage site).
Manchester	Manchester District Music Archive	To celebrate Greater Manchester music, protect its heritage and promote awareness of its cultural importance.
Sheffield	Sheffield history	Memories, stories and photos of Sheffield (people contribute).

³³ www.theage.com.au/articles/2004/09/09/1094530766163.html



- 3.7.15 Witnesses were generally however in favour of using such technologies alongside physical assets, not as a replacement for them. The option of downloading a mobile phone application or 'app' was suggested as one way in which music tourists could digest further information of interest and make connections to an area or venue of interest ahead and during their visit to the city.

Permanent Exhibition Space

- 3.7.16 The success of the Home of Metal exhibition raised the issue of whether Birmingham needs a permanent exhibition/museum space dedicated to music. To some of our witnesses, the case was clear: properly curated and credible exhibitions can generate enormous interest, bring visitors to the city and act as a focal point for events, conferences etc.
- 3.7.17 For others, the jury is still out. The experience of Sheffield's National Centre for Popular Music acts as a salutary warning for anyone considering such an idea. The issues are sustainability and credibility. The viability of such a space would be questionable without rotating exhibitions; the size and nature of the venue all important. Authenticity and credibility with the industry and with fans is crucial – pop music is and always has been “bottom up”.
- 3.7.18 There are successful ventures: in 1987, a number of interested individuals discussed the need for the establishment of some form of archive for jazz. The result was the National Jazz Foundation Archive and, eventually, the National Jazz Archive in Loughton Library, Essex. Essex County Council supported the archive and offered the accommodation.
- 3.7.19 This experience recognises two things: firstly that without a focal point, a nationally recognised archive, “there was some concern that collections in the hands of private individuals might ultimately be lost if no arrangements could be made to safeguard them”. Secondly, the Archive is supported by a programme of events, concerts and conferences. Keeping interest alive is key.
- 3.7.20 There was some support for a “proper Birmingham Music Archive within the new library”. As one witness put it:
- ... offering access to recordings and memorabilia of the Birmingham scene with a timeline, would help provide an informed perspective on the contributions made to the national and international music scene by Birmingham musicians, but also it should honour artists who have been local heroes without necessarily reaching a national consciousness.

3.8 Summary

- 3.8.1 There is strong evidence that heritage attractions are a significant component of a tourism “offer” to visitors, and that this is equally true with regard to music heritage. Whilst there is not the evidence available for a clear business case, the visitor and economic impact figures from national and international attractions and from the Home of Metal exhibition here in Birmingham demonstrate that this is an area that is worth serious investigation.



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3.8.2 And whilst it is true Birmingham does not have a Beatles or Elvis equivalent, we should not underestimate the value of Birmingham's musical past – its role in the birth of heavy metal and British reggae and bhangra, the bands such as Black Sabbath and Duran Duran, and the diversity of Birmingham's "melting pot" music scene. As David Leaver points out "Visitors are attracted by notions of authenticity, heritage and nostalgia, and frequently undertake emotionally charged 'pilgrimages'". UK Music asked:

"Is there anything else, other than music that has the power to transform the utterly mundane, like a pedestrian crossing in north London, into an international tourist hotspot?"

3.8.3 In Birmingham we have individuals committed to Birmingham's music heritage and plenty of ideas about how to celebrate it. The barriers seem to be prominence, strategy and infrastructure. With the exception of the Home of Metal exhibition, much of the activity we have discussed here is not widely recognised. Even films that find an audience outside the city are not celebrated here. There is no strategy in place, and little of the infrastructure needed to deliver a good visitor experience.

3.8.4 Some put that down to the inertia and indifference of the city's leading institutions; others to the fragmentation of the music sector in Birmingham. There's also no doubt that the diversity of Birmingham's musical heritage is both a strength and drawback.

3.8.5 We will return to the role of the City Council in Chapter 5, but the message with regards to musical heritage was clear: there appears to be little support for, and a lack of understanding of, musical heritage. This was partly about a lack of a clear strategy. In practical terms, witnesses felt that there ought to be a single contact for those organisations interested in working in Birmingham, who can make links with what is going on elsewhere, but in particular break down barriers within the City Council to get things done.

3.8.6 A good example of this is the news that Birmingham Civic Society is developing a music heritage scheme. This is very welcome; we are also very keen to ensure that this remains both sustainable and credible. A central contact in the City Council would have been able to assist here.

3.8.7 The diversity of Birmingham's musical heritage is reflected in the diverse groups and individuals involved and interested in it. There is also a role for the independent music sector here, particularly in terms of determining priorities and linking projects up. There were mixed views on how this could be best achieved: some thought some sort of strategy group would help, so that organisations would have somewhere to go for support, advice, information and would not always be starting from scratch. It would also enable the sector to present a strong voice in cultural and political circles. Against that was the view that anything too generic would lose authenticity. Forcing Birmingham's diversity under one grouping or branding would not work. Those interested in Heavy Metal were unlikely to be fans of Duran Duran. There was general support for "city backing but without the council seeking to take over the reins."



4 Birmingham Today: A Music City?

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The second focus of our evidence gathering was Birmingham's independent music sector – to what extent is Birmingham a city of music today? In particular we asked what are Birmingham's strengths and weaknesses?
- 4.1.2 This chapter will set out the findings from those witnesses involved in the music industry in Birmingham. We spoke to as wide a range of people involved in the independent sector as we could in the time available, including an unsigned band, record label owners, promoters, venue owners/managers and festival organisers – all Birmingham based.
- 4.1.3 From these discussions, several themes arose:
- The health of the independent music sector in Birmingham, and its capacity and willingness to collaborate;
 - The vitality of the live music scene: venues and festivals, audiences and the visitor experience;
 - The reputation of Birmingham as a music city – locally, nationally and internationally; how perceptions of the city are affected by popular music;
 - Relationships with the City Council, and the types of support that are/could be available.
- 4.1.4 The following sections explore the first three themes in more detail; the last point is picked up in the next chapter.

4.2 The Independent Music Sector in Birmingham

Of course, all of this [music tourism] stems from the musical talent of the artists – and the investment in that talent – that attracts so many music tourists in the first place.³⁴

- 4.2.1 As UK Music, and all our witnesses made clear, at the heart of this issue are the creators and performers of music and whether they are able to flourish. Specifically for us, the question was whether they can flourish in Birmingham?
- 4.2.2 The infrastructure that needs to be in place is varied: it includes record labels and A&R (Artists and repertoire – responsible for talent spotting and overseeing the artistic development of artists), promoters, publishers and media agencies (as well as venues which we will focus on in the next section).

³⁴ UK Music, *Destination Music: The Contribution of Music Festivals and Major Concerts to Tourism in the UK*, 2011



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4.2.3 Councillor Hendricks' view was that:

The City can demonstrate a scene, across the communities, which includes a range of promoters, venues and festival bringing music from in and outside of Birmingham to audiences. In addition to this there are a number of key individuals, labels, artist, managers residing and functioning across the city; a fact that seems to suggest that the sector exists, is quantifiable and may be engaged with.

4.2.4 However, his view, and that of our witnesses was that whilst Birmingham has all segments of the industry, it does not have the crucial support networks that have national recognition and support by the industry in comparison to London, and even Manchester and Liverpool. Clare Edwards in her 2008 report for Advantage West Midlands also notes the "lack of infrastructure.

4.2.5 Many of those involved in the industry tend to take on more than one role, e.g. a promoter may also own a venue, and the culture was very much 'do it yourself'.

4.2.6 We spoke to a local unsigned band and were told that a strong support structure is needed to enable a band to grow and reach the next level – i.e. a record deal or signing up to a record label. However it was highlighted that in order to reach this, a wide range of assistance is needed, along with a number of people providing the backing to generate a bigger interest. This usually means that any bands with aspirations to move up the ladder having to leave the city as the lack of infrastructure and necessary contacts hinder progress.

4.2.7 This issue of retaining talent in the city came up a couple of times from witnesses:

There is very little opportunity for music students living in Birmingham to pursue a career in music. ... More support needs be given to the creative industries including incentives for individuals wishing to stay in Birmingham.

4.2.8 However, we took written evidence from Sound It Out, a social development agency for the West Midlands, which develops and delivers music based programmes of work across a diversity of communities, ages, ethnicities and genres. Their view was that "the sector (or the non formal sector) is there, it just needs a quality structure and a longer term approach to sustaining it." This includes better signposting and career advice sessions, and supporting some of the volunteering and mentoring programmes that exist. In general:

... the participatory music sector is incredibly diverse and well skilled.

Increasingly in my organisation we are receiving greater amounts of increasingly high quality applications for various freelance positions we offer (this tends to be between 150 – 200 work opportunities per year), and it is similar with training and development courses we run.



- 4.2.9 Sound It Out run successful volunteering and mentoring programmes for young people which have enabled young people to engage with the music industry and learn about career opportunities while gaining practical experience. Many have then gone onto formal higher education qualifications in music, work placements or employment, the majority of which have been local.
- 4.2.10 A linked issue is that of rehearsal rooms, although not raised in this Scrutiny Review very often it has been recognised as an issue nationally. UK Music, working with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and others, has helped fund a pilot scheme of 14 music rehearsal spaces for young people (Government put up an initial £500,000; local authorities and other sources such as Youth Music have provided the rest). These are all based in areas of multiple deprivation and are all free, or nearly free, to access. There are three in the Birmingham area: the Mason Youth Centre, the Pump House and also one recently opened in Coventry.

