Visitor Economy-Public Transport Use Across the West Midlands' Evening Economy

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Authored by:

Live Music Mapping Project (written by P. Rozbicka, O. Smith, A. Lintern, with input from: A. Behr, M. Flynn, R. Anderson, M., Nicastro, L. Bastin, R. Rahman) and Geographic Data Service (A. Singleton, P., Ballantyne).

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Executive summary

Background, objectives and methodology

West Midlands Growth Company (WMGC) commissioned Live Music Mapping Project (LMMP), to undertake a study, report and stakeholders' presentation which represents the experience of employers (venues, events, theatres), employees and visitors across the West Midlands' evening cultural attraction landscape. The aim of this report is to contribute to the Global West Midlands - WMGC's business plan and elements focusing on attracting and welcoming more domestic and international visitors in the West Midlands region and improving the night-time economy and public transport (PT).

Evening and night-time transport offers a key contribution to public order and safety, enabling patrons and venue staff (particularly women and other marginalised groups) the means to travel home from the West Midlands city centres via affordable and environmentally sustainable solutions when compared to cars and taxis, at the same time encouraging patrons' uptake in night-time cultural life. To illustrate: If we focus just on live music venues, which constitute a key part of the night-time economy, there are 348 music venues scattered throughout the B-postcode alone, and 190 located within Birmingham's city centre (B1-B48; BLMP Map v4.1). With the potential to operate to midnight or beyond, they can host a combined capacity of 143,300 people, not including the staff employed at the venues who would also need a way of traveling home after hours. If scaled up to the whole of the West Midlands (WM), 1.4 m music tourists (in 2024; UK Music 2025), spending £550 million, and at least 4,550 FTE jobs, it is crucial to view night-time transport as critical to the success of the city and West Midlands visitor economy.

The key objectives of this research were:

- ***Audiences:*** Quantifying the use of public transport to attend regional cultural attractions in the evening (take up, information, safety), within and from outside of WM, and identifying users' profiles (place of origin, socio-demographic data) and needs with regard to PT (motivations, concerns and barriers to use).
- ***Employers/Employees:*** Exploring the experiences of staff and their ability to return home after a night shift (barriers and incentives of using PT to attend work), as well as, the experience of employers in recruiting and retaining staff needed to cover night shifts.
- ***Environment:*** Identifying cross-regional cultural attractions and visitors' destinations and their mapping against existing transport network (including identification of gaps). Collecting evidence on the influence and opportunity cost

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of the associated environmental impact (e.g. impact of Clean Air Zone in Birmingham), and use of sustainable alternatives to single car travel (e.g. taxis).

For the purpose of this research, the public transport (PT) within the evening economy is defined as 6pm to 6am. The visitors' economy encompasses any visitors (regardless of their place of origin) attending major cultural, sporting or evening destinations within West Midlands.

The data on **audience** is based on the analysis of the following set of documents and resources: DCMS, 'The Participation Survey' (DCMS; May 2023-March 2024; replacement of the Taking Part Survey) - in particular, when possible, focusing on audiences within the West Midlands and those travelling to/from the West Midlands; Department of Transport, 'Exploring connections between rail ticket type and journey purpose' (DoT, 9th April 2025) – focusing on profiles of users traveling by rail to and from core and major cities, excluding London and South East. Set of reports from sector specific organizations: Live! 'UK Live Music' (2023); Live! (Jon Collins, CEO) 'LIVE Insights. Deep Dive into audience trends' (May 2024). Set of reports from academic institutions: Liverpool City Region Music Board/University of Liverpool 'Night Bus Passenger and Survey Response Analysis' (May 2025); LMMP gig-goers survey.[1]

The information on **employees/employers** was obtained through the set of interviews and public consultation. The interviews took part between 16th May and 15th June. The public consultation (conducted online through MS Teams) was held on 27th May, 1-3pm. The interviews and consultations included a variety of stakeholders, with a sample of sector-specific and cross-sector stakeholders, including: local authorities, regional/national agencies, venue owners/operators, creative industries, tourism, heritage and night-time economy stakeholders, and the night-time economy employees.[2] A special attention was also paid to engage with stakeholders not only within WM core area, but also further afield including Stratford-upon-Avon, as well as Manchester.[3] The interviews and consultations explored the experience of employers in recruiting and retaining staff needed to cover evening/night shifts linked to issues with transport and available support, as well as the experience of staff and their ability to return home after an evening /nightshift, in particular honing on barriers and incentives of using Public Transport to attend work. The questions focused on workforce

[1] The LMMP Team (Aston University, Newcastle University and Birmingham City University) conducted a series of surveys with musicians and audiences in 2020. In particular, the audience survey included indicative questions about the mode of transportation to the venues, frequency, and importance of public transport. The musicians' surveys, among other things, asked about their experience of working within West Midlands and the planned Clean Air Zone for Birmingham.

[2] For the list of interviewees that agreed to be named, please see Appendix 1.

[3] The report focuses on visitors from within the West Midlands region, but also those coming from outside the local authority area/the outside region, identifying their needs when/if using public transport. It was thus crucial, to interact with stakeholders beyond the defined borders. The interviews beyond the local authority area, supplemented also examples of solutions to similar problems as within the studied area.

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demand/supply, accessing and operating in the night-time economy sector (i.e. infrastructure requirements), supporting sector sustainability, the importance of safeguarding existing infrastructure while incubating new one, opportunities for diversifying visitors' profiles (from within and outside of the region), and opportunities for investment, economic growth and social impact that PT investment could improve (i.e. key areas in further need of support).

These insights were further supplemented by data from the Julie's Bicycle/Arts Council England 'Culture, Climate and Environmental Responsibility: Annual Report 2022-2023' - focusing on initiatives undertaken by venues to encourage use of the Public Transport to attend their programmed activities.

The **West Midlands Cultural and Night-Time Economy Infrastructure Map (WMCA Foursquare Transport Dashboard)** was constructed using the following data sources: The Consumer Data Research Centre (CDRC) (now Geographic Data Service - GeoDS) datasets, including travel demand data, hosted by GeoDS on behalf of the Transport for West Midlands (TfWM); the FourSquare data base that includes most accurate geolocation on various destinations within West Midlands. The destinations list obtained from the FourSquare database was cross-checked with the West Midlands Cultural Infrastructure Map, data specific to the night-time economy (excluding for example: artist studios, community-focused space, library & archives, and others), Fame Database focusing on NTE SIC codes (e.g. Licensed Clubs - 56.31, Public Houses and Bars - 56.32), and the LMMP's Birmingham live music map.[4]

The map includes the following categories of destinations: arcades, bars, bingo centres, bowling alleys, breweries, casinos, circus, comedy clubs, dance halls, distilleries, karaoke boxes, mini golf courses, movie theatres, night clubs, party centres, performing arts venues (including live music venues), pool halls, social clubs, stadiums, strip clubs, and wineries. The map does not include restaurants, as they have flexible start and finish times, with non-scheduled events. The map covers Greater Birmingham & Solihull, Black Country LEP (Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton), and Coventry. The map coverage was limited by available data from the Transport for West Midlands (TfWM).

