



AI Adoption Roadmap

Create Central
June 2025



West Midlands
Combined Authority





Table of Contents

1. Introduction and context	2
2. How to use this roadmap	2
3. AI adoption phases	4
3.1 Phase 1: AI readiness & baseline mapping	4
3.2 Phase 2: Quick wins & practical pilots	6
3.3 Phase 3: Skills, collaboration & governance	8
3.4 Phase 4: Funding and sector integration	10
3.5 Phase 5: Strategic regional alignment	12
4. Toolkits for action: Turning strategy into delivery	14
5. Appendices	17
APPENDIX 1: Creative AI Readiness & Governance Assessment	17
APPENDIX 2: Creative AI Readiness & Governance Assessment - Questions	20
APPENDIX 3: Five high-impact, business-specific AI use cases examples for the creative industries in the West Midlands	24

1. Introduction and context

The West Midlands is home to one of the UK's most dynamic creative clusters, with strengths in film, TV, gaming, immersive media, and digital content. With major assets like the BBC's expansion in Birmingham, the globally recognised *Silicon Spa* games hub, and new infrastructure such as Digbeth Loc. Studios and STEAMhouse, the region is well positioned to lead in creative AI innovation.

AI is already being used across the cluster—from game development and virtual production to content localisation and audience analytics. But for many creative businesses, especially smaller and early-stage companies, the path to adoption remains unclear. This roadmap is designed to support those organisations—helping them explore AI confidently, creatively, and responsibly—while also engaging larger or more advanced organisations as partners, mentors, and collaborators.

The roadmap is grounded in three guiding themes:

- **Creativity-led AI** – AI as a tool to amplify, not replace, human creativity.
- **Responsible and ethical innovation** – Governance and ethics embedded from the start.
- **Collaborative infrastructure** – Building on strong regional partnerships across industry, academia, and culture.

Structured around five practical phases, the roadmap helps creative SMEs navigate AI adoption in ways that reflect the region's values and strengths. It supports experimentation, skills development, and access to funding and infrastructure—while embedding ethical practice throughout. By aligning with wider regional strategies, this roadmap aims to place the West Midlands at the forefront of inclusive, responsible, and world-class creative AI.

2. How to use this roadmap

Creative organisations across the West Midlands are at different stages in their AI journey. Some are just beginning to explore the potential of AI, while others are actively testing tools or embedding AI into creative workflows. This roadmap is built with that diversity in mind—it is flexible, modular, and designed to support organisations at all levels of maturity.

The journey begins with the **Creative AI Readiness & Governance Assessment**—a practical self-assessment that helps organisations understand where they are now, identify creative use cases for AI, and reflect on their ethical and governance readiness. This insight allows Create Central to direct organisations to the most relevant phases of the roadmap.

Each phase is supported by one or more **practical toolkits and templates**. These are the core enablers of the roadmap—concrete resources that help organisations take action, test ideas, share learning, and grow their confidence in AI. All toolkits will be hosted on the **Creative AI Knowledge Hub**, Create Central’s digital platform for regional collaboration and support.

You don’t have to follow the roadmap in order—each phase stands alone. Use what’s most helpful, when it’s most useful. The roadmap provides structured, practical support across five phases:

	PHASE 1: AI readiness & baseline mapping	PHASE 2: Quick wins & practical pilots	PHASE 3: Skills, collaboration & governance	PHASE 4: Funding & sector integration	PHASE 5: Strategic regional alignment
Who and when it's for?	Ideal starting point for early-stage organisations or those reassessing their AI maturity, governance and opportunity areas.	For teams ready to experiment, demonstrate value or build confidence through hands-on testing. Works well early on or after readiness assessment	For organisations strengthening internal capability, developing partnerships or embedding ethical practice. Can run alongside pilots.	Best for organisations ready to pitch, secure funding, or scale successful AI projects. Suited to growth-minded SMEs, studios or startups.	For strategic leaders, funders or institutions shaping infrastructure, governance or regional delivery models. Often cluster-level or policy-focused.
Components	Maturity survey Initial workshops Knowledge hub	Curated AI tool directory Pilot design toolkit Mentor network Case study templates	Training directory & course development Collaboration templates Creative AI Governance & Ethics Toolkit Peer learning events	Commercialisation toolkit Funding & pitch support pack Showcase and PR templates Commissioner engagement tools	Regional funding & infrastructure pathways AI ethics and policy input Creative AI impact reporting Centre of Excellence exploration
Investment required	Low cost/resource	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	High investment