Working Together

- 4.2.11 The small size of the sector might appear to lend itself to close working and collaboration across the sector but, as were told repeatedly, Birmingham has always been a “strange scene”, a melting pot with no one single stand-out genre.
- 4.2.12 This perhaps more than anything else has contributed to the lack of progress in bringing the independent music sector together to provide a coherent voice.
- 4.2.13 There have been attempts to bring the sector together in the past, and a number of witnesses commented that they had been invited to meetings over the last ten years to discuss the same issues as those covered in our evidence gathering sessions. Yet there is no discernable voice advocating for the independent music sector in Birmingham. Views are mixed on why that is the case: mistakes made, high expectations, wrong timing, to name a few.
- 4.2.14 There are some groups working today:
- Music West Midlands (MWM): launched 2004, MWM is dedicated to the development, production and marketing of the region's music. Music West Midlands aimed to become the lead agency for the Business of Music across all platforms, origins, tastes, genres and processes for the whole of the West Midlands region and to act as industry champions and an employer's advisory board to Government departments wishing to interact with the regional Music Business community. However, one witness suggested that activity had “gone flat” in the last 2 years because of current economic circumstances.
 - West Midlands World Music Consortium is made up of 35 venues and organisation with a remit to tour and promote world music in and from Birmingham, the wider West Midlands region and abroad. One of the ambitions of WMWMC is make Birmingham the centre stage of world music and host WOMEX (World Music expo) in Birmingham.
 - Shaanti 11 promotes South Asian and new Asian music and has been able to promote music unique to Birmingham overseas;



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- Reggae Baby Lounge presents an opportunity for promoters to see new and established Birmingham Based reggae performers, songwriter and bands;
- Birmingham Music Network is a voluntary social enterprise organisation that was set up in the year 2000 to allow those keen to get into the music industry to informally meet and share information, gain knowledge and receive advice from those that are already in the local industry. Meetings are held on a monthly basis and the agenda is set by attendees.

4.2.15 Nevertheless many were of the view that there are “individual pockets” of activity but “without a platform for sharing ideas and mutual co-operation”.

The will and energy is there but there needs to be better coordination and contact between groups and interested individuals to take a holistic approach to promoting Birmingham music, both as an active force and as an archive.

4.2.16 We explored with our witnesses what groups or partnerships are in existence within sector, and whether there is a role for such a group. Cllr Hendricks concluded very strongly that there was a role for a “strategic music forum”, made up of sector representatives, drawn from all areas of the sector. This forum would work with stakeholders to influence planning and strategy; monitor trends and opportunities; and oversee sector development.

4.2.17 Whilst there are still differing views on the best way forward for the sector, most agreed that without a body to put forward a coherent voice and shared vision (particularly at the commercial end of the sector), the sector would be at a disadvantage. Those cautious about such an approach were concerned that trying to impose a structure on Birmingham’s diverse scene would constrain individuality and damage authenticity.

4.3 Live Music

4.3.1 Given the focus of this Scrutiny Review was the role popular music could play in attracting visitors to the city and enhancing the quality of life of residents, we looked at live music in Birmingham.

4.3.2 We were told that live music is better attended than it has been for a long time with growth over the last decade. Although PRS for Music reported a decline in consumer revenues from live music in the UK last year of 6.8% to £1.4bn, closer examination showed:

UK festivals performed strongly, and arenas and mid-sized venues held up, [but] there was a striking decline in the number of stadium gigs in 2010 compared to the previous year.

4.3.3 In other words, two-thirds of the decline were due to the fact that many major touring acts were not on the road in 2010, and “with less supply comes less demand”. Also some acts reduced their risk by playing in arenas rather than stadiums (e.g. Kings of Leon and Rod Stewart, both playing at the NIA in Birmingham that year). However, the UK festival market saw its primary ticket revenue



increase by nearly 20% – the result of both the increasing capacity of existing festivals and the increasing number of festivals.³⁵

- 4.3.4 In our evidence gathering, we discussed the range and quality of live music venues and festivals in Birmingham and the City Council's role in supporting these.

Venues

- 4.3.5 We were keen to find out what our witnesses thought about the range of venues in the city: is there the right mix of size and type? Generally our witnesses thought Birmingham has a wide-range of venues for live music in the city with the right mix of sizes, from large, premium venues to small pub venues.
- 4.3.6 There are two large venues in and around the city: the **National Indoor Arena** (NIA) with 12,800 capacity, and the **LG Arena** with a capacity of up to 15,700 and more flexible layouts following the completion of redevelopment in October 2009.
- 4.3.7 The NEC Group (of which both the NIA and the LG Arena are part) have a venue agreement with promoters. The Ticket Factory, The NEC Group's national box office, is allocated a minimum of 70% of tickets to sell. This service is operated on charging a booking fee to customers. Promoters can take the other 30% to other agents or The Ticket Factory can sell 100% of the tickets. A standard package of marketing accompanies this agreement.
- 4.3.8 Of the mid-size venues, the **Town Hall and Symphony Hall** (THSH) stand out as premium venues. They are unlike any other music venue in Birmingham as they are run as a charitable trust (by Performances Birmingham Ltd). They received core funding from Birmingham City Council and must abide by the terms of the service level agreement with the Council. They therefore take a balanced approach to the programming of events, ensuring that it is representative of a diverse range of artists (bearing in mind the city's demographics and mix of cultures) and economically viable.
- 4.3.9 A number of major artists have played at the two Halls in the last year. The Town Hall has a maximum capacity of 1,086 seats (seats in the stalls can be removed if required). The Symphony Hall has fixed seating of 2,262, though for rock and pop concerts this is reduced to 1,885. A number of our witnesses commented that they were considerably more expensive for promoters/artists than other venues in the city and outside. This was a source of complaint from some of our witnesses. However, the Chief Executive justified the variation on the grounds that they deliver more than just a venue: ticketing, technical and marketing is also provided. This "curator" role can involve taking on more risk on behalf of promoters/artists; for example, the Folk, Roots and World Music events hosted during 2011. THSH also have their own box office, and cap the number of tickets that can be sold elsewhere. This can make them less attractive to some promoters, as that is one of their sources of income.

³⁵ Will Page and Chris Carey, *Adding up the UK Music Industry 2010*, PRS for Music, August 2011



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- 4.3.10 Smaller venues range from the newly opened Birmingham Ballroom to one of the many pub live music venues in the city. The **Birmingham Ballroom** re-opened in September 2011 and provides three live music and club night venues: the Ballroom (3,000 capacity), The Other Room (600 capacity), and The End (200 capacity). The venue will be an independent live music venue, in other words not owned by a national company nor sponsored. Promoters and artists are not charged for the use of the Ballroom (though the other two do charge venue rentals) though costs of security, publicity and ticket printing are recouped.
- 4.3.11 We spoke to the owners/managers of two of the best known pub venues. The **Hare and Hounds** is a pub and live music venue in Kings Heath with a capacity to hold up to 200 people. The venue is also currently running a live sound course for anyone interested in being a sound engineer. One of the promoters we spoke to said that the Hare and Hounds was considered to be one of the top five smaller venues in the UK.
- 4.3.12 **The Rainbow** pub in Digbeth started as a live music venue in 2003 and has hosted a range of live music and DJ events. There are three venues within the building: the Cellar, the Courtyard and the Bar. The capacity is up to 7,000. The owners have a licence to close the road six times a year.
- 4.3.13 Overall, the venue owners/managers we spoke to felt that Birmingham did have the right mix of venues for the city, but that there was a lack of coherence when it came to promoting the city's venues and that it was left to promoters seeking to bring an act to the city to work out which venue would best suit a particular act. Whilst others pointed out that this was no different to most other cities, there was a view that better co-ordination would benefit Birmingham.
- 4.3.14 There was some agreement that some sort of 'one-stop' access point to information on venues (and other issues) for the city was needed. We spoke to representatives of THSH who shared with us their thoughts on more collaborative work amongst venues owners to bring a variety of acts to the City and to promote it as a place where artists would want to perform. Alongside this, there was an appetite for regular networking amongst the other venue owners/managers we spoke to.
- 4.3.15 This does happen on an informal basis, for example if THSH receive an enquiry about an act that would be better suited to play at the LG Arena or Birmingham Ballroom, they would pass this on. It is important for the individual venues, as well as Birmingham as a whole, that the acts are placed in the right venue; otherwise the visitor experience can be damaged and the promoter discouraged from returning to the city. However, it is not structured, and a more regular network – two or three times a year – could be of use. Some felt that the City Council was best placed to facilitate this; others felt that it could be built into existing structures (such as the Music Hub).
- 4.3.16 Other issues raised by the smaller venue owners/managers included the difficulties in promoting and publicising gigs (in particular the lack of opportunity to display posters and the restrictions in some parts of the city on distributing flyers) and the City Council's preference for "higher" arts (through funding) and larger venues (through the use of digital information displays). These issues are picked up in Chapter 5.



Festivals

4.3.17 There are a wide variety of music festivals held within Birmingham, including this year:

- Mostly Jazz, July 2011;
- Birmingham International Jazz Festival, July 2011;
- BE Festival, July 2011;
- Espirito Brum, September 2011;
- Moseley Folk Festival, September 2011;
- Supersonic, October 2011.

4.3.18 We spoke to the organisers of the Moseley Folk Festival and Birmingham Jazz Festival. The **Moseley Folk Festival**, held since 2006, is extremely popular (this year it was sold out on the Saturday and close to capacity on the Friday and Sunday). Over 40% of tickets were sold to people outside of Birmingham. Some visitors came from Europe and beyond.

4.3.19 The festival is held in a private park in Moseley, and the income generated from the festival is invested back into the park. This helps minimise complaints from local people who do not like the noise and disruption. It is professionally run (with adequate levels of security) and a sensitive approach is taken to these issues. (The Mostly Jazz Festival is held in the same park). There are many benefits to the local area: many of the stalls (retail: clothes, beer etc) are local businesses; local pubs profit from festival goers when the event finishes in the evening (10.30pm).

4.3.20 The **27th Birmingham International Jazz & Blues Festival** was held in July 2011, with 200 performances in 50 venues across the city and the region. Most events were free to the public.

4.3.21 Witnesses agreed that such events generate positive publicity for the city, but again the festivals generally operate independently and there seems to be little synergy or interconnection.

4.3.22 The City Council commissioned a consultation with five of Birmingham's independent festivals (not just music), recognising that these "punch above their weight" economically (despite operating at full stretch and with limited resources). The aim was to address some of the "internal and external factors which will enable small- and medium-scale festivals to flourish and achieve optimum impact in the future." The Independent Festival Group included Fierce! (performance); Supersonic (music); Rhubarb (photography); Birmingham Book Festival; and Flatpack Festival (film).