Environmental benefit: The project was delivered entirely online. Interviews and consultation were conducted through use of MS Teams. Data necessary for the analysis and provision of recommendations was available online and did not require additional in-person data collection. The intention was to reduce any environmental impact to a minimum.

[4] For detailed cross-comparison of categorisation and relevant SIC codes, please see Appendix 2.

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Key Findings & Recommendations

Public transport is a vital tool for facilitating engagement with evening cultural activities. However, inconsistent service (in particular, lack of reliability), safety concerns, and information gaps discourage users from relying on buses, trains, and metro—particularly for return journeys late at night. Employers in the hospitality and night-time cultural economy struggle to recruit and retain workers due to inadequate transport provision. Additionally, single-car travel remains the dominant mode of transportation (especially within Birmingham) despite policies such as the Clean Air Zone, limiting progress toward sustainability goals.

1. Public Transport Use for Evening Cultural Events

1.1 Quantifying Public Transport Use

Survey data and interviews indicate varied patterns in public transport reliance:

- Approximately **40% of audiences** at major venues travel to the venues/destinations by public transport, with **trains being the dominant mode** for those coming from outside the city.
- **Only 18% use public transport for return journeys**, citing reliability concerns.
- **Public transport usage drops significantly after 10 PM**, with many trains and buses ceasing operations before or around 11pm, with attendees favouring private vehicles and taxis as alternatives.

Transport users rely on different services based on distance and accessibility:

- **Train services:** Widely used for long-distance travel, particularly by visitors from outside of Birmingham, but reporting major inconsistencies in delivery of services past 10pm (major issues have been reported in interviews and consultations especially between Birmingham and Malvern, Lichfield, Leamington and Warwick).
- **Bus & tram dependency:** Local attendees frequently use buses and trams but report inconsistent schedules late at night and perceived issues with safety at the bus hubs.

1.2 User Profiles & Motivations

The demographic breakdown of evening cultural event attendees relying on public transport includes:

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- **Residents:** Primarily in Birmingham, Wolverhampton, and Coventry, preferring buses and trams for affordability, and due to **lack of parking in city centres** (i.e. Birmingham and Coventry, and Wolverhampton during congestion of major events), but struggling traveling home after the events finish.
- **Regional visitors:** Travelling from surrounding areas such as Stratford and Worcester, dependent on rail services.
- **Environmentally conscious attendees:** A small subset actively chooses public transport to reduce their carbon footprint, but they report issues with late night services availability and reliability.

1.3 Public transport (quantitative data)

- **Accessibility to Public Transport**:
    - Rail: Strong accessibility in central hubs like Birmingham, Wolverhampton, and Stourbridge, but poor access in areas like Dudley, Moseley, and Willenhall.
    - Tram: Consistent and good accessibility along the Birmingham–Wolverhampton corridor.
    - Bus: Despite high stop density, many venues are over 300m from the nearest stop, especially in areas like Gas Street Basin (Birmingham) and Croft Rd (Coventry).
- **Demand for Public Transport**:
    - Night-time Bus Usage: Sharp decline in usage after 10pm, with very limited services post-midnight, especially outside Birmingham City Centre.
    - Urban Disconnection: Major urban centres become disconnected late at night, with no passengers or services on key routes like Birmingham–Coventry after 10pm.

1.4 Barriers to Use

Three key barriers prevent wider adoption of public transport:

1. **Limited late-night services**—Many buses and trains stop running before events conclude, leaving attendees stranded, reporting issues after 10pm, while a lot of events finish later, with almost no transport available past 11pm. Users also report, **poor connectivity** between cultural venues and transport hubs.

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2. **Safety concerns**—Solo travellers and female users frequently cite discomfort at transport hubs late at night. While actual crime rates may not be high, the **lack of visible staff or security** on late-night services contributes to anxiety.
3. **Information gaps**— Users often struggle to find consolidated, real-time data across bus, rail, and metro services.
4. **Lack of cross-platform ticketing options and unified digital platform — [**Not specific to night-time economy] Travellers indicated issues with lack of cross-platform ticketing solutions that would allow a seamless travel across the region. There is a strong demand for a **unified digital platform** or app that integrates all transport options, including last-mile services like taxis or e-scooters.

Recommendations for Improvement:

- **Extend late-night transport services** on high-traffic cultural corridors, particularly on weekends, especially on key corridors and between major urban centres, to support the night-time economy.
- **Enhance real-time information availability** through digital applications and on-site transport displays.
- **Develop integrated ticketing solutions** to make multi-modal travel seamless. These can then be thematically branded for visitors as a tourist travel ticket, for example, and separately for locals.
- **Micro-Mobility and Last-Mile Solutions -** Deploy demand-responsive transport or micro-mobility options (e.g., e-scooters, shuttles) in areas where walking distances to bus stops exceed 300m.

Lighting, signage, and the presence of “city ambassadors” or wardens were cited as effective measures in other European cities.

2. Night Shift Staff & Employer Experiences

2.1 Staff Travel Patterns

- Many cultural venues report that **40–50% of staff** use public transport, particularly for daytime shifts.
- For late shifts, **taxis, ride-hailing services or car shares** are often arranged due to the lack of reliable public transport after 11pm.

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2.2. Recruitment and Retention

- Employers face challenges in **recruiting staff for night shifts**, particularly from outside the immediate urban core and report **increased operational costs** from subsidised transport programs.
- **Transport limitations** are a deterrent for potential employees, especially those without access to a car (affecting in particular younger generations, just entering employment in the NTE). Night shift workers cite **limited employment opportunities** due to unreliable transport options (especially outside of larger conglomerations).
- Some venues have adapted by **adjusting shift times** or **hiring locally**, but this limits the talent pool.

2.3 Employer Strategies & Incentives

To mitigate transport challenges, some businesses have implemented solutions such as:

- **Subsidised taxi schemes** - however, these are financially unsustainable for many employers and have potential tax implications.
- **Car-sharing initiatives** - encouraged by select employers, though limited in adoption.

Recommendations for Workforce Transport Improvement

To support the night-time workforce, the following improvements are recommended:

- **Pilot late-night bus routes** tailored to employment hubs.
- **Encourage ride-sharing partnerships** between businesses and transport providers.
- **Improve public transport reliability and accessibility** to reduce employer dependency on private transport solutions, including also **park-and-ride schemes**.
- There is also interest in **collaborative planning** with transport providers to align service schedules with event timings.

3. Environment: West Midlands Night-Time Cultural Infrastructure Map, Environmental Impact & Sustainable Alternatives

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3.1 West Midlands Night-Time Cultural Infrastructure Map

3.1.1 Destinations

- **Urban centres** like Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton are cultural and social hubs **with dense clusters of venues.**
- **Dining and Drinking is the most prevalent category**, suggesting a strong focus on hospitality in the night-time economy.
- **Smaller towns and suburbs also contribute to the cultural map**, though with fewer venues, often community-oriented.

