

# Visitor Experience: strategy, plan and budget

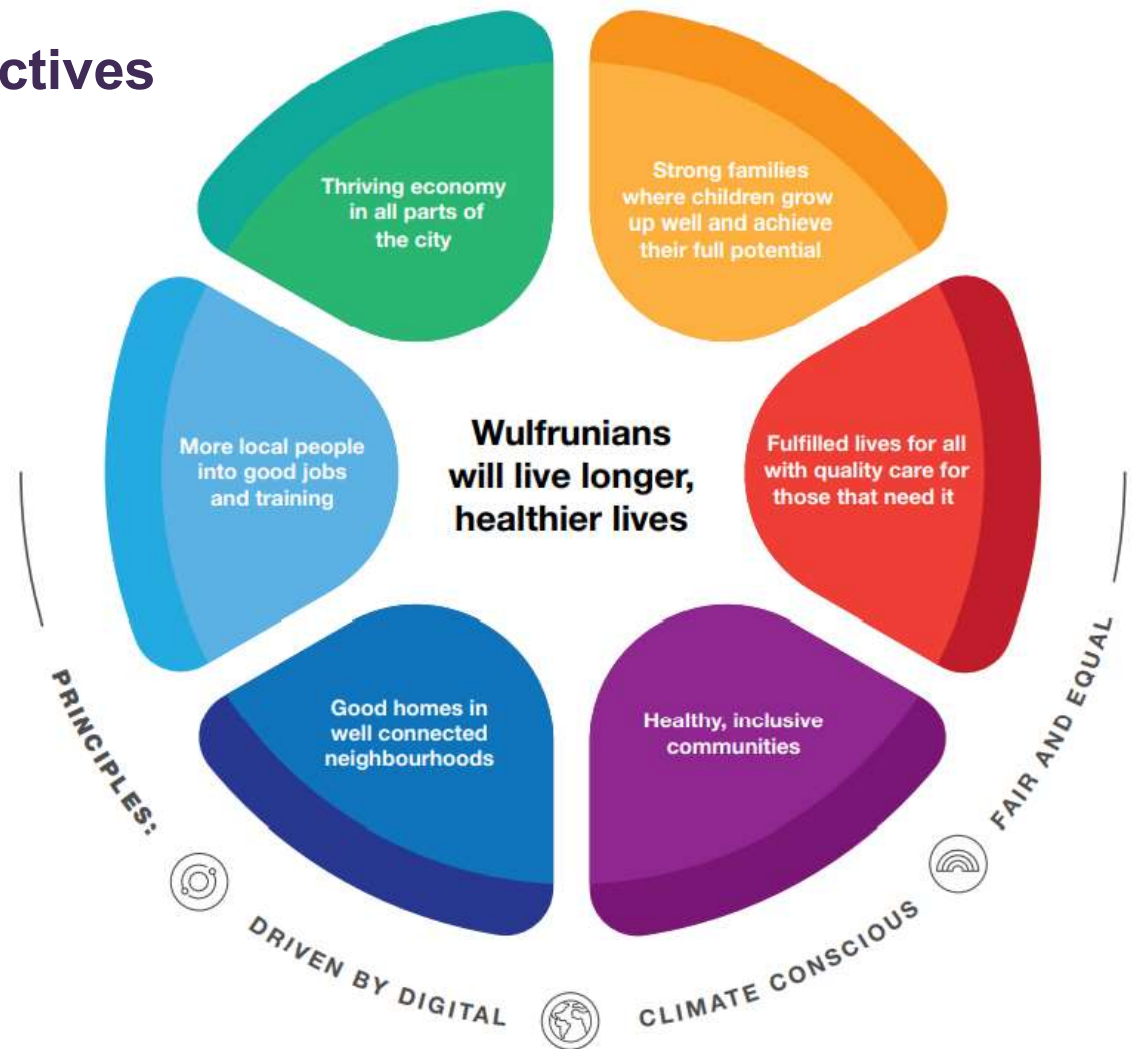
**Context**

# Connecting to our strategic objectives

## OUR CITY, OUR PLAN

Working together to be a city of opportunity, a city for everyone and deliver our contribution to Vision 2030

- Strong connection to 'thriving economy' and 'good jobs' but supports all strands



## Already an Events City...

- 1,000+ events a year
- 30,000 football visitors every fortnight
- 300,000 per year to the Grand Theatre
- Estimated 300,000 to new Civic Halls
- 120,000 visitors to the Racecourse a year
- Admired civic / community events programme (IPW)
- Range of local events delivered by partners (eg BIDs) and event companies