3. AI adoption phases

3.1 Phase 1: AI readiness & baseline mapping

Target audience: Start here if you are new to AI or need a clear picture of where your organisation stands. Useful for early engagement or re-baselining before scale-up.

Investment required: Low to moderate

Goal:

To give every organisation in the West Midlands creative cluster a clear, supportive starting point for responsible AI adoption—through self-assessment, peer learning, and practical guidance.

Key activities

- Launch a **Creative AI Readiness & Governance Assessment** to baseline AI maturity, opportunity areas, and governance preparedness.
- Deliver **introductory workshops and demos** showcasing real-world creative AI use cases.
- Activate a **creative AI mentorship network** pairing early-stage adopters with experienced mentors.
- Launch the **Creative AI Knowledge Hub** as the central access point for resources, guidance, and community updates.
- Use assessment data to **segment the cluster** and route organisations into appropriate next phases of support.

Delivery tools and templates

- Creative AI Readiness & Governance Assessment (see appendices)
- Introductory workshop packs and facilitator guides
- Mentor directory and onboarding toolkit
- Creative AI Knowledge Hub
- Ethics and IP starter templates (disclosures, consent, attribution)
- Segmented support pathways linked to future roadmap phases

Delivery recommendations for Create Central

To operationalise this phase, Create Central should:

1. **Commission the Creative AI Readiness & Governance Assessment:**
Partner with assessment design specialists (or do it yourselves) to create a modular, self-service tool with automated feedback and tailored resource links. See also appendices.
2. **Design and deliver a regional introductory workshop programme:**
Develop workshops in partnership with early adopters (e.g. Fish in a Bottle, Holosphere, Rebel Creatives). Focus on real case studies, practical demos, and introductory ethics principles. Offer multiple rounds regionally to maximise reach.
3. **Activate a mentorship network:**
Recruit and brief experienced users to act as mentors. Use a lightweight application and onboarding process, and provide structured mentoring formats (e.g. drop-ins, advice clinics).
4. **Build and manage the Creative AI Knowledge Hub:**
Make it the go-to place for assessments, case studies, toolkits, upcoming events, and FAQs. Appoint a Knowledge Hub content lead to ensure it remains live, current, and sector-relevant.
5. **Implement a segmented support model:**
Use assessment results to categorise organisations by AI readiness and direct them into next-step activities—such as training (Phase 3), pilots (Phase 2), or funding support (Phase 4).
6. **Track engagement and gather feedback:**
Monitor how organisations use the tools and support offers. Use feedback loops to refine resources and training based on user experience and sector needs.

Example use case

A small Birmingham-based post-production studio completes the AI Readiness & Governance Assessment and realises it's using AI tools (for subtitling and sound balancing) without clear IP or attribution processes. They access guidance through the Creative AI Knowledge Hub and attend an introductory workshop featuring Fish in a Bottle and Rebel Creatives. They are paired with a mentor from Holosphere, who advises on ethical considerations. As a result, the studio introduces a new disclosure policy for AI-assisted edits and begins exploring AI-generated visual effects as a next step—preparing to join Phase 2 as a pilot participant.

3.2 Phase 2: Quick wins & practical pilots

Target audience: Ideal for teams ready to experiment or demonstrate value quickly. Can be used at any stage to explore use cases or test new tools.

Investment required: Low to moderate (with targeted pilot funding where possible)

Goal:

To help creative organisations move from awareness to action—using accessible tools and small-scale pilots to demonstrate the creative potential of AI, build confidence, and generate shareable success stories across the cluster.