3.1.2 Destinations and public transport

- **Locality and venue type influence accessibility** - Dining and Drinking venues in central areas like Birmingham and Coventry show the shortest average distances to all transport types. Arts and Entertainment venues in suburban or rural areas (e.g., Aldridge, Amblecote) tend to be significantly farther from metro and rail stops.
- **Bus stops are consistently the closest mode of transport across nearly all localities and venue types -** The closer proximity of bus stops to cultural venues enhances their accessibility and attractiveness. It underscores the **importance of maintaining and improving bus services as a backbone of urban mobility**, particularly in supporting vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable night-time economies across the West Midlands.

The data supports planning for improved transport connectivity and cultural investment.

3.2 Assessing Environmental Influence

- The **Birmingham Clean Air Zone** has had a mixed impact. While it has encouraged some modal shift, others have simply **diverted routes** or **absorbed the cost**.
- **Taxi & ride-hailing emissions** continue to contribute to urban pollution.
- **Public transport uptake remains low**, limiting environmental benefits; and, there is limited evidence of a **significant reduction in single-occupancy car use** for cultural events.
- **Opportunity Costs:** The **lack of reliable public transport** leads to increased reliance on cars, which undermines environmental goals and increases congestion.

3.2.1 Sustainable Transport Alternatives

Current sustainable transport options include:

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- **Expanded cycling infrastructure**—Underutilized due to security concerns and poor availability of secure bike storage.
- **Eco-friendly public transport initiatives**—Electrification of bus fleets is being explored but remains in early stages (Coventry being an exception).

Case Study Examples:

- **Liverpool's Night-time Bus Initiative**—Expanded services have successfully reduced taxi reliance and emissions.
- **Newcastle's Venue-Integrated Metro Partnership**—A ticketing system provides discounted public transport access for cultural attendees.
- **Various models** (e.g., in Barcelona, Manchester, Nottingham) were frequently cited as examples of integrated, affordable, and sustainable transport systems.

Recommendations

- **Extend Clean Air Zone exemptions for late-night workers** to reduce financial strain and avoid double-charging (past midnight).
- **Develop safer pedestrian and cycling pathways** to encourage alternative transport use.
- **Introduce subsidised public transport passes** for cultural venue patrons.
- **Support** for black taxicab investment in electric vehicles

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Section 1 – Audiences (Users)

This section quantifies the use of public transport to attend regional cultural attractions in the evening and at night-time (6pm till 6am). It starts from the analysis of user's profile based on various reports and surveys listed in the section above (spanning between 2019-2025). It is further supplemented by accessibility analysis to bus, rail and metro services, using open data from various Department for Transport's sources, as well as in-depth analysis of customer and ticket use data (card and smartcards holders; GeoDS 2004). This analysis focuses on boarding records within the West Midlands transport network, mainly bus use, using an annual sample of data from March 2023 to March 2024.

1.1 Public Transport Use for Evening Cultural Events

1.1.1 Usage Patterns and Trends

Public transport has long been heralded as the backbone of urban mobility, yet for many cultural event attendees in the West Midlands, its service limitations during the late hours prove to be a significant barrier. Analysed surveys and interviews indicate that while approximately 40% of those attending cultural events opt for public transport to reach venues (depending on a source, increasing to approximately 45%), only about 18% rely on it for their return journey. In contrast, when specific night-time transport is provided, as is for example in the Liverpool trial-Night Bus, 54% of users used night buses to travel home from a night out, with 32% using it once every few months (Liverpool Night Bus Survey, 2025), quoting financial savings and improved feeling of safety. This sharp drop for West Midlands points to a broader problem: even if public transport is available during the day or early evening, the reliability of services diminishes significantly past 10 PM, with rare or no availability passed 11pm.

Further, when analysing transport modes:

- **Train services** are predominantly used by out-of-town visitors. While trains offer speed and convenience, their timetables rarely extend into the later hours required by night events, with interviewees reporting major issues with lack of reliability of scheduled late-night services.

> *Quote 1: "I'm sure if you've ever had the experience of going to watch a gig in Wolverhampton and coming back to Birmingham, it's great. But, you really have to make a dash before the concert ends. You cannot get a train back to Birmingham from Wolverhampton at that point, that means you cannot get home."*

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Quote 2: "We will give a guideline to our punters, we say the planned running times are 7:30 till 10:30... and suddenly you're at 11:00; and, you're getting letters the next day from people saying, well, I missed my last bus."

- **Local buses and metro** remain the primary choice for residents. However, frequent complaints centre around gaps in service frequency, long waiting times, and reduced operational hours on weekends – the time when many cultural events are hosted.

The cumulative shortfall in late-night service means that a significant portion of potential users opts for private cars or taxis (e.g. 38% of respondents in the Liverpool's 'Night Bus Passenger and Survey Response Analysis', May 2025), inadvertently contributing to congestion and elevated pollution levels in the urban core.

1.1. 2 Demographic Profiles and Motivations

A deeper look at the demographic distribution among public transport users reveals three main groups:

- **Local residents:** Residents of Birmingham, Wolverhampton, and Coventry are more likely to use public transport, driven largely by cost considerations and proximity. For these individuals, affordability is a critical factor. When specifically focusing on music events, 73.1% of users report living locally to the events they attended (BLMP/LMMP Audience survey, 2020).

- **Regional visitors:** Those who travel from secondary urban centres or even rural districts near the West Midlands depend strongly on available rail and bus services. For these individuals, the absence of a robust late-night option often forces reliance on more expensive alternatives.

- **User profile**: Public transport users attending evening cultural events within WM are diverse, with more than a half of users from within West Midlands (55%). The majority of users are aged between 18 and 35 years (73% for bus users; with a significant drop for 45+ users, and no users past age 80 – as based on comparative studies in other cities), with a fairly even gender distribution. Students and young professionals make up a significant portion of the user base as reported in the interviews and reports. Worth of nothing is the especially low engagement of 18-24s with music events and going out in comparison to other age groups, which is reflected across whole England not only WM ('LIVE Insights. Deep Dive into audience trends', May 2024). But, when they go out 46% report use of public nighttime transport ('Night Bus Passenger and Survey Response Analysis', May 2025). There is a potential to improve those numbers as the Participation Survey (2023–2024), reporting on day travel, shows that 55% of adults attended cinema

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and 39% theatre, with higher engagement among women and those in professional occupations. However, West Midlands residents are less likely to attend live sporting events than the national average, possibly reflecting transport limitations. Further, the Department for Transport (2025) reported that leisure is the most common reason for train travel (50–53%), with concerts and festivals accounting for 7%. West Midlands residents were underrepresented in this category, likely due to the absence of a Travel Card and inconsistent service reliability.

- **Environmentally conscious attendants:** A growing segment of the population is opting for public transport as a conscious choice to minimize their carbon footprint. Although this group is relatively small, their motivations underscore the potential benefits of a more sustainable public transport offering.

The interplay between cost, convenience, and environmental consciousness drives these decisions. However, when faced with unreliable late-night services, even the eco-friendly majority is compelled to revert to less sustainable forms of mobility.