## Key introductory points...

- Since February this year, City Events and Arts/Culture are part of new Visitor Experience service
- Greater programming, priorities and resources alignment to achieve city aims:
  - 1. Changing perceptions of the city** – by enhancing its profile and reputation nationally and internationally
  - 2. Increasing the social benefit and value** – by creating opportunities for employment and skills development
  - 3. Increasing the economic benefit and return** – by generating significant new direct and indirect spend
- Working towards city-wide rather than council-only approach
- Right balance of free-to-access and paid-for commercial activities – council won't always benefit financially but city residents and businesses should



## Commonwealth Games Cycling Time Trial, August 2022

- Start and finish line hosted in West Park, race across the city.
- Contribution of £260,000 made by the Council to win the event.
- 20,000 attended across the event and also lined the streets of the city, representing an indirect economic benefit of £665,000.
- Global TV coverage, showcasing city including impressive architecture.



## Fireworks Spectacular, November 2021

- Hosted in partnership with Dunstall Racecourse
- Budget of £0 v's income of £11,300
- 15,000 attended the event, representing an indirect economic benefit of £500,000.
- 2022 event – strong pre-sales
- Income generating event, supporting growth areas within the programme.





## Grand Slam of Darts, November 2021

- Hosted at Aldersley
- Budget of £7,320 v's income of £70,000
- 12,500 attended the event, representing an indirect economic benefit of £420,000.
- Additionally, a large production crew stayed in the city for 2 weeks at an estimated cost of £140,000.
- Global TV coverage on Sky Sports.
- 2022 sales best ever
- Income generating event, supporting growth areas within the programme.





## British Art Show, January to April 2022

- Exhibition in the Gallery, University Art School, public realm and 9 other venues across city.
- Supported by £230,000 of Arts Council grant.
- 22,000 visitors attended the main show, representing an indirect economic benefit of £730,000
- A further estimated 40,000 experienced the wider installations across the city
- Supported almost 100 volunteers and almost 3,000 school children visits.
- Visitors numbers likely to have been higher if no covid aftermath



## Christmas lights switch on, December 2021

- Hosted in Queen Square, Bilston, Wednesfield, Tettenhall and Bantock.
- Budget of £5,370 v's cost of £41,500.
- 24,000 attended the events, representing an indirect economic benefit of £800,000.
- Free events accessible to all.
- Challenging environment for sponsorship / commercial opportunities.
- Cost covered by other commercial income.
- Vital to businesses in pre-Christmas period.



## Already an events city: the Council's contribution

- Council makes a significant contribution to a city-wide programme through investment in arts, culture and city events:



\*Including WVActive Aldersley

\*\*Figures identified for the West Midlands in the 2015 Great Britain Day Visits Survey

[wolverhampton.gov.uk](http://wolverhampton.gov.uk)

# Plans



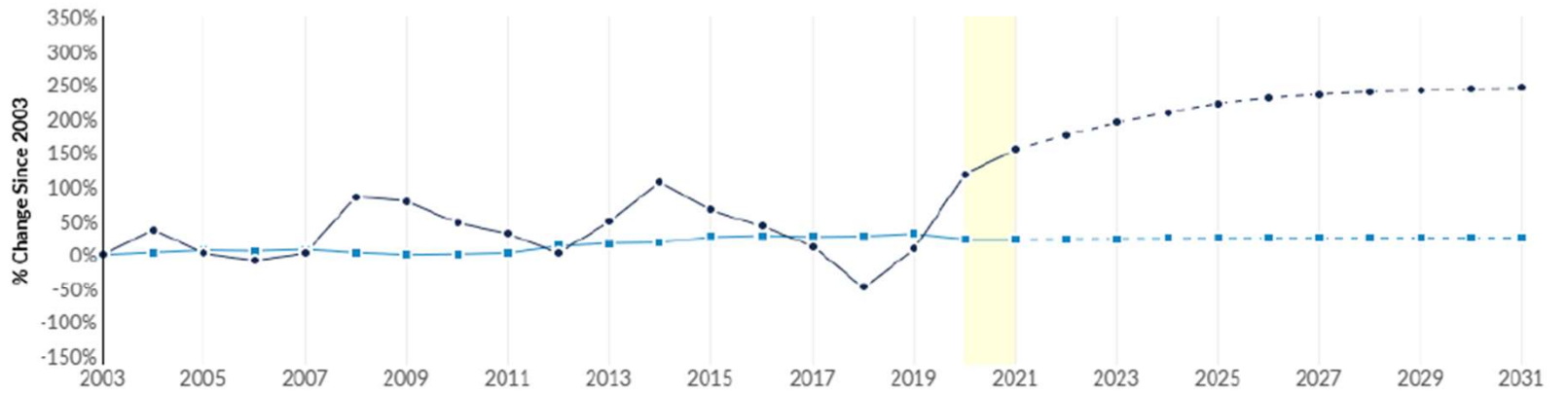
## Plans to build on current position...