4.3.23 Three main barriers to development were identified:

- Event planning: including venues (a lack of mid-scale spaces and the challenges of non-traditional venues); infrastructure (gaps in provision of amenities, particularly in relation to Digbeth/Eastside); transport (poor public bus services running to and from the area during the evening especially for those living outside Birmingham) and lines of communication (the need to streamline the planning and licensing process);



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- PR and Marketing: regional media (dwindling print outlets for arts coverage / patchy provision online) and visibility (the challenge of making an impact in the city-centre and outer areas);
- Finance and administration: staffing (shortage of skilled event producers in the region and leadership development); financial planning (Birmingham festivals “tend to burn brightly but not for long”) and cultural policy (lack of a clear cultural strategy informing the decisions of major stakeholders alongside a complex and time-consuming fundraising process).³⁶

4.3.24 Of these issues, promotion and marketing was the one most strongly emphasised in our evidence gathering sessions. The Moseley Folk Festival was able to get sponsorship to produce banners, which were then displayed on railings on junctions in the city. However, there does not appear to be a clear process for applying for these.

4.3.25 The report again articulated the tension between the value of the “independent” smaller festivals – where independence is prized as an asset by audiences and by journalists and sponsors who can build profile around a distinctive story rather than a ‘something for everyone’ approach – and the advantages of working together to reduce fragmentation and duplication of effort and resources. One area the report suggests independent festival organisers could work together more is in building a “coherent festival calendar”, a point echoed by Marketing Birmingham in our evidence gathering sessions.

Audiences

4.3.26 A recurring view from different witnesses was that audiences in Birmingham were perceived to be less adventurous than in other cities, that Birmingham was not in the “top five for audience pull”, and that mid-range venues do not sell as well as in other cities.

4.3.27 Representatives of the Town Hall and Symphony Hall told us that in their experience the city has a lower ticket sales spend on events compared to counterparts Manchester and Liverpool. They also felt they have to be conservative in their programming in Birmingham and commented that this was somewhat different to the variety of artists that appear in the aforementioned cities.

4.3.28 Some of this may be the impact of the current economic climate on the number of people attending gigs. For instance we were told that, anecdotally, it seems that people are going out less often generally and therefore there is much less of a footfall Monday to Thursday where local and unsigned bands are most likely to be able to get gigs or secure venues.

4.3.29 Public transport – or rather lack of public transport after midnight – was suggested as having some influence here, as was the lack of a comprehensive listings and information guide on all events happening in the city. Both these are picked up later in the report.

4.3.30 Another theory put forward, again by several witnesses independently, was the influence of the student market. There is a clear perception that there is less involvement of student unions in

³⁶ Ian Francis, *Independent Festivals Group Needs Analysis*, prepared for Birmingham City Council, October 2009



organising and promoting gigs locally and as such students that are studying in Birmingham from other cities are struggling to find out what's on. Smaller venue owners/managers complained of the restrictions on accessing student audiences: the charges to get into Freshers Fairs and the restrictions of distributing flyers. Some put this down to agreements with big promoters, particularly of club nights. Conversely, there was a view from a member of the students' live music society at the University of Birmingham that promoting smaller gigs was difficult for them. We heard that promoters put the onus on those performing at the gig to sell tickets. The Guild itself did not put gigs on but may look at doing more so in the future. All our witnesses recognised that Birmingham does not have the reputation for live music that other Students Unions have.

4.4 Perceptions of Birmingham

- 4.4.1 A common theme in our evidence gathering related to perceptions of Birmingham, both as a base for industry or as music destination for visitors and promoters. As Cllr Hendricks concluded that:

[Birmingham has] ... a thriving local independent music sector, with individual successes but more could be done to establish a national or international reputation.

- 4.4.2 The issue was discussed in two parts: firstly, concern that local promotion of events and gigs is difficult; and secondly that more could be done to attract national or international attention.

Local Promotion

- 4.4.3 As David Leaver notes in his paper "Not Fade Away":

Marketing communications plays a very significant role in the development of tourism in its many and various forms. In musical and heritage tourism, its influence can be particularly strong. 'Fans' are by definition eager seekers of information relating to the object of their fandom and thus, highly likely to identify, utilize and value sources that will assist them in getting closer to artists and their music. Provision of information via the web or conventional publication is likely to achieve high levels of penetration and impact (a push strategy will usually find an open door).

- 4.4.4 The availability of information about gigs and events is therefore important not just for locals, but in informing visitors and contributing to the feel of a thriving music sector that will naturally attract people to the city.
- 4.4.5 A number of our witnesses pointed to the lack of coordination and a centralised information point to obtain details of live events or artists:



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Live music promotion is mostly done through flyers and through venue/promoter websites, though these are not always updated or lack information. A comprehensive website of live music/venue/artist information would be useful.

- 4.4.6 They felt that we compared poorly to other major cities, and there was a feeling that local media, both print and tv/radio did not cover local music as well as it could:

Encouragement to local radio stations to provide more exposure for local music and artists across the spectrum is essential. One thinks back to the 80s when ... radio shows ... gave extensive exposure to local acts in terms of airplay, sessions and interviews. It is a shame stations such as BRMB and WM no longer feel a community responsibility to local music.

- 4.4.7 Soldier, a local unsigned band, told us they were interviewed three times in Manchester by a local radio station when they played there, but have not received the same exposure in their home city.

- 4.4.8 Radio WM's "Introducing" music show held on Thursday evenings showcases local talent from 10pm. It is up to the band/artist or their promoter to upload songs to the show's website to be selected by the presenters. Particular praise was given to Brum Notes (a "music and lifestyle" magazine with a circulation of 10,000). However, as one promoter put it:

I do my best to promote live music locally, especially spotlighting local acts, on the MyBrum website, but a major problem is that artists themselves seem unaware of outlets for publicising themselves in terms of live music and releases. Something on the lines of a clearing house for disseminating information, listings of local music activity and releases, and highlighting local labels, etc, would be useful.

- 4.4.9 Some of this is about how the city promotes itself – which we will return to in Chapter 5.

Increasing National / International Attention

- 4.4.10 The research conducted by Cllr Hendricks found that a stronger profile for Birmingham was ranked the third highest priority for those involved in the industry in ensuring their success. Those who spoke to Councillor Hendricks said that a Birmingham identity was of value, however if their project/business could not succeed here then they would relocate.

- 4.4.11 This was echoed in the evidence we received: Birmingham does not shout about what it has and could do more to improve the profile and image of the city

- 4.4.12 Beyond the marketing of the city, we discussed two ideas for getting more national and international attention:

- Having a large annual event or festival;



- Using international events such as MIDEM or South by South West to promote the city.

- 4.4.13 The idea of a **large annual event** has been tried before, with Gigbeth, a music festival showcasing local bands from a range of musical genres. Witnesses recognised that this had drawn attention to the city and had a real push for Birmingham based bands. Other cities host events such as Liverpool Sound City, In the City (Manchester) and Brighton's Great Escape. Further details are set out in the box overleaf.
- 4.4.14 There are options to consider here in Birmingham: ideally Birmingham's independent music sector would come together to put forward an event – an industry based origin was thought to be crucial to the authenticity of any such event, and the idea of it being “imposed” by bodies such as the City Council was largely rejected. However, it was also recognised by some witnesses that the independent music sector was not yet cohesive enough to bring such a proposal forward.
- 4.4.15 Such an event could be an industry based conference, bringing together a mix of independent and commercial players to discuss national and local issues, pushing local bands and their development and profile. Another option would be to hold a music festival or “music month” to promote the city's musical talent, using a series of gigs, local radio play and other events.
- 4.4.16 Alternatively, (or perhaps as a first step), the city could attract existing events or awards ceremonies e.g. ISPA (International Society for the Performing Arts³⁷) and Womex – the World Music Expo held in Copenhagen in 2011. There was also a recurring view that the city should have a stronger presence at industry events such as MIDEM and South by South West.
- 4.4.17 MIDEM (Marché International du Disque et de l'Edition Musicale) is a large industry trade fair held annually in Cannes. It is largely attended by those in the commercial sector (labels, publishers, artists and independent bands); however a number of national music organisations from the UK attend. Music West Midlands has had a stand for 3 years (mainly funded by the Arts Council). In 2010, there were around 8,000 delegates, 4,400 from UK and only four from Birmingham.
- 4.4.18 Birmingham has sent a contingent to South by South West Music conference, in Austin, Texas. This annual music festival sees more than 2,000 performers playing in more than 90 venues over four days in March. Again, it is an opportunity for those in the industry to network and share ideas.
- 4.4.19 There was some support for a more visible Birmingham presence at MIDEM amongst our witnesses as a means of highlighting Birmingham as a music city and showcasing its artists.

³⁷ a not-for-profit international network of performing arts professionals who come together with the shared goal of strengthening the arts internationally by building leadership ability, recognizing and discussing field-wide trends and deepening global exchange through the arts.



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4.5 Summary

- 4.5.1 From our discussions, it was clear that the independent music sector is represented in Birmingham but not presenting a coherent voice. Co-ordination and the ability to articulate the sector's needs is needed to help support new bands and retain talent in the city.
- 4.5.2 The owners and managers of venues that we spoke to were keen on working together to ensure artists play at the right venue and work together on promotion. Our witnesses confirmed that there is a good live music scene in Birmingham but that it was often a struggle to promote gigs and events.
- 4.5.3 The importance of the perception of Birmingham was emphasised – both generally and as a place where music is valued. In terms of the latter, some witnesses felt that holding a large annual event (such as an established awards ceremony) or a more prominent presence at international events such as MIDEM would help improve external perceptions of the city.

Music Events in Other Cities

Liverpool Sound City started in 2008 to coincide with the city's Capital of Culture year. It is an annual three day international music, media and technology conference and live arts and music festival focussing on new and emerging talent. Grant funding from the Arts Council, Liverpool City Council, UKTI North West and private sector funders. Sound City takes place during May and is a ticketed event.