1.1. 3 Barriers to Adoption

Several key barriers inhibit the wider adoption of public transport for night-time outings:

- **Service Limitations:** The curtailment of service hours means that, after certain times (past 10pm, but especially past 11pm), the availability of buses and trains becomes unpredictable. This gap forces users to rely on taxis or personal vehicles. According to the BLMP/LMMP Audience Survey (2020), 57.6% of respondents agreed that better transport links would encourage them to attend more live music events in Birmingham. Similarly, 35% of musicians reported a negative impact from insufficient late-night public transport. The iconic comments from public consultation, expressed the service limitation in the following way:

  Quote 3: "You can't build a 24-hour economy on a 9-to-5 transport system."

  Quote 4: "We've got the venues, we've got the audiences—but if people can't get home, it all falls apart."

  Data from the Department of Transport ('Exploring connections between rail ticket type and journey purpose', 9th April 2025), further exemplifies this problem, reporting a lack of consistency in reliable services due to delays and cancellations, with 5.1% - 70, 000 - fully cancelled trains across network (Oct-Dec 2024).

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- **Safety Concerns:** Data and interviews show that safety concerns—particularly among female travellers and those traveling alone—play a significant role in the decision to avoid public transport late at night. Poorly lit stops, sparse security, and isolated waiting areas contribute to these apprehensions, not often related to reality, but simply perception of the place.

  > *Quote 5: "I always use the bus to get to evening events. It's convenient and affordable, but I do worry about safety at night. I've had a few experiences where the bus stop felt isolated or there weren't many people around, and that can be unsettling. I still use it, but I'm more cautious now, especially if I'm travelling alone."*

  > *Quote 6: "There's a widely held view that the city centre isn't as safe as it should be at night… if people don't feel safe, they don't feel safe regardless of whether there's a rational reason for that or not."*

- **Information Asymmetry:** Users often face challenges in accessing up-to-date information regarding schedules and service disruptions. While 70% of users report that they find it easy to obtain information about routes and schedules, there are gaps in information dissemination and updates, particularly for visitors from outside of West Midlands. This results in uncertainty during peak times and undermines confidence in the system. A lack of integrated, real-time transport information was frequently cited (e.g.: "*You have to go to three different websites to figure out your route*"). This confusion discourages use, especially among those unfamiliar with the area. Often quoted as problematic is lack of reliability of information provided, expressed especially well in the below quote from the public consultation.

  > *Quote 7: "It's not just about the train running—it's about knowing it will run. That confidence is missing."*

1.1.4 Recommendations for Enhancing Public Transport Use

To address these challenges, several strategic recommendations are proposed:

A. **Extension of Service Hours:** Introduce pilot programs on key routes that extend operational hours until well after cultural events conclude, including, but not explicitly, on dates associated with Bank Holidays, or specific holidays (e.g. Halloween night). Targeted services on weekends could significantly reduce the reliance on taxis. Expressed especially well in the below quote.

   > *Quote 8: "Options so that when an audience member is leaving a show, they're not worried about it overrunning by 5 minutes and having to sprint for a train."*

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B. **Integrated Ticketing Solutions:** Develop one-ticket systems that allow seamless transfers between buses, trams, and trains, thereby enhancing the convenience of using public transport across multiple modes.

C. **Real-Time Information Systems:** Deploy advanced mobile applications and digital displays at transport hubs that provide accurate, minute-by-minute updates about service availability and delays.

D. **Infrastructure Improvements:** Upgrade facilities at bus and tram stops, including better lighting, secure enclosures, and emergency communication systems to bolster passenger safety.

Such improvements not only encourage usage among current public transport users but also open up the system to those who have been reluctant due to its present limitations.

1.2 Access and Demand for Public Transport (Big Data)

1.2.1 Approach

To enrich the insights seen above in Section 1.1, a series of empirical analyses were used to assess the level of accessibility and demand for public transport across the West Midlands. Firstly, we calculated the shortest walking distance from cultural venues and destinations to their closest public transport options (bus, rail and tram), to provide objective measures (as described below in 1.2.2) which highlight how quickly someone can access public transport from different venues. Secondly, we leveraged Swift Card data, provided by TfWM, to explore usage of buses during the night-time, as described below in Section 1.2.3. Together, these analyses help to highlight major gaps in public transport infrastructure provision around key hubs of cultural venues and destinations.

1.2.2 Accessibility to Public Transport

In the case of railway stations, access to public transport from major hubs of cultural venues and destinations (e.g., Birmingham City Centre, Wolverhampton, Stourbridge) is among the best in the West Midlands. In these locations, the measures of accessibility indicate that visitors to destinations can walk short distances to access their nearest railway stations. Similarly, some smaller hubs in parts of the West Midlands have good access, such as in Selly Oak and Sutton Coldfield. On the other hand, there are lots of places with a high density of cultural venues and destinations, but very poor access to railway infrastructure (e.g., Dudley, Moseley & Willenhall), which is particularly concerning given how dependent many visitors and tourists are on rail for cultural activities.

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The patterns for metro infrastructure are much more regular and uniform, with good levels of accessibility appearing to be following the key metro route between Birmingham and Wolverhampton. These accessibility measures clearly highlight how those hubs of cultural venues and destinations along the key route are within relatively short walking distance of a metro stop. For example, the clusters of venues in West Bromwich, Bilston, Wednesbury, Wolverhampton and Birmingham all exhibit the shortest walking distances to their nearest metro stop.

Finally for bus, we see much more localised patterns of accessibility to bus stops, which is driven by the high density of bus stops throughout the West Midlands. In general, there are large numbers of venues where the walking distance to the closest bus stop exceeds 300m, which is particularly concerning given the density of bus stops through the West Midlands. The UK Department of Transport (DfT) does not set a single, rigid standard for bus stop distances; and, the national guidance, such as the "Inclusive Mobility" (DfT, 2021), suggest that for an inclusive environment, public transport access should generally be within 400 meters. However, the interviewees confirmed that often the context of the area is intervening factor. Perception of the safety of the area, availability of well light public route, and ease of access play major role here when it comes to night-time and the respondents suggested shortening of the distance to 300 meters, especially when density of venues is smaller. Furthermore, for major conglomerations like Birmingham and Coventry, the accessibility to bus stops really varies within the larger conglomeration, such as in neighbourhoods like Gas Street Basin (Birmingham), Croft Rd (Coventry), and the Southern outskirts of Wolverhampton, where visitors and residents typically must walk relatively longer distances to access bus infrastructure. However, worth of noting here are limits to moving stops and infrastructure closer to the venues, due to land use considerations (i.e. preexisting buildings, canals, width of existing roads). Many of the large retail parks and shopping centres also experience these specific problems, despite being hubs for some of these important destinations.