1. Growth sector/market for the City which can contribute to thriving economy/good jobs
2. Challenges to mitigate with post pandemic market suffering from increased costs, and the cost-of-living crisis affecting buyer behaviour.
3. IPW commissioned to review and inform five-year strategy. The brief;
  - ‘Our City, Our Plan’ Outlines the City’s Ambition to be an Event City as a basis.
  - Develop an underlying business case and planning process for a five-year event strategy and plan.
  - For the City, not just the Council.

# Industry summary for creative cluster in city

<p>618</p> <p>Jobs (2021)</p> <p>53% below National average</p>	<p>+16.4%</p> <p>% Change (2020-2021)</p> <p>Nation: +0.1%</p>	<p>£23,923</p> <p>Avg. Wages Per Job (2021)</p> <p>Nation: £39,953</p>
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## Regional Trends



Region	2020 Jobs	2021 Jobs	Change	% Change
● Region	531	618	87	16.4%
■ United Kingdom	385,772	386,073	301	0.1%

**Events/  
culture also  
about wider  
city offer/  
context...**



# Wolverhampton Events Ecology

Where does the  
city currently sit  
in these strata?

Where does it  
want to be in 5 –  
10 years?





## Initial IPW recommendations...

1. Create a shared vision
2. Create a performance framework
3. Create city-wide governance structures
4. Better use of market intelligence and data
5. Generate more private sector investment in high quality events
6. Find the balance between accessible public events and commercial events that generate income for reinvestment in the programme

# Plans for next 12 months

- New activity;
  - Support and funding for annual Eid event
  - Support and funding for annual city Pride event
  - Support for African-Caribbean city event
  - Building on the legacy of Commonwealth Games
  - Build on British Art Show legacy
  - Develop and deliver an improved digital city visitor offer – Visit Wolverhampton
  - Maximise the AEG relationship
  - Implement the five-year event strategy and IPW recommendations
- Opportunities;
  - Utilise grant funding to deliver our arts/culture and events objectives.

# Budget

## 2021/2022 Budget in context...

Item	Budget	Outturn	Key points for information
<b>Employee costs</b>	£470,440	£475,374	
<b>Darts</b>	£7,320	(£69,667)	Surplus generated
<b>Snooker</b>	£0	£9,416	Investment to secure new major event for the city
<b>Armed Forces</b>	£8,000	£7,810	
<b>Bonfire</b>	£0	(£11,246)	Surplus generated
<b>Christmas</b>	£5,370	£41,500	Funding now adjusted to meet current need
<b>Creation Day</b>	£0	£23,270	Marketing support for future event
<b>Diwali</b>	£0	£11,722	Funding now adjusted to meet current need
<b>Parks Events Income</b>	(£14,130)	(£26,320)	Surplus generated
<b>Slade Rooms</b>	(30,310)	£46,173	Business case impacted by Covid-19
<b>Relight Festival</b>	£0	£157,323	Business case impacted by Covid-19
<b>Non-specific events</b>	£10,950	£13,937	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£457,640</b>	<b>£679,292</b>	



## Budget in context...

- 2021/2022 was a challenging year for city events / arts culture
- Impact of Covid:
  - Creation Day Festival postponed three times due to Government Covid restrictions. May 2022 event moved to summer/autumn 2023.
  - Relight Festival – delayed by extended Government Covid restrictions and buyer behaviour post-pandemic.
  - Lost income from venues eg Slade Rooms: but continued cost liabilities.
  - Lost sponsorship opportunities to reduce costs – confidence only now returning
  - Cost inflation eg temporary toilets for events costing £1,100 in 2019, now costing £3,100. Getting significantly worse this year.
- Ambition: events/culture seen as big driver for footfall and economic benefit
- Greater requirements on the events budget to do more – given the success of the team after a period of budget reductions and post pandemic cost inflation and pressures.
- Internal review - core funding eg Christmas lights, Vaisakhi, Diwali, Eid and Pride
- Greater income generation as way of growing programme over medium-term.

**Questions?**