In 2009 the event ran for a week in 35 venues throughout the city. The festival featured 50 international bands, 200 UK bands and artists and 150 local bands and artists. The audience is estimated to have been around 30,000. Media coverage generated £1.5 million in equivalent value of advertising in print media and £62,000 in broadcast reach, with total PR generation for the region estimated at £2.4 million. In 2009 the event secured £2 million visitor spend and £1 million business for local creative businesses.³⁸

The 2009 event increased ticket and wristband sales by 30% from 2008. Private sector investment was increased by 110% and the overall event attendance by 20%. The national geographic profile was improved by 60% and international geographic profile by 75% (maintaining regional audience levels).

Currently there are plans for a **Glasgow 'Sound City'** to run towards the end of September 2012. It is part of the 'Sound City' brand. Glasgow ran a 'tester' event in 2011. The intention is to mirror Liverpool's Sound City but also include a wider range of art forms including film and video alongside the main course of music.

The City Council is involved and supportive of the initiative and is providing marketing and PR assistance to the organisers.

³⁸ www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/Liverpool_Sound_City_South_by_South_West.pdf



Manchester – In the City was founded in 1992 by Factory Records boss Tony Wilson with partner Yvette Livesey as a platform for unsigned acts to prove their worth to the music industry.

It took place annually during October (last held in 2010) at various venues around Manchester's Piccadilly and Northern Quarter. It was considered Europe's largest city based music festival³⁹ and was a ticketed event.

In the City acted as a music trade show during the day with various panel discussions focused on the business side of things from issues of the day to helping those that are new to the industry. It was also a networking opportunity enabling new business relationships to flourish.

Brighton's Great Escape Festival was founded in 2006 and takes place in Brighton over three days in May. The festival is composed of pre-publicised performances and impromptu street gigs; a Convention and the Alternative Escape.

Performances include over 300 bands playing in 30 venues, plus impromptu street gigs, numerous club nights, label parties, industry showcases, unique collaborations and outdoor gigs.

The Convention consists of panels and debates for music industry delegates, key note interviews, short Q&A sessions, case studies and educational workshops. This is attended by over 3000 delegates annually and takes place in The Brighton Dome. The programme runs daily between 10am and 5pm. The Alternative Escape runs alongside the festival for labels, promoters and organisers to showcase their latest signings.

³⁹ musicians.about.com/od/musictradeshows/p/inthecity.htm



5 The Role of Birmingham City Council

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 As noted in Section 4.1, one of the themes to emerge from our discussions was about the sector's relationships with the City Council. This corresponded with our third line of enquiry: what can the City Council do practically to help? How can it most effectively deploy its resources, expertise and position?
- 5.1.2 Views on how involved the City Council should be in this area (and to what extent it should simply get out of the way) were varied. Whilst some criticised an apparent lack of interest in music in the city from the City Council; others were wary of the City Council taking too great a role and stifling creativity.
- 5.1.3 In this chapter, we look at some of the areas our witnesses suggested could be improved:
- Setting strategy and priorities;
 - Contacts and networks;
 - Promotion and marketing.

5.2 Strategy and Priorities

- 5.2.1 The need for a strategy and clear priorities came up in our discussions in a number of guises. Firstly, a clear strategy for the city would guide public investment – of which there has been some in recent years, but this has been ad hoc, uncoordinated and not targeted. This in turn led to few obvious long term outcomes which served to increase disaffection in the sector.
- 5.2.2 A public statement of support for the sector would also give confidence to private investment and help to reverse the perceived lack of incentive to stay in the city.
- 5.2.3 Secondly, it would facilitate the influencing of related policy and service delivery, for example licensing and public transport, and ensure that policies were not contradictory in this area, which was the perception of our witnesses.

Current City Council Policy

- 5.2.4 Cultural policy for the City Council is primarily contained within the Cultural Strategy. It was developed by the Birmingham Cultural Partnership (BCP) who are responsible for overseeing its delivery. Whilst popular music is rarely explicitly referred to, there are four strategic themes which include key actions relating to activity we have mentioned in this report, albeit generically:
- Culture on your doorstep: including promoting unique heritage sites located in local neighbourhoods (e.g. Community Museums) and develop their use as venues for a wide range



of cultural activities; and supporting events which bring local residents together to share cultural experiences;

- Next generation: ensuring young people's voices are central to cultural planning and delivery in Birmingham through increased representation of young people on boards of cultural and sporting organisations and encouragement of youth panels;
- Stronger cultural and creative industries, including the need for a new creative industries joint investment strategy and draw up action plans to progress the development of key growth sectors (including music);
- A great international city of the future: including establishing a new eight week Autumn Festival and supporting the development of significant smaller "niche" events; creating new ways of interpreting and promoting the city's distinctive heritage through new trails, events, bus tours; and developing Birmingham branding which promotes the Big City Culture concept and has maximum impact on visitors, reinforcing the quality, diversity and reach of the cultural offer.

5.2.5 As we have made clear in this report, the benefits of supporting popular music in the city are partly economic, and as such it is important that economic policy recognises this. This has caused fragmentation in the past. As Cllr Hendricks noted:

Support has traditionally come from three different portfolios – Leisure, Regeneration and Corporate Communications. However, each department seems to have been working independently of the others.

5.2.6 The changing policy landscape in regeneration has had the effect of putting on hold work on a city wide Creative Industries Strategy, which had identified music as a key growth area. Work is expected to continue to develop this, but is constrained by lack of relevant funding streams.

5.2.7 However, the City Council's Cabinet agreed to set up a Creative Industries Fund of £5m to assist local companies who have sustainable plans to grow their business. The Cabinet recognised that:

Creative industries [make] an important contribution to economic growth with many creative companies also offering social and cultural benefits which enhance the identity of cities.⁴⁰

5.2.8 Birmingham City Council operates a loan scheme under Finance Birmingham⁴¹ but as creative industries tend to "face particular challenges in securing access to finance because investors fail to understand the nature of their businesses, and they have a lack of tangible assets with collateral being in the form of intellectual property" a separate fund was considered appropriate.

⁴⁰ Creative Industries Fund – Full Business Case, Report of the Strategic Director, Development, 12 December 2011;

⁴¹ www.financebirmingham.com



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The Local Enterprise Partnership – Creative City

- 5.2.9 Another significant arm of local policy is the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) – the business and local authority led body tasked with driving economic growth and job creation in economic areas. The Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP⁴² (GBSLEP) have approved a framework for an economic strategy with three key components: Business, People and Place. The latter strand includes transport, planning and other infrastructure needs. Most recently, the Creative City was announced on 25 October 2011.
- 5.2.10 This initiative will bring together public and private sector investment in a new fund for Birmingham and the LEP area, to support activities and projects linked to the economic strategy, so that culture and creativity are harnessed as a force to drive recovery. At its core is a proposal for a museum quarter in around Curzon Street, including a new contemporary arts museum and photograph museum.

Funding

- 5.2.11 The lack of an apparent policy was seen to result in little investment from the City Council in the sector, in contrast to the large sums awarded to classical music organisations. The view was expressed that current funding arrangements do not match the cultural interests of most Birmingham citizens.
- 5.2.12 Witnesses also recognised that recent changes (such as the demise of Advantage West Midlands and the reduction of money available to the Arts Council) meant “doors were closing” on public investment. (Most public investment for the arts comes from the Arts Council.)
- 5.2.13 There were some ideas of how the City Council could get directly involved in funding the sector: such as a small development fund for bands, who often fail for lack of a few hundred pounds for transport or rehearsal space. Bands could be paid – or ‘topped up’ – a modest amount for performing in small venues, thus providing support to musicians at the onset of their careers.
- 5.2.14 However, very few of our witnesses asked for direct funding from the City Council. More common was the view that the City Council should not be in the position of “picking winners” – it simply does not have the expertise to do so and can, albeit without meaning to, simply reward those most accomplished at filling in forms. It can also lead to resentment from those parts of the sector not benefiting, as inevitably some will lose out. There was also a view that the City Council should not be involved in funding this activity at all – it should come from the grass-roots and be commercially viable.

Licensing

- 5.2.15 One of the obvious ways in which the City Council has an impact on the independent music sector is through licensing.

⁴² centrefenterprise.com/



5.2.16 The Licensing Act 2003 states that persons and / or premises that wish to provide entertainment (including dance performances, live music performances or the playing of recorded music) must obtain a license from the City Council. The City Council must act in accordance with the legislation, including promoting the four objectives underlying the licensing law:

- Prevention of Crime and Disorder;
- Prevention of Public Nuisance;
- Protection of Children from Harm;
- Public Safety.

5.2.17 There are a number of national issues stemming from the 2003 Act. UK Music, in Destination Music, recommend that:

Central Government should encourage live music at the grass roots by exempting small venues from the licensing regulations in the 2003 Licensing Act.

5.2.18 In the Coalition Programme for Government a commitment was made to “cut red tape to encourage the performance of more live music”.⁴³ In September 2011 the Department for Culture, Media & Sport issued a consultation document ‘Regulated Entertainment – A Consultation proposal to examine the deregulation of Schedule One of the Licensing Act 2003’. This proposes to deregulate public performance of live music (both amplified and unamplified) for audiences of fewer than 5,000 people (though alcohol licenses would still be required).

5.2.19 Locally, our witnesses reported an overall positive experience of working with Birmingham City Council regulatory services with regard to licensing. However, there were views that there was still an issue particularly in the city centre where housing is built next to existing venues and residents then complain about noise. The most quoted example is that of the Fiddle and Bone pub, a live music venue in the city centre (primarily jazz), which had its entertainment licence revoked following complaints about noise from residents in recently built apartments. The pub closed in 2004. Two years ago, the Rainbow pub in Digbeth faced a similar battle that received widespread publicity. However, we were told that those issues had since been resolved to the owners’ satisfaction.

5.2.20 These examples (and others) have led to the perception that the City Council does not support live music, or at best is confused.

[The City Council] could make a start by not forcing venues to stop their live music because one or two residents in buildings subsequently built within the same vicinity complain about 'noise'.

⁴³ The Coalition: our programme for government, Page 14;



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I understand that there have been issues on the live music circuit as regards noise levels for local residents in new-build properties that have not been sufficiently sound-proofed by developers, despite being a planning condition.