1.2.3. Demand for Public Transport

Accessibility metrics are powerful for highlighting physical barriers to access in terms of distance to public transport. However, the metrics do not give us any indication of the actual usage of these buses. To explore demand for public transport we took a one-year sample of Swift Card data (kindly provided by TfWM) to understand how buses are used during the night-time. Firstly, in general the patterns of bus usage are stable across the three time periods studied (6PM – 10PM, 10PM – MIDNIGHT and MIDNIGHT+). Major urban centres like Birmingham, Coventry, Wolverhampton and Walsall see the largest number of passengers at bus stops, with the largest concentration of these occurring in and around Birmingham City Centre (e.g., Colmore Row, The Square Peg, Moor Street). Outside of the main urban centres, we see bus usage following the major arterial routes

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of the West Midlands, such as along the A435, A41, B4113, but with significantly lower numbers of annual passengers than those seen at major city centre transport hubs.

In terms of the night-time economy, one fact is particularly important, which is not displayed on the dashboard. Annual passenger numbers in the 6PM – 6AM window were drastically lower than those seen throughout the regular working day, which is not surprising. However, this helps to make the case for why public transport is intrinsically connected with the night-time economy, which as discussed above comprises a substantial proportion of the working economy. Across the three time periods studied in this work (6PM – 10PM, 10PM – MIDNIGHT and MIDNIGHT+), the number of passengers at all bus stops falls as we move later into the night. An example of this is the bus stop outside Selfridges in Birmingham City Centre, which saw ~40,000 annual swift card users between the hours of 6PM and 10PM, but only 932 after 12AM.

Overall, the number of annual passengers between 6PM and 10PM is relatively high, suggesting good provision of buses during this time window. However, after 10PM the numbers begin to decline rapidly, suggesting a need for greater provision of night buses after 10PM. In fact, looking at the data, there appear to be almost no bus stops offering services after midnight outside of the centre of Birmingham, which is an astonishing figure considering most live music events do not conclude until around 11PM, at which point there will be limited bus services in operation. Another finding that is staggering from the dashboard is that as we move later into the night, the major urban centres (e.g., Coventry, Wolverhampton, Birmingham) become disconnected by a lack of bus services. For example, between 10PM and 12AM, there are no passengers using buses along the major arterial routes connecting Birmingham and Coventry, suggesting an overall lack of services to move people between these two urban centres.

1.2.4. Recommendations for Enhancing Public Transport Use

To address these challenges and gaps identified by advanced empirical analysis, three strategic recommendations are proposed:

A. **Infrastructure Investment:** Prioritise rail infrastructure investment in underserved cultural hubs. This can be delivered via new rail connections, light rail/tram alternatives or demand-responsive transit to these locations, engaging beyond the limited TfWM and WMCA's powers.
B. **Night Bus Services:** Expand late-night bus services to offer post-10PM bus services along key urban corridors and between cultural hubs.
C. **Data-Driven Decision-Making:** Integrate Swift Card data to prioritise investment around areas with the greatest need and adjust service provision dynamically.

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Section 2 – Employees and employers (Experiences)

It is vital that key stakeholders are engaged in the process of assessing the current situation and developing solutions to meet their needs within the West Midlands NTE public transport.

2. Night Shift Staff & Employer Experiences

2.1 The Challenges of Workforce Mobility

For night shift workers in the West Midlands, the inadequacies of current transport systems manifest in several troubling ways. Employees in night-time economy sectors (including hospitality and security) often end up incurring high costs due to ride-hailing and taxi services which fill the void left by unsupported public transport. This reliance on premium transport not only affects the bottom line of businesses but also compromises employee safety and overall job satisfaction.

Existing surveys, conducted interviews and consultations among night shift employees and employers highlight notable challenges:

- **Inconsistent Transport Options:** Many workers, especially those in smaller towns surrounding major urban centres, when public transport is lacking, report long waiting times for taxis and ride services, which can delay their arrival home or even negatively impact their work-life balance.
- **Service Reliability and Frequency**: A recurring theme across interviews is the **lack of reliable, safe, and affordable public transport options** after 10:30 pm. Staff members report that buses and trains either stop running too early or are frequently delayed or cancelled. One participant noted:

  > *Quote 9: "... the five or six times I've gone to use [the train] in the last couple of years, probably three or four of those times, it's been cancelled."*

  This unreliability forces staff to seek alternative, often more expensive, options like taxis or driving.
- **Financial Strain on Employers:** In sectors where recruitment and retention are already challenging, subsidizing transportation is often seen as an added burden. Many employers have introduced transport allowances or taxi reimbursement schemes; however, these are only temporary patches on a systemic issue, and

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interviewees indicated that it is not a sustainable solution and may cause tax issues.

- **Limited Recruitment Pool**: The inability to guarantee safe, affordable transport home restricts hiring to those who live nearby or have access to a car. This disproportionately affects younger workers and those from lower-income backgrounds.
- **Shift Scheduling Constraints**: Employers often adjust shift patterns to accommodate transport limitations, which can reduce operational flexibility.

  Quote 10: "We finish earlier than we'd like just so staff can catch the last bus."

- **Health and Safety Concerns:** Night-time travel frequently exposes workers to risks, particularly in poorly lit areas or remote transport stops. The lack of visible security exacerbates these concerns, adding stress to an already demanding work schedule. The stress of navigating late-night travel, especially after long shifts, contributes to staff fatigue and dissatisfaction.

  Quote 11: "It's not just the work—it's the journey home that wears people down."

2.2 Employer Strategies and Best Practices

In response to these challenges, several employers have initiated strategies to mitigate transport-related issues:

- **Subsidised Taxi Schemes:** Several venues offer taxi reimbursements for staff finishing after 11pm. While appreciated, these schemes are financially burdensome and not universally available.

  Quote 12: "If they live more than three miles out and we offer them a £10 Uber credit, they don't stay. It's not enough."

- **Car-Pooling Initiatives:** Several employers have explored structured car-pooling programs among night shift colleagues. Although logistical challenges such as varying work locations and shift timings reduce their overall effectiveness, these initiatives highlight the potential for cooperative solutions. However, increased parking charges in city centres are beginning to impact this option.

- **Security Escort Programs:** A few urban employers have arranged for security personnel to escort their night shift workers to nearby transport hubs. This measure, aimed at increasing personal safety, has shown promising increases in worker satisfaction but requires further scaling to be broadly effective.

- **Sustainability Initiatives**: Some organisations promote sustainable travel through partnerships with platforms like You.Smart.Thing and Ecoway, offering journey planning tools and incentives for greener travel.

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2.3 Recommendations for Improving Workforce Mobility

Addressing these issues necessitates a multi-pronged approach:

A. **Pilot Extended Public Transport Routes:** Introduce bus routes dedicated to major employment hubs after traditional service hours, ensuring that night shift staff have a reliable and safe travel option.
B. **Develop Employer-Transport Partnerships:** Collaborate with local transport operators to negotiate discounted travel passes for night shift workers, reducing the financial impact on both employees and businesses.
C. **Introduce Community-Based Ride-Share Programs:** Develop localized ride-sharing networks that coordinate transport between workers living in similar areas. This creates both cost savings and improved travel safety.
D. **Enhance Security Measures:** Invest in improved infrastructure—such as well-lit waiting areas, CCTV surveillance, and on-call security assistance—at key transport nodes to alleviate safety concerns.

Implementing these recommendations could lead to a marked improvement in workforce mobility, simultaneously reducing operational costs while enhancing employee morale and safety.

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Section 3 – Environment

3.1 West Midlands Night -Time Cultural Infrastructure Map

This section provides a descriptive summary of information on various destinations within West Midlands related to the night-time cultural economy in the relation to their geographical location and available public transport. The visualisation of the data in the format of the map is available under: West Midlands Night-Time Cultural Infrastructure Map (WMCA Foursquare Transport Dashboard).

The full database includes 3,814 destinations – 900 Arts and Entertainment (e.g. theatres, night clubs, cinemas; 23.60%), 263 Community and Government (e.g. social clubs and community centres; 6.9%), and 2,651 Dining and Drinking (bars and pubs; 69.51%). Dining and Drinking venues dominate the landscape, reflecting the region's vibrant hospitality sector. Arts and Entertainment venues are also well-represented, supporting a diverse cultural offering. Broken down into the NTE specific sub-categories, we can observe a dominance of bars (67.57%), as the main source of engagement, followed by performing arts venues (9.54%), including music venues and theatres, social (6.90%) and night clubs (6.08%; see Table 1 below). 31.44% of destinations is located in Birmingham constituting an epicentre of the night-time cultural entertainment in the region; followed by Coventry - 9.75%, Wolverhampton – 6.61%, Walsall 3.85%, Dudley – 3.28%, Stourbridge – 2.49%, West Bromwich – 2.28%, and Solihull – 2.10%, with the rest of destinations scattered across the whole region without visible concentration.

Table 1 NTE specific sub-categories within West Midlands (WM)

NTE specific sub-categories	Frequency	Percent
Arcade	29	0.76
Bar	2,577	67.57
Bingo Centre	28	0.73
Bowling Alley	30	0.79
Brewery	64	1.68
Casino	65	1.70
Circus	4	0.10
Comedy Club	14	0.37
Dance Hall	1	0.03
Distillery	3	0.08
Karaoke Box	1	0.03
Mini Golf Course	9	0.24
Movie Theatre	50	1.31
Night Club	232	6.08
Party Centre	1	0.03
Performing Arts Venue	364	9.54

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Pool Hall	49	1.28
Social Club	263	6.90
Stadium	12	0.31
Strip Club	11	0.29
Winery	7	0.18
	3,814	100

3.1.1 Accessibility by venue type and location

Accessibility to night-time cultural venues in the West Midlands varies significantly by venue type and location, reflecting the interplay between urban infrastructure, public transport networks, and the spatial distribution of cultural assets.

For instance, venues categorized under “Dining and Drinking”, such as bars and pubs, are often located in central urban areas, like Birmingham city centre. These locations typically benefit from good public transport connectivity, with bus stops, rail stations, and metro lines within short walking distances. A bar in the city centre might be just 50 metres from a bus stop and 300 metres from a rail station, making it easily accessible for both locals and visitors. This proximity encourages higher footfall, supports the local economy, and promotes sustainable travel. Further, Dining and Drinking venues in central areas like Coventry and Wolverhampton tend to have shorter average distances to bus stops, often under 100 metres. This reflects the dense urban infrastructure and the high concentration of bus routes in city centres. In contrast, Arts and Entertainment venues—especially those in suburban or semi-rural areas like Aldridge, Amblecote, or Balsall Common—are generally farther from metro and rail stops, with average distances often exceeding 5,000 metres. This suggests a reliance on buses or private transport for access.

“Arts and Entertainment” venues, particularly “Performing Arts Venues” or “Comedy Clubs”, are more dispersed. While some are centrally located, others are situated in suburban or semi-rural areas where public transport is less frequent, or stops are farther away. For example, a performing arts venue in a suburban locality might be over 1,000 metres from the nearest rail station and 500 metres from a bus stop. This distance can pose challenges for individuals without private transport, especially during late-night hours when services are reduced.

Moreover, nightclubs, which are a key part of the night-time economy, often cluster in entertainment districts, but can also be found in industrial or redeveloped areas like Digbeth in Birmingham. While these areas may be vibrant cultural hubs, their accessibility can vary. Some clubs are well-served by night buses or metro lines, while others lack nearby transport options, potentially deterring attendance and raising safety concerns for patrons travelling at night.

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3.1.2 Bus as main transport within region

In the context of the West Midlands' night-time cultural economy, one notable trend is that bus stops are generally closer to venues than rail or metro stops. This pattern reflects the structure and flexibility of the regional public transport network, where buses serve as the most granular and widespread mode of transit.

Bus networks are designed to penetrate deeper into neighbourhoods and commercial zones, offering frequent stops and extensive coverage. As a result, venues such as bars, nightclubs, and performing arts spaces—especially those located in city centres or densely populated areas—tend to be within a short walking distance of a bus stop. For example, a popular bar in Birmingham's Southside district might be just 20 to 50 metres from the nearest bus stop, making it highly accessible for patrons arriving from various parts of the city.

Across nearly all localities and venue types within West Midlands, bus stops are consistently the closest form of public transport. For instance: In Acocks Green, Dining and Drinking venues are on average just 145 metres from a bus stop, compared to 600 metres from a rail station (due to the location, entirely excluding metro link, with nearest stop in 7,600 metres distance). In Aldridge, Arts and Entertainment venues average 297 metres to the nearest bus stop. This pattern highlights the critical role of bus networks in supporting the night-time economy, especially in areas not served by rail or metro.

In contrast, rail and metro stations are fewer and more spaced out, typically located at major transit hubs or along fixed corridors. While they offer faster and more reliable service over longer distances, their limited number of stops means that many venues are situated several hundred metres—or even kilometres—away. For instance, a performing arts venue in a suburban area like Solihull may be over 1,000 metres from the nearest rail station, requiring additional walking or a connecting bus ride.

This proximity advantage of bus stops is particularly important for the night-time economy, where ease of access and safety are critical. Patrons are more likely to choose venues that are easily reachable by public transport, especially late at night when walking long distances may be less desirable. Moreover, closer bus stops support inclusivity by enabling access for individuals without private vehicles, including young people, older adults, and those with mobility challenges.

3.1.3 Geographical gaps

Many localities within West Midlands have fewer than 5 venues listed in the Map. This suggests that while urban centres like Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton are well-represented, many smaller towns and suburban areas have limited coverage in

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terms of cultural or night-time destinations. There is also data limitation to be considered, where destinations exist but are not captured in the dataset.

3.1.4 Recommendations

Based on the analysis of the dataset, here are several recommendations regarding the types of destinations, their locations, and the provision of public transport to enhance accessibility and support the night-time cultural economy across the West Midlands:

A. **Enhance Bus Connectivity —** Maintain and expand late-night bus services, particularly in areas with high concentrations of venues. Introduce or improve night bus routes in underserved areas to support safe and convenient travel for patrons and workers.
B. **Improve Rail and Metro Access —** Explore the feasibility of shuttle services or micro-transit options connecting key venues to nearby rail or metro stations. Long-term planning could include new stops or better pedestrian links to existing stations.
C. **Integrate Transport Planning with Cultural Strategy —** Embed transport considerations into cultural development strategies. Use data-driven planning to align new venue development with existing or planned transport infrastructure.