5.2.21 This was not helped by the draft Core Strategy which contained slightly contradictory statements in that:

Developers will be expected to ... carefully consider the implications arising from the existing night-time use of the Locality

and

It is important to ensure that residential occupants are afforded suitable protection from any noise impacts arising from such entertainment venues.

5.2.22 It was suggested that the City Council could do more to help and support venues to manage noise levels and enforce planning conditions.

Transport

5.2.23 One area where the City Council has some influence, though no direct control, is public transport. Again, a clear over-arching policy would give shape to the City Council's interventions in this area. We asked both Centro and National Express West Midlands for their views on public transport and the night time economy.

5.2.24 Today, the vast majority of potential music venues are generally well served by bus services during the evening until 11pm, thus events starting around 7pm-8pm and finishing before 11pm do have the potential to carry concert goers.

5.2.25 Historically Birmingham was one of the first places in the country to have night services predominately for shift workers. In more recent years the services were being used predominantly for leisure purposes. Between the mid 1990's and 2008 night services only ran at weekends in the early hours of Saturday and Sunday mornings. For many years Centro did provide subsidy for the services though in the latter years the routes were run without any subsidy from Centro.

5.2.26 However, night services in Birmingham were withdrawn in 2008, discontinued due to a lack of sustained patronage. Usage was so poor that Centro could not justify subsidizing the routes. Four reasons were suggested for this:

- The size of the market to specific destinations: although there may appear to be a considerable number of potential passengers in the city centre; when disaggregated by destination eg Solihull / Walsall / Halesowen, the numbers are not sufficient to justify more than an hourly service. Another issue is the lack of a 'reverse' or 'intermediate' flow of passengers. Buses were only carrying passengers away from Birmingham city centre, with very few passengers boarding at intermediate stops and having to return to the city centre empty;



- Taxis and Private Hire vehicles became a more attractive way of travelling home from a night out in the city centre because they are able to provide a door to door service. This created a downward spiral for the night bus services. Bus fares were increased and the taxi became even more attractive;
- Market size is erratic: many nights of the week are quiet in Birmingham city centre, with significant demand only occurring at weekends and holiday periods. This has resulted in night buses only running on Thursdays / Fridays and Saturdays (as a maximum). Such a service pattern produces uncertainty in the mind of the potential passenger as to whether there are any buses running on a particular night;
- Traffic Congestion in Hotspot areas: the severe traffic congestion experienced in popular entertainment areas eg Broad Street has resulted in buses having to be removed from these streets in order to maintain the reliability of the service. This has the knock on effect of discouraging passengers as they no longer see buses running and if they do wish to catch a bus they have to walk a significant distance to an often isolated and poorly lit bus stop.

5.2.27 Suggested improvements included:

- Better Publicity: the challenge is to ensure information about routes and the location of bus stops is made available at the time of booking. Ideally a joint venue / NX publication and/or web site would be an effective means of disseminating the information, particularly if direct links could be included from the venues' booking web sites to the NX West Midlands web site, to encourage potential passengers to assess options at the time of booking their seats. Further information could be sent out with tickets;
- Better located / More Visible Bus Stops: Bus Stops close to venues should be clearly signposted from the venues and also be in safe and well illuminated locations, with real time information fitted. A number of Birmingham's principal venues are in congested locations which are difficult to serve by buses eg Symphony Hall (congestion on Broad St forcing buses to use other routes), Hippodrome (congestion in the Ladywell Walk / Smallbrook Queensway area) and the nearby Alexandra Theatre. A study of potential improvements to walking routes to appropriate bus stops and the quality of the bus stop and immediate environment would be beneficial.

5.3 Contacts and Networks

- 5.3.1 Almost all of our witnesses mentioned the difficulty of "finding the right person to speak to". This could be within the sector – regarding finding the right venue or making links within the sector – and within the City Council – which department was needed according to the enquiry:

A clearing house of information on venues and facilities [would be useful]. I often get artists asking where they can play in Birmingham and which venues host what forms of music.



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I've personally found communication a little difficult. I deposited a large number of cassette recordings of local band demos and unreleased material with the library two to three years ago for an archive after talking to the music department. But it took forever to get any response about progress on the tapes and at one point no one seemed to know where they were This is an invaluable and irreplaceable record of some 20–25 years of local music and musicians, yet it seems to have been handled in an almost slapdash manner.

There seems to be no easily identifiable figure at the Council who would be a contact regarding live music in the city.

5.3.2 We came across a couple of examples during the time we were conducting this Scrutiny Review of the problems this caused for those looking to do business in Birmingham:

- The promoters for Espirito Brum (the UK edition of Espirito Mundo, a cross cultural celebration bringing together musicians from Brazil and Birmingham) set up a three day festival in September including creative collaborations in Birmingham between visiting and local artists in the form of concerts, workshops, recordings and interventions. The organisers had great difficulty in making contact with appropriate people in the City Council and Marketing Birmingham, and as such got very little support in setting up the festival. However, following our interview with the promoters, links have now been made and support is being given with regards to next year's festival, in continuing the cultural exchange and in building business links between Birmingham and Brazil;
- The Drum and Bass Awards has been running in Birmingham since 2007, with no acknowledgement from the City Council. The event has grown year on year and in 2010 over 4,000 people attended. The Awards have generated much interest with local and national media and press coverage with BBC Radio One and BBC 1xtra broadcasting live from the event. Data provided to us from the organiser of the Drum and Bass Awards shows that in 2011 people travelled from as far a field as Australia, China and Canada to attend the awards. People also came from across Europe and the U.S.A as well as the UK and Ireland. Again, following the publicity surrounding this Review, links with the Council have been made and a significant amount of support received.

5.3.3 In essence, the view was that a portal for independents and those outside Birmingham was needed. Such a need had been identified with regards to film and television companies filming in Birmingham, and was met with the inception of Film Birmingham (see box below).



Film Birmingham

Film Birmingham was established by Birmingham City Council in February 2006 to attract filming to Birmingham and so increase the impact of this sector on the local economy. It offers a one-stop shop for location searches and by liaising with Council departments and external bodies to facilitate related issues such as road closure, recruitment of extras and access to funding.

Birmingham established a Film Charter when Film Birmingham was initiated. The Film Charter sets out how the Council, across all its services, will deal with filming requests in order to increase the quantity and quality of filming (features, documentary and television) in the City in order to generate economic impact for Birmingham.

The Film Office was initially staffed by a Director and a Liaison Officer, funded by the lottery through the Arts Service's Urban Fusion Programme. When this funded ended, the Leader of the Council committed to fund the ongoing running of Film Birmingham and provided a budget to March 2013 to support one full-time manager and the film office running costs.

Recent achievements

- Improved levels of filming in the City with over 1,200 requests in year ending March 2011, which is a 50% increase on requests for 2010;
- Attracted and continuing to support feature film making: last year saw 'Toast' (starring Freddie Highmore and Helena Bonham-Carter) and 'Tezz' a Bollywood production (starring Anil Kapoor) filmed in the City;
- Attracted and continuing to support television drama making in the city: the BBC's Hustle will be filmed in Birmingham for the third year; a new 5-part BBC drama series, 'Line of Duty', will be filmed in Birmingham later this year. Ruby Films who produced 'Toast', will be returning to make a new 5-part BBC series 'Dancing on The Edge', which is being directed by the world renown Stephen Poliakoff.
- The website has been redesigned and re-launched to enable on-line film requests, showcase the success of previous filming in the City and allow greater interaction/feedback from the public.

Current activity

Currently, Film Birmingham is working to support a range of prospective and scheduled filming including; Hustle, Line of Duty, Dancing on the Edge, Doctors, Gadget Show, X Factor, Monster Munchies, Live From the Clinic, Fifth Gear, Xtra Factor, Peter Andre – Here to help.

Economic Impact

From April 2010 to present end of March 2011, there were 1,296 requests to film with a total economic impact of £5,894,000.



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- 5.3.4 Advice and guidance is offered by the City Council's Culture Commissioning team. This includes the facilitating sector groups (e.g. small arts organisations group) and events promotion (if linked to the City Council).
- 5.3.5 Business support was also mentioned. We were told that the Birmingham business hub aimed at improving access and take up of business support across the City and GBSLEP has been set up. The hub based at Baskerville House, includes representatives from key business support organisations such as Marketing Birmingham, GBSLEP, the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, Finance Birmingham, ART and Birmingham Forward. The City Council is supportive of the concept and will also have a small team based in the hub

5.4 Promotion and Marketing

- 5.4.1 We have already discussed the various issues relating to perceptions of Birmingham and how events and gigs are marketed in the city (see Chapter 4). We considered the role the City Council could play in this.
- 5.4.2 Broadly, witnesses wanted to see perceptions of Birmingham, nationally and internationally, improved. Cllr Hendricks also found this in his research:

Birmingham music businesses see a strong profile for Birmingham as intrinsic to their success

- 5.4.3 There were also issues around promoting smaller venues and festivals within the city – these tend not to have large budgets and so marketing costs can often be prohibitive (see Chapter 4). This was therefore another area where there was real support for City Council assistance. The advantages for the city would be in helping those smaller, independent festivals and events which give the city vibrancy and make it attractive to visitors. Good marketing creates conversations about what Birmingham has to offer, both within and outside Birmingham.
- 5.4.4 Our witnesses were not asking for large amounts of money, but better access to marketing routes. They also wanted more public recognition for the work done in bringing people to the city – as one said: “it would be nice, when somebody does something good, Birmingham City Council notices”.
- 5.4.5 This section therefore considers three areas where the City Council have a direct impact:
- Marketing Birmingham;
 - Council owned/managed advertising opportunities;
 - Distribution of printed material.

Marketing Birmingham

- 5.4.6 Leading on promoting Birmingham as a visitor destination and a focus for inward investment within Birmingham is Marketing Birmingham – the city's strategic marketing partnership. Marketing



Birmingham is a private-public partnership supported by the City Council, with member companies, champions and private investors from all over the West Midlands.

- 5.4.7 Some of our witnesses commented that Marketing Birmingham did not appear “interested” (like the City Council) in smaller, niche events. Two points were made in response: firstly Marketing Birmingham’s SLA with the City Council is quite specific: they are measured on, amongst other things, visitor numbers and value for money, which cannot always be demonstrated by smaller niche events. To get that value for money and critical mass, Marketing Birmingham do support “clusters” of events, but this leads back to the issue of branding/mass market appeal versus independence/niche. As noted both in the sections on heritage and festivals, it is often the independence of events that is part of the appeal to audiences and promoters. They would therefore resist being “bundled” in with others as they would be concerned that they would lose identity and credibility.
- 5.4.8 However, it is often by clustering marketing of events that Marketing Birmingham is able to promote to a wider audience and demonstrate value for money. One issue that would help here (and was raised in the Independent Festivals Needs Analysis) was about calendarisation: i.e. the scheduling of festivals/events so that they are not competing would be beneficial, but individual events, particularly established ones, have own timescales.
- 5.4.9 The primary platform for visitor information about Birmingham is **visitbirmingham.co.uk**, administered by Marketing Birmingham. This includes a generic overview of Birmingham’s music scene, with a range of venues listed in the ‘further reading’ section – year to date, this page has been the 52nd most popular out of the 47,700 pages on the whole of the site. It also features sections including:
- Discover Birmingham’s music scene - including a music venues map featuring a range of large and small venues covering a significant number of music genres;
 - Home of Metal – details of this programme which explores the foundations, social context and heritage of heavy metal culture;
 - Music Heritage – celebrating Birmingham’s musical heritage;
 - Birmingham Musical Facts – providing a range of well known and not so well known Birmingham musical facts.
- 5.4.10 The dedicated ‘festivals and events’ section on visitbirmingham.com provides details on a number of festivals and events taking place across the city, and includes bespoke pages for musical festivals/events such as The Moseley Folk Festival, Supersonic Festival and Espirito Brum.
- 5.4.11 In addition, the event calendar provides an opportunity for all events/gigs across the city region to be promoted on visitbirmingham.com. Any event can be listed; the organiser needs to forward its details to Global Data Point who feeds the details through to the website. This opportunity is available to all events in the city region. Over 20% of all the events listed in this calendar are music related; across a number of genres from classical to pop.



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5.4.12 Marketing Birmingham told us that Visitbirmingham.com is in the process of being re-developed, including greater use of user generated content on the website. This development will benefit Birmingham's music sector, in particular the smaller events, venues and gigs. However:

... it should be noted that there has been a move in recent years for contemporary performers to communicate with their niche audiences directly rather than through intermediaries. Therefore, it should be recognised that websites such as visitbirmingham.com will remain more attractive to the mass market and associated tourism activity.

5.4.13 Marketing Birmingham successfully applied for ERDF funds to "increase the volume and value of tourism to the programme area". £2.5m has been allocated to the promotion of leisure tourism, including:

- £300,000 allocated to support independent festivals develop their international markets. Grants will be given to those which demonstrate relevance to the programme and an ability to deliver the overarching objectives of jobs creation and the growth of the visitor economy;
- £300,000 allocated to market the project area as a cultural destination. Packages will be created to link cultural venues to other visitor economy businesses, such as hotels and transport providers, and create an attractive proposition for national and international visitors.

5.4.14 The budgets are fairly specific, as set out in the original bid document however the wider project will also reference music in its promotional activity.

5.4.15 Marketing Birmingham are also working with Visit England, who are in the early stages of a project to combine the UK's entire musical heritage into one offer and to package it as a powerful and compelling story. The concept involves prominent cities, such as Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool etc, looking at joint ways to use the theme of music to boost visitor volume and value. An independent working group has been established to consider this approach and take forward and maximise all marketing opportunities.

Advertising

Even in the internet age, access to space for posters and flyers in such quarters has its impact.

5.4.16 We have already mentioned in Chapter 4 the issues smaller venue owner/managers and festival organisers have: the lack of opportunity for displaying posters and the restrictions in some parts of the city on distributing flyers) and the City Council's giving larger venues access to digital information displays. It was felt that city resources are skewed to certain types of culture/music, whereas if popular music events had greater access to marketing opportunities, they could reach across genres and demography.



- 5.4.17 Whilst these views came predominantly from the smaller venue/festival end of the sector, these concerns were shared by some of the larger venues – partly because they are often involved in promoting lesser-known acts, but also because of the benefits to them of being part of a looser network of independent venues and events.
- 5.4.18 Recently, the City Council has created a small business and commercial development team to deliver a more strategic and commercial approach to the use of its advertising assets. There are four elements to this:
- Managing the JC Decaux contract for the Council Information Posters Network, which includes two poster network sites with 88 poster sites each (these can be booked in two week slots at a cost of £1,250.00 per network). This contract expires in 2014 and the renegotiation process will take place in early 2012;
 - Implementation and management of a new contract for the management of City-owned sites not currently occupied and/or let for advertising purposes;
 - A review of the City Dressing Portfolio (banners, scrolls, planter boards etc), which offers the opportunity to promote events and campaigns;
 - Maximising sponsorship/partnerships to support City's activities and events: a procurement exercise is planned to consider the benefits of appointing partner who will help the City to maximise funding and partnership opportunities across its portfolio of activities and events (sports, leisure, arts and cultural activities).

Distribution of Printed Material

- 5.4.19 In 2006 a consent scheme to control the distribution of free printed matter in the city centre was brought into effect, using legal powers under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. A report to Local Services and Community Safety O&S Committee in 2008 set out the reasons for the introduction of this scheme:

The purpose of the legislation is to help control the litter problem created by the distribution of free printed matter, which is often quickly discarded by persons to whom it is given or indeed left in piles by those distributing it. Some parts of the City, especially in the City's main retail centre and entertainment areas, can become carpeted with discarded flyers and present a considerable cleaning task for the City Council as well as a slip hazard for pedestrians.

- 5.4.20 The current annual fee is set by the Public Protection Committee and is £260 per distributor. The areas covered are the city centre (comprising the main retail areas) including the Hurst Street and Digbeth.
- 5.4.21 A number of witnesses mentioned this: the cost of the licence is prohibitive for smaller venues and festivals (£260 per licence). They pointed to systems operating elsewhere that were not as



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prohibitive. For example, Leeds City Council has a flyer consent scheme in the city centre and Headingley. Annual charges can be bought on an increasing scale: for example five badges applied for would cost £75+£100+£150+£175+£175 = £675, as opposed to £1,300 in Birmingham.

5.5 Summary

5.5.1 Other Councils have gone much further in supporting music development in their localities, such as Newcastle and Middlesbrough City Council's support for Generator (see box below). However, our witnesses' requests were less ambitious, and from our discussions we have identified three main areas where they believe that Birmingham City Council could do more to support the independent music sector and so help improve perceptions of the city:

- In setting a clear strategy and priorities;
- Providing a portal for contacts and networking;
- Promotion and marketing.

5.5.2 Many were cautious about the City Council taking too great a role, referencing pop music's long independent history. However, others did see a role, partly in recognising and celebrating what does go on, but also in playing a brokering role between the public sector and the industry.

5.5.3 It was recognised, by our witnesses and in Cllr Hendricks' report, that there have been interventions from the public sector but the long-term impact of this cannot be ascertained. Currently, the view is that Birmingham City Council does not have a clear policy on popular music, and that therefore a scatter gun approach to public funding has resulted. It can also discourage private investment if investors feel their work is not appreciated. As another witness noted:

The council should be playing a pivotal role in supporting the music sector. For many years (in my experience) BCC have played a role of funder, and trying to shape funded orgs around BCC priorities. I believe this needs to change, and BCC should be responsive to the sector around their priorities rather than the other way round. BCC has enormous resources, networks, contacts and clout, and these could and should be utilised to support where applicable.

5.5.4 A clear strategy would also guide City Council service areas and reduce the risk of apparently contradictory policies (such as perceived by some around support for the arts against licensing restrictions). There are also big opportunities with the inception of the Local Enterprise Partnership and particularly Creative City. However, we need to ensure that the smaller organisations are not squeezed out here. Recognising the independent music sector as major cultural asset and an economic opportunity for the city will strengthen their claim.

5.5.5 Some witnesses believe that greater clarity is the best help the City Council can give. However, we must also recognise that this can be difficult in a city as diverse as Birmingham, as prioritising



some elements means others lose out. However, there is an argument that we are currently “too inclusive” – which means don’t do anything very well.

- 5.5.6 Having a strategy is the first step, there then needs to be a mechanism to deliver it. A clear point of contact within the City Council would firstly raise the profile of the issue but also reduce duplication and the impression of a lack of coordinated service. The City Council took the decision to install and fund such a point of contact for those who wish to come and film in the city. There is a great deal of support for a similar role for music.



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Generator – A Case Study⁴⁴

Generator is a music development agency based in Newcastle Upon Tyne, providing a framework of support where current and emerging musical talent, existing and new music business can easily and regularly access information, development programmes, advice and guidance.

Set up in 1991 and originally serving the North East and Cumbria, it now undertakes a national role, after being asked by Arts Council England to assist other fledgling agencies, organisations and groups in policy, programme development, governance and funding.

The agency has therefore represented the music development sector at Government level with membership of both the Live Music Forum and Music Education forums. The agency also leads the Music Industry Development Association, a body set up to establish common aims amongst similar organisations in the UK.

Generator currently receives funding from, amongst others, Newcastle and Middlesbrough City Council.

Generator currently produces a range of programmes covering:

- **Music business development** in a regional context, including seminars to expand the knowledge of existing practitioners and inspire those wishing to pursue the formation of a new business; Music Clinics to analyse business viability and offer advice on business planning, legal issues and associated strategies such as marketing; Music Business mentors, allocated to businesses showing promise while expanding businesses are offered the opportunity to access the services of a consultant. Furthermore Generator has developed a music industry approved Level 3 Business to Business course that can be delivered with partner organisations across the UK. The course is endorsed by both CC Skills and has been scrutinised by UK Music.
- **Musician support** (including the development of commercial viability of artists) and **artist development**: programmes (SPEAR programme and Teenage Rampage) which seek out a particular region's most accomplished talent and nurture them through mentoring, performance enhancement and showcasing at national conferences. This has often led to artists being signed by management, publishing and recording companies and further success.
- **Live music** (most significantly in supporting promoters) and in supporting and representing the music development sector. Generator has produced the Transit scheme (funded by the Arts Council since 2001) which has helped over 100 budding promoters find their feet and develop their skills. The scheme operates throughout England and offers subsidies, training, mentoring and network opportunities as well as countless appearances from the country's unsigned artists.