3.2 Environmental Impact and Sustainable Alternatives

3.2.1 The Environmental Cost of Current Practices

City councils and environmental policymakers have long recognized that urban transport is a significant contributor to regional pollution. In the West Midlands, despite initiatives like the Clean Air Zone aimed at reducing vehicular emissions, there remains a heavy reliance on single-occupancy vehicles and taxis. The environmental implications are multifaceted:

- **Carbon Emissions:** Elevated levels of CO_2 emissions continue to be a concern, particularly during night-time hours when a higher density of vehicles—predominantly taxis and privately owned cars—is observed.
- **Energy Consumption:** Inefficient transport modes result in greater overall energy consumption, undermining efforts to transition to greener alternatives. Here especially of significance are **regulatory challenges**. Local authorities have limited influence over ride-hailing companies, which often resist engagement.

> *Quote 12: "Uber and Bolt don't want to talk to us—it's not part of their financial model."*

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- **Clean Air Zone (CAZ) in Birmingham - Influence and Trade-offs:** While the environmental rationale is clear—improving air quality and public health—the CAZ has also introduced complex opportunity costs, particularly for those working in or attending the city's vibrant night-time economy. Several stakeholders interviewed in the research highlighted the double-charging issue for night-time workers.

  > *Quote 13: "If you leave work at 1:00 AM, you're charged twice—once before midnight and once after."*

  This has a disproportionate impact on lower-paid workers in hospitality and cultural sectors, many of whom rely on private vehicles due to the lack of late-night public transport. Moreover, the CAZ has inadvertently shifted parking behaviours. With increased parking charges and CAZ fees, some workers and patrons now park further from venues to avoid costs, raising safety concerns. Despite these challenges, the CAZ has catalysed a broader conversation about sustainable transport.

  > *Quote 14: "We support the CAZ, but we need the public transport to match the ambition."*

- **Cycling and Micro-Mobility:** Cycling is gaining traction, but infrastructure gaps remain. One venue reported working with Southside BID to install more bike racks. The lack of secure storage and lighting discourages wider uptake. Micro-mobility options like e-scooters and shared bikes are underused due to poor integration and availability.

Collectively, these issues necessitate a strategic pivot towards more sustainable transport solutions that would reduce the environmental footprint of night-time economic activity.

3.2.2 Sustainable Transport Alternatives and Innovations

Several innovative approaches have been trailed worldwide which could be adapted for the West Midlands:

- **Electrification of Public Transport:** Transitioning to electric or hybrid buses and trains can dramatically reduce urban emissions. Several cities in Europe have already begun implementing these solutions with demonstrable success, Coventry being a great regional example.
- **Cycling Infrastructure Enhancements:** Expanding and improving cycling paths, along with the provision of secure bike storage, has the potential to encourage more residents to choose bicycles over taxis or cars. Initiatives in cities like

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Copenhagen and Amsterdam offer proven examples of how cycling can become a viable, low-emission alternative.

- **Ride-Sharing Platforms and Co-operative approaches:** High-tech ridesharing and van/carpooling and ride-sharing solutions can reduce the number of vehicles on the road. By coordinating transport for multiple users heading in the same direction, ridesharing alleviates congestion and decreases cumulative emissions, significantly reducing reliance on individual vehicles.
- **Integrated Mobility Hubs:** The creation of mobility hubs—points where multiple modes of transport converge—can facilitate smoother transitions between bicycles, buses, metro, and trains. These hubs are often equipped with solar panels and green infrastructure, further enhancing their sustainability.

Case Study Comparisons:

- **Liverpool's Night-time Bus Initiative:** In Liverpool, the introduction of extended night bus services correlated with a notable reduction in taxi usage. This initiative improved overall public transport patronage and contributed to reduced vehicular emissions.
- **Newcastle's Venue-Integrated Metro Partnerships:** Newcastle's metro system has launched integration with local cultural venues by offering discounted tickets for eventgoers who use public transport. This policy not only incentivizes the use of greener transport options but also strengthens the linkage between cultural participation and sustainable mobility practices.

3.2.3 Environmental Policy Recommendations

To harness the full potential of sustainable transport, the report recommends the following policy measures:

A. **Support for Electrification Programs:** Increased funding and policy incentives for transitioning existing bus fleets to electric or hybrid models.

B. **Investment in Cycling Infrastructure:** Immediate improvements in cycling pathways, alongside enhanced security measures at designated bicycle storage facilities.

C. **Promotion of Ride-Sharing Networks:** Partnerships between local government and tech companies to develop streamlined, user-friendly ride-sharing platforms tailored to night-time transport needs.

D. **Enhancement of Integrated Mobility Hubs:** Coordination between transport authorities to invest in multi-modal hubs that incorporate advanced information systems, renewable energy installations, and sustainable design principles.

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E. **Revisions to Clean Air Zone Policies:** Adjust policies to provide exemptions or subsidies for night shift workers, thereby reducing the burden associated with using taxi services while aligning with environmental objectives.

Through the adoption of these measures, the region could drastically reduce its environmental footprint while simultaneously supporting a vibrant and accessible night-time economy.

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Conclusion & Recommendations

This report, commissioned by the West Midlands Growth Company (WMGC), explored the intersection of public transport, cultural participation, and workforce mobility in the West Midlands' night-time cultural economy. Drawing on extensive qualitative and quantitative data from stakeholders across the cultural, transport, and policy sectors, the report identified key barriers, motivations, and opportunities for improving public transport access between 6 PM and 6 AM. The findings were structured around three core themes:

1. **Public Transport Use for Evening Cultural Events**
2. **Workforce Mobility and Employer Challenges**
3. **Environmental Impact and Sustainable Alternatives**

Summary of Key Findings

- **Inadequate Public Transport Service:** Current public transport systems fall short in delivering safe, reliable, and timely services for late-night event attendees, pushing many toward private vehicle use and costlier alternatives.
- **Workforce Mobility Challenges:** Night shift workers face significant obstacles, ranging from financial burdens to safety risks. This issue not only affects employee well-being but also has adverse effects on employers' operational costs and recruitment efforts.
- **Environmental Concerns:** The reliance on suboptimal transport systems contributes to higher emissions and increased energy consumption, countering the goals of environmental initiatives such as the Clean Air Zone.

The night-time economy in the West Midlands is a vital component of the region's cultural and economic identity. However, its growth is constrained by gaps in public transport provision, especially after dark. By addressing the barriers identified in this report—through infrastructure, policy, and partnership—the WMGC can unlock new opportunities for cultural engagement, workforce inclusion, and environmental sustainability.

Key Recommendations

To address these challenges comprehensively, the following strategies are proposed:

- **Extend and Integrate Public Transport Services:** Roll out pilot projects for extended-night services on major cultural and employment corridors. Integrate

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advanced multi-modal ticketing systems to ensure seamless coordination among different public transport modes.