⁴⁴ www.generator.org.uk/about-generator



6 Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 The starting point for this Scrutiny Review was the findings of the UK Music report on music tourism. The UK Music report was the first of its kind in putting an economic value on music tourism, although various studies have been done on the value of culture, tourism and, in Birmingham, the economic value of classical music. It set down a challenge to both central government and local government. Other cities are responding to this challenge, and so the Leisure, Sport and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to investigate the implications for Birmingham.

6.1.2 We therefore set out to understand the evidence in relation to the role popular music can and does play in attracting visitors to the city. We extended this to capture how popular music can enhance the quality of life of residents.

6.1.3 This report sets out our findings and proposes some recommendations. We will put forward the case that popular music is a key part of our culture, both past and present. Whilst a full economic study has not been done – because this area has been largely neglected – there is plenty of indicative evidence that this is a potential growth area for the city:

- UK music industry revenues totalled £3.8bn in 2010. The UK strengthened its position as a net exporter of music and is growing its trade balance three times faster than the U.S.;⁴⁵
- The major concerts and music festivals that take place across the UK attract more than 7.7 million visitors, who spend £1.4 billion in total during the course of their trip. Music tourists in the West Midlands spend at least £138 million a year;
- Five independent festivals bring a combined total of more than £5 million into Birmingham's economy each year by earned income, visitor spend, column inches and the proportion of their budgets which is spent locally.⁴⁶

6.1.4 A Sunday Times article marking the opening of the Home of Metal exhibition sketched out some of Birmingham's musical history and then asked why these things are not more widely known. Their answer:

This is Birmingham. They do things indifferently here.

6.1.5 They go on to outline a recurring theme in our evidence gathering: that “Brummies aren’t as chirpy as the Scousers or as cocky as the Mancs” and as a result “don’t like to shout about what

⁴⁵ Will Page and Chris Carey, Adding up the UK Music Industry 2010, PRS for Music, August 2011

⁴⁶ Ian Francis, *Independent Festivals Group Needs Analysis*, prepared for Birmingham City Council, October 2009



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they do”.⁴⁷ We believe that this should change as far as Birmingham’s past musical successes and present musical diversity is concerned. In this report we have set out why we think this should change, and in the remaining sections, what should be done to make those changes.

6.2 Valuing Popular Music Culture

- 6.2.1 Birmingham has a varied, vibrant and independent music scene. This is backed up by a good live music scene, with right mix of venues and a good range of independent festivals. There is a range of industry professionals at all points of production; however these tend to be small and largely unrecognised. Collectively there is little recognition outside Birmingham of what the city has to offer (both to fans/visitors and promoters/professionals).
- 6.2.2 We also recognised the value of popular music to Birmingham’s residents: Birmingham is one of the youngest cities in Europe and the culture that they are most interested in is sometimes seen as undervalued.

Embedding

- 6.2.3 One of the key barriers identified by our witnesses was the lack of clear signal from the city authorities (primarily the City Council) that popular music matters to the city. This was felt through a lack of contact with the City Council, little funding and support (in contrast to classical music organisations) and sometimes through barriers perceived to be put up by the City Council (we heard that independent music promoters often got things done “in spite of” not because of the City Council).
- 6.2.4 We agreed that there is a need to promote an understanding of the role popular music plays in the perceptions of a city and to embed this understanding in the cultural offer of the city – both its cultural value and tourism value. This should support the growth of the present industry but also facilitate better celebration of our musical past.
- 6.2.5 A clear statement of policy would clarify and strengthen the City Council’s objectives, giving reassurance and encouragement to private investment as well as ensuring we attract and get the most value out of any public investment.
- 6.2.6 There therefore needs to be explicit reference within the Cultural Strategy – which does contain a number of key elements already (such as recognising the importance of heritage, niche events and developing Birmingham’s branding). However, this should be jointly developed with the independent music sector. They should have involvement in this process but also, more long term, should have some representation on the Cultural Partnership. It is equally important that the economic benefits are recognised in any emerging Creative Industries Strategy.

⁴⁷ Sunday Times magazine, 19th June 2011



Connecting

- 6.2.7 Having a strategy is only a first step, there then needs to be a mechanism to deliver the outcomes of that strategy.
- 6.2.8 A second key barrier identified in our evidence gathering was the lack of a cohesive “voice” from the independent music sector. We have spoken to a range of people involved in or connected to music in the city during this Review, and there were strong views that these conversations should continue. It is not the first time these conversations have been had, and other attempts have been made to bring the sector together but with only incremental progress being made.
- 6.2.9 This is something that would benefit the city generally and we would support such a move, particularly it would enable the independent music sector’s voice to be heard at a City Council and LEP level with greater unity, strength and authority. As one witness put it:

The will and energy is there but there needs to be better co-ordination and contact between groups and interested individuals to take an holistic approach to promoting Birmingham music, both as an active force and as an archive.

- 6.2.10 But again this cannot be imposed top-down. Where the City Council can clearly assist is in having a clear point of contact for those in the sector wishing to put on events or gigs, or develop their music business in Birmingham.
- 6.2.11 We therefore propose that the City Council should install a single contact for the industry and venues, who can bring together different aspects of the City Council as necessary, and be a link into the Council for the industry. They would also act as the external face of the city in this area. In essence, they would take responsibility for providing support (advice, guidance, networks) to the music sector within Birmingham, would be a champion or ambassador figure to make connections across the sector and advocate for the sector. This person/office could be located within the City Council or Marketing Birmingham
- 6.2.12 The role could encompass:
- Implement a ‘Music Charter’ to progress actions to support the Cultural and Creative Industries Strategies, working with a strategic forum drawn from the sector, BCC and others to deliver charter;
 - Be the face of the City Council for the music sector; acting as an external point of contact for the national industry, supporting the establishment and maintenance of a long-term approach to the branding and profile of Birmingham in an independent music context;
 - Bring together different areas of the City Council (provide a ‘first point of call’ and means of breaking through departmental barriers particularly regarding transport/marketing/licensing);
 - Facilitate collaboration with business, cultural and educational sectors and linking with music development agencies across the country;



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- Support funding applications (including Arts Council applications for 'music development fund')
- Recognise and celebrate all the things already going on;
- Facilitate quarterly meetings of venues and work with festivals;
- Better links and co-ordination with the media to improve coverage of local events.

6.2.13 This should focus on popular music rather than classical as there are structures in place for the latter both in terms of organisations and finance.

6.2.14 It would of course require some funding: but this is an important industry – culturally and economically – and it receives very little attention/funding at the moment. The benefits are economic, social and in increasing positive PR for the city. It would help prevent the city losing out on major events because the organisers do not know who to speak to. It would also go some way to rebalancing investment in cultural activities that appeal more to the young, diverse population of the city.

6.2.15 Any investment would be around setting the right environment, not direct funding – indeed there were very few requests for direct funding during our evidence gathering. The City Council made a similar move when it set up Film Birmingham and this has brought considerable benefit to the city.

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R01	That the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture and the Cabinet Member for Transport, Environment and Regeneration work together to ensure that the cultural and economic value of music heritage and popular music sector to the City is recognised and embedded in cultural and economic policy. This should include:		September 2012
a	• Working with the partners in the Cultural Partnership to ensure explicit reference is made in the Cultural Strategy; and • Better representation from independent music sector on the Cultural Partnership;	Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture	
b	• Working with the partners to ensure explicit reference is made in any future Creative Industries Strategy.	Cabinet Member for Transport, Environment and Regeneration	



	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R02	That the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture work with Marketing Birmingham to set up a "Music Birmingham" contact/office for the independent popular music sector within Birmingham and outside. This role would: • Work with stakeholders in the popular music sector to implement a 'Music Charter' to progress actions to support the Cultural and Creative Industries Strategies; • Be the face of the City Council for the popular music sector; • Work across different areas of the City Council to progress actions.	Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture Cabinet Member for Transport, Environment and Regeneration	September 2012

6.3 Heritage

6.3.1 We believe that Birmingham could and should do more to celebrate its diverse musical heritage. Music Birmingham would play a role in developing this. Again, little investment has been made in this area so the data does not yet exist to formulate a business plan; nevertheless we have established that there are significant benefits to be had – economically in terms of encouraging tourism (both in terms of offering attractions and in contributing to a sense of place/vibrancy), but also in terms of benefits to the community and building civic pride.

6.3.2 There is a perception that other cities market their music past and present better than Birmingham does. Birmingham is behind some other core cities on this, but there is no magic or easy answer to be found in these cities. The "Liverpool Matrix" however does offer a checklist for developing a coherent approach to celebrating music heritage. Music Birmingham could focus on developing these strands.

6.3.3 The matrix reiterates the importance of authenticity: any activity should be grounded in on-going activity, credible and sustainable. It should also be linked to Birmingham's current and future music industry, with community education programmes. As one witness put it:

The opportunity for young people to feel proud of their cultural heritage could possible lead to newer forms of music being explored and created in the city.

6.3.4 Arguments for a "Birmingham Museum of Music" have been put forward by some witnesses. Whilst the case for such a museum has not been made, there are clear arguments in favour of physical visitor attractions, as part of activity to establish Birmingham as a city of music.

6.3.5 The Home of Metal exhibition has demonstrated what can be achieved by such an event, both in terms of visitors and national and international publicity. Although the exhibition has ended, the project continues. However, without a physical location for the brand, the link with Birmingham



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will be lost along with the reason for visitors to come here. The Home of Metal programme would not have got the coverage it did without that exhibition.

- 6.3.6 We therefore propose that the City Council should support efforts to find a permanent home for a part of the exhibition (some items have had to be returned to their owners) as a good first step in testing out the benefits of such a project.
- 6.3.7 The argument for initially focusing on the Home of Metal idea is firstly that it builds on an already successful and authentic event. The brand “Home of Metal” has been extremely good for the city – we did not stop being the ‘home of metal’ at the end of September and we should not stop shouting about it. There is also an opportunity as Black Sabbath is shortly to reform.
- 6.3.8 The point made with regard to the Loughton Library Jazz Archive is also important: having an established centre for Heavy Metal might encourage collectors and fans to leave memorabilia in their wills, thus generating more content.
- 6.3.9 Many make the point that Birmingham’s diverse musical heritage should be celebrated, not just one part of it. That could have benefits, but there are warnings in the shape of the Sheffield National Centre for Pop Music, which failed due to a lack of visitors. Many of our witnesses put the Home of Metal’s success down to its authentic and therefore niche appeal. Many artists/professionals are fiercely proud of popular music’s grassroots beginnings and independence which give it credibility. An overly corporate or branded approach would put off the very people this is intended to attract.
- 6.3.10 Others thought there is a need for a music only museum that has articles of interest from both the past and present, but that it needs to be constantly refreshed to make it commercially viable. This would equally apply to the Home of Metal exhibition, and activity around collection management and conservation work would also need to be explored.
- 6.3.11 Building events, conferences and seminars around a museum can help keep it refreshed and encourage visitors. These can be planned industry/visitor based events, or about taking advantage of an opportunity. Black Sabbath’s reunion and their agreement to headline at the Download Festival in June 2012 is one such opportunity we should not miss. Early discussions are taking place about how the city could best celebrate this, and the City Council should be supporting any celebrations.
- 6.3.12 We were also cautioned that trying to do too many things at once risked losing focus, and that one or two priorities should be chosen. For example, if two very similar applications are made to the Arts Council, it is likely neither would succeed. The City Council could support applications by having clear priorities set out in its Music Charter, and perhaps supporting some events with discounted access to council facilities if it attracts significant, positive media coverage.
- 6.3.13 Inevitably this will mean some areas losing out – even in Liverpool, there were concerns that “Beatles have been over-represented in Liverpool’s musical heritage, and that this bias has obscured the legacy of the wider Merseybeat genre and earlier stars such as Billy Fury”.



6.3.14 There is plenty to celebrate here in Birmingham and plenty of people who not only want to celebrate but would be willing to put in work to do so – both individuals through to Marketing Birmingham and the City Council. For example, the work to build a digital archive activity in the city is to be welcomed; even more so the possibility that this will be linked to the Library of Birmingham. This work should continue.

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R03	That the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture (and partners) support efforts, over the next 6 months, to find a temporary exhibition space for a music heritage exhibition in Birmingham which focuses on the local roots of heavy metal music, following the recent success of the Capsule-curated Home of Metal exhibition at BMAG. Options include: • Using BMAG's Waterhall in summer 2012, subject to its availability and the exhibition's compatibility with the venue's essential income generating requirements; • Working with partners to assist in finding a commercial home.	Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture	September 2012
R04	Building on the experience in R03, that the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport & Culture explore other options for a space to celebrate music heritage. These include supporting the inclusion of displays about Birmingham's musical heritage in BMAG's plans for post-1945 Modern Birmingham History galleries, which form part of a later phase of its long term masterplan. As part of this, the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture should work with partners to celebrate the reunion of Black Sabbath in 2012.	Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture	June 2012
R05	The Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture should work with potential partners (e.g. PRS) to develop a heritage plaque scheme for the city; and set out how this would be backed up with city wide marketing/events.	Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture	December 2012
R06	The Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture should continue to explore opportunities to develop a music digital archive linked to the Library of Birmingham.	Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture	June 2012



6.4 Music Sector Today and the Role of the City Council

- 6.4.1 Following on from our overarching recommendations in section 5.2, there were other specific recommendations
- 6.4.2 The first two relate to promotion: we have heard how difficult it is for the independent music sector to promote themselves outside the city, and the difficulties smaller venues and festivals have in promoting their gigs and events.
- 6.4.3 We propose that the City Council should work with the International Trade Team at Birmingham Chamber of Commerce to promote a Birmingham presence at MIDEM. There was some support for a more visible Birmingham presence at MIDEM amongst our witnesses as a means of highlighting Birmingham as a music city and showcasing its artists. This would need to be backed with promotional resources, properly planned and with clear outcomes specified. The city should also be investigating bringing a high profile music event to the city, such as Heavy Metal Awards, IPSA or Womex.
- 6.4.4 A new joint investment plan for major events is being developed with Marketing Birmingham, NEC and City Council Events including a shared approach to securing sponsorship. With regards to smaller venues and festivals, there was a strong feeling that many avenues to promote their events were closed off to them, largely through being prohibitively expensive. The findings of this Scrutiny Review should be fed into the review of city dressing with a view to giving more access at affordable rates to local music businesses. The Cabinet member should explore other steps that could be taken, which would recognise the value of events and festivals in contributing to the vibrancy of the city.
- 6.4.5 It is also worth exploring whether the “Moseley Folk Festival model” could be used more widely – i.e. local parks used for festivals but with any money generated retained and spent in the local area.

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R07	That the Cabinet Member for Transport, Environment and Regeneration works with the International Trade Team at Birmingham Chamber of Commerce to provide advice and support to enable Birmingham businesses, who meet the eligibility criteria, to have a presence at MIDEM.	Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture Cabinet Member for Transport, Environment and Regeneration	December 2012
R08	That the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture investigate bringing a high profile music event to the city, such as Heavy Metal Awards, IPSA or Womex.	Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture	December 2012



	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R09	That the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture (and partners) explore opportunities to support smaller venues, festivals and promoters to market and promote live music in the city. This could include options for controlled advertising display areas.	Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture	September 2012
R10	That the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture work with the Cultural Partnership and Marketing Birmingham to • Produce a stocktake of local music industry; • Support re-development of visitbirmingham.com to include more user generated content.	Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture	December 2012

6.5 Progress with Implementation

- 6.5.1 To keep the Leisure, Sport and Culture O&S Committee informed of progress in implementing the recommendations within this report, the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture is recommended to report back on progress periodically. This will be carried out through the established tracking process.

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R11	Progress towards achievement of these recommendations should be reported to the Leisure, Sport and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2012. Subsequent progress reports will be scheduled by the Committee thereafter, until all recommendations are implemented.	Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Culture	September 2012



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Appendix 1: Witnesses and Sources

Evidence Gathering Sessions and Meetings

Councillor Ernie Hendricks

Fergal Sharkey & Adam Webb, UK Music

John Hemming, Birmingham Music Heritage Foundation

Jez Collins, Birmingham Popular Music Archive

Lisa Meyer, Capsule

Rob Horrocks, PhD student, Birmingham City University

Jim Simpson, Big Bear Records

Ammo Talwar, Punch Records

Adam Regan, Hare & Hounds Pub

Kent Davis, The Rainbow Pub

Gerv Havill, Moseley Folk Festival

Richard Maides, Birmingham Ballroom

Neil Rami, Chief Executive, & Tim Manson, Director of Operations and Policy, Marketing Birmingham

Steve Willis & Geoff Pearce, Access All Bands

Mark Sampson, Birmingham Music Network

Andrew Jowett & Chris Baldock, Symphony Hall; and Simon Wales, General Manager, Town Hall

Tessa Burwood, Espirito Brum

Gerard Franklin & Margaret Murray, Frequency Media

Scott Cooper, Soldier

Carlo Salazzo, Head Promoter, Birmingham Promoters

Chris Neville, Licensing, BCC

Val Birchall, Culture Commissioning, BCC

Frederick Claridge, Live and Unsigned Music Society, University of Birmingham

Other meetings and written evidence

David Leaver, Manchester Metropolitan University; Mike Davis, Brum Beat Magazine; Brum Notes Magazine; Matthew Daniels, Sound it Out; Jonathan Mayes & Anita Dinham, Arts Council; Guy Craddock, Centro; Martin Hancock, National Express West Midlands; Mukhtar Dar, The Drum Arts Centre; Magika MC; Dawn Carrick.



Appendix 2: UK Music Recommendations

1. Clearly, we must do more to attract greater numbers of overseas music tourists – they spend a quarter more in the UK than the ‘average’ overseas visitor, and constitute 18% of music tourism spending even though they only account for 5% of the music tourist population.
2. The Government’s new tourism policy allows for the creation of ‘thematic’ tourism bodies based around a particular type of holiday (caravanning, boating or walking). This should pave the way for the creation of the first ever “live music tourism body” to promote music tourism within the UK.
3. Tourism authorities and local economic partnerships should capitalise on the unique musical strength and heritage of each region and nation with specific campaigns and packages including transportation and accommodation.
4. A comprehensive ‘music tourism map app’ should be designed which can help potential tourists design their own musical tour to cater for every musical taste, incorporating iconic places, histories, and opportunities to attend live music events.
5. Central Government should address concerns over the difficulties that overseas performers encounter with the UK’s visa system, and work with their counterparts in other countries to ease difficulties that UK performers encounter when seeking entry to other countries to tour & perform.
6. Central Government should work with the music industry to ensure that fans have an industry-approved facility to trade and sell on any tickets to live music events which are surplus to their requirements.
7. The success of the “top end” live music scene owes much to the health of the grassroots and intermediary music scene. Central Government should encourage live music at the grass roots by exempting small venues from the licensing regulations in the 2003 Licensing Act.
8. Regional and city planning authorities should ensure a balanced mix of small, medium and large capacity venues in each region or major city for a seamless progression route for musicians as their musical careers advance.
9. In recognition that this study, though the most comprehensive ever undertaken, only captures a proportion of the music events that take place in the UK, we recommend further research on the value of music to the tourism economy. As well as incorporating data from smaller capacity music events, it could analyse the significance of music attractions in drawing tourists, other live events where music is a significant element, such as opera, musicals, and street carnivals, and crucially, track trends to see whether music tourism in the UK is growing.