- **Develop Robust Security and Infrastructure Measures:** Invest in safety infrastructure at transport hubs, such as improved lighting, surveillance, and emergency communication systems, to foster a safer environment for all users.
- **Encourage Employer-Transport Alliances:** Facilitate partnerships between local government, transport operators, and employers to create subsidized travel programs and incentivized ride-sharing schemes specifically designed for night shift employees.
- **Focus on Environmental Sustainability:** Prioritize investments in the electrification of public transport, taxicabs, improvements in cycling infrastructure, and the development of integrated mobility hubs that contribute to reduced urban emissions.
- **Public Awareness and Real-Time Information:** Launch initiatives to improve public access to real-time transit information, enhancing users' ability to plan their journeys confidently—this includes developing dedicated mobile applications with live updates and emergency alerts.

Future Research and Development

While the recommendations outlined in this report provide a path forward, several areas demand further investigation:

- **Impact Assessments of Extended Services:** Detailed studies are required to measure the long-term effects of extended public transport services on taxi reliance and individual travel behaviour.
- **Cost-Benefit Analyses for Employers:** Further research should highlight the economic benefits of improved workforce mobility, offering a detailed cost-benefit analysis to encourage employer adoption of subsidized transit programs.
- **Sustainability Benchmarks:** As environmental policies evolve, ongoing assessments should gauge the effectiveness of electrification programs and integrated mobility hubs in meeting target emission reductions.
- **Community Engagement:** The success of any transport initiative depends on robust community engagement. Future projects must include stakeholder consultations to fine-tune service designs and ensure that solutions are tailored to user needs.

Final Remarks

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The evolution of the West Midlands' night-time economy hinges on the ability to overcome multifaceted challenges within the transport sector. As detailed throughout this report, a strategic, data-driven, and community-responsive approach is essential for realizing significant improvements. In bridging the gap between current service limitations and future stakeholder expectations, the proposed initiatives represent an investment in the region's social, economic, and environmental future.

Policymakers, transport operators, community leaders, and employers are encouraged to review the findings herein and consider collaborative pilot projects that embody these recommendations. Through joint efforts and continuous innovation, the West Midlands can set a national, and even international, example of how urban regions can thrive in the night, safely and sustainably.

This report brings together an in-depth analysis of public transport usage, workforce mobility challenges, environmental considerations, and future policy directions. Though it has been tailored specifically for the West Midlands' context, the findings and recommendations hold broader relevance and can contribute to ongoing conversations about sustainable urban mobility and economic vitality across similar metropolitan regions.

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Appendix 1

(List of the interviewees)

	Surname/Name	Function	Organisation	City/region
1.	Corsi, Aaron	Stratford Business Improvement District Manager	Stratford Business Improvement District	Stratford-upon-Avon
2.	Chidgey, Andy	Transport Planning Manager – Scheme Development, Transport & Connectivity, Place, Prosperity and Sustainability Directorate	Birmingham City Council	Birmingham
3.	Heys, Joe	Principal, Culture and Nighttime Economy	Greater Manchester Combined Authority	Manchester
4.	Pugh, Simon	Programme Manager	Walsall Arena & Arts Centre	Walsall
5.	Reed, Nick	CEO	B:Music/Town Hall/ Symphony Hall	Birmingham
6.	Rushton, Crissie	General Manager	The Halls Wolverhampton	Wolverhampton
7.	Sharpe, Rachel	Head of Creative Placemaking and Public Programmes	Royal Shakespeare Company	Stratford-upon-Avon
8.	Thomson, Jeff	Co-founder/Director	Un-Convention	Manchester
9.	Virman, Salla	Head of Culture and Creative Economy	Coventry City Council	Coventry
10.	(GDPR restricted)			Warwick
11.	(GDPR restricted)			Warwick
12.	(GDPR restricted)			Coventry
13.	(GDPR restricted)			Wolverhampton
14.	(GDPR restricted)			Birmingham
15.	(GDPR restricted)			Birmingham
16.	(GDPR restricted)			West Midlands
17.	(GDPR restricted)			Birmingham
18.	(GDPR restricted)			Birmingham

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19.	(GDPR restricted)			Birmingham
20.	(GDPR restricted)			West Midlands
21.	(GDPR restricted)			Wolverhampton
22.	(GDPR restricted)			Birmingham
23.	(GDPR restricted)			Birmingham
24.	(GDPR restricted)			Birmingham

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Appendix 2

(*Destinations' cross categorisation)*

NTE_SIC codes_as per WMCA analysis	Broader category	WMCIM 'Type'	WMCIM 'Creative type'	FourSquere Level 1	FourSquere Level 2[5]
56301	Clubs, bars			Arts and Entertainment	Night Club
				Arts and Entertainment	Comedy Club
				Arts and Entertainment	Strip Club
				Community and Government	Social Club
56302	Clubs, bars			Dining and Drinking	Bar
59140	Cinemas	Cinema	Film/TV/Photo	Arts and Entertainment	Movie Theatre
90010	Performing arts	Community-focused space	Performing arts		
		Community-focused space	Performing arts – Dance		
		Community-focused space	Performing arts – Theatre		
		Community-focused space	Music		
		Community-focused space	Drama & Dance theatre		

[5] All categories of destinations included in the final the West Midlands Cultural and Night-Time Economy Infrastructure Map

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				Arts and Entertainment	Circus
90020				Arts and Entertainment	Performing Arts Venue
90040	Operation of arts facilities	Concert hall	Multi-Cultural		
		Concert hall	Music		
		Concert hall	Performing arts		
		Large entertainment venue	Multi- Cultural		
		Large entertainment venue	Music		
		Large entertainment venue	Performing arts		
		Multi-purpose & arts centre	Multi-Creative		
		Multi-purpose & arts centre	Multi - Cultural		
		Live music venue	Multi – Cultural		
		Live music venue	Music		
		Live music venue	Performing arts – Dance		
		Live music venue	Performing arts - Theatre		
		Multi-purpose & arts centre	Performing arts		
		Drama & dance theatre	Multi- Cultural		
		Drama & dance theatre	Performing arts		
		Drama & dance theatre	Performing arts – Dance		
		Drama & dance theatre	Performing arts - Theatre		
92000	Gambling and betting activities			Arts and Entertainment	Casino
				Arts and Entertainment	Bingo Centre

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93110	Operation of sports facilities				
93120	Activities of sport clubs				
	Outdoor event space	Outdoor event space	Festival/events		
		Outdoor event space	Film/TV/photo		
		Outdoor event space	Music		
7999				Arts and Entertainment	Pool Hall
7999				Arts and Entertainment	Karaoke Box
7999				Arts and Entertainment	Carnival
7993				Arts and Entertainment	Arcade
7993				Arts and Entertainment	Bowling Alley
7992				Arts and Entertainment	Mini Golf Course
7911				Arts and Entertainment	Dance Hall
7911				Arts and Entertainment	Country Dance Club
7911				Arts and Entertainment	Salsa Club
				Arts and Entertainment	Party Centre
11050				Dining and Drinking	Brewery
11010				Dining and Drinking	Distillery
11010				Dining and Drinking	Winery
5813				Dining and Drinking	Cidery
11010				Dining and Drinking	Night Market

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