Key activities

- Promote easy-to-use, off-the-shelf AI tools tailored to creative workflows such as editing, content generation, translation, and audience insight.
- Support small-scale, low-risk pilot projects to test AI tools in real production or campaign settings (see Appendix 3 for some suggested ideas).
- Capture and share case studies that highlight creative outcomes, challenges, and ethical considerations.
- Help teams translate successful pilots into early-stage funding applications, investor conversations, or commissioner pitches.

Delivery tools and templates

- **Curated AI Tool Directory** – practical list of creative-relevant tools with use cases and guidance
- **Pilot Design Toolkit** – templates to scope goals, select tools, consider ethics, and evaluate outcomes
- **Case Study Capture Template** – structured guide to documenting and sharing pilot journeys
- **Funding and Pitch Support Pack** – includes grant guidance, pitch deck formats, and storytelling prompts
- **Showcase and PR Toolkit** – for presenting work at festivals, events, and through media channels

Delivery recommendations for Create Central

To enable creative organisations to gain early wins and build confidence in AI through practical experimentation, Create Central should:

1. **Curate and publish an AI Tool Directory**
Develop a living directory of accessible, off-the-shelf AI tools that are relevant to creative workflows. Include short descriptions, use cases, and ethical tips. Host this on the Creative AI Knowledge Hub and update it based on user feedback.
2. **Provide hands-on support for pilot projects**
Invite applications for pilot support from organisations who have completed Phase 1. Provide access to a light-touch pilot design template and offer mentoring, technical input, or ethical guidance where needed.
3. **Collect and share structured case studies**
Work with pilot teams to capture stories of success, failure, and learning using a shared case study format. Use these stories to build momentum and demystify AI for others in the cluster.
4. **Support early-stage commercialisation or funding bids**
Use the Commercialisation Toolkit and Pitch Pack (Phase 4) to help successful pilots move into funding rounds, commissioner conversations, or investor interest. Offer light-touch guidance clinics and links to relevant grant programmes.
5. **Promote pilot successes at creative and tech events**
Create visibility for regional innovation by helping organisations showcase their AI-enhanced work at local, national, or international events—such as Birmingham Film Festival, CogX, or SXSW.

Example use case

Following an AI readiness workshop, a Coventry-based film production company joins a Create Central-supported pilot. They test an off-the-shelf subtitling tool on a multilingual documentary, significantly reducing edit time. Using the pilot toolkit, they document their approach and outcomes, share the case study through the Knowledge Hub, and use the results to support a successful Innovate UK funding bid to scale up their workflow. Their story is later featured at a regional industry showcase, inspiring other small studios to experiment with similar tools.

3.3 Phase 3: Skills, collaboration & governance

Target audience: Best when building internal capability, starting partnerships, or introducing ethical frameworks. Can follow Phase 1 or run alongside Phases 2 and 4.

Investment required: Moderate

Goal

To equip creative organisations with the skills, partnerships, and ethical frameworks they need to use AI confidently and responsibly—ensuring AI adoption is not only technically capable but creatively meaningful and publicly trusted.

Key activities

- Expand short, accessible **AI training tailored to creative** roles (e.g. editors, producers, marketers, designers).
- Develop and **promote collaboration templates** for SME–studio, SME–university, and freelancer–company AI partnerships.
- **Pilot creative collaborations** that pair different types of organisations to explore shared AI use cases.
- Distribute the Creative **AI Governance & Ethics Toolkit** to embed responsible practice.
- Facilitate **peer learning and knowledge exchange** through events, case clinics, and roundtables.

Delivery tools and templates

- AI Training Directory – listing short courses, bootcamps, and regional offers tailored to creative professionals
- Collaboration Toolkit – includes IP agreements, consent forms, MOUs, and guidance for co-producing with AI
- Creative AI Governance & Ethics Toolkit – with checklists, sample disclosures, attribution templates, and guidance on IP, consent and audience transparency
- Peer Learning Pack – formats and facilitation tips for hosting knowledge-sharing sessions
- Case Study Examples – templates and prompts to help teams share lessons from ethical and collaborative AI use

Delivery recommendations for Create Central

To build long-term capability and embed ethical AI practice across the creative industries, Create Central should:

1. **Expand access to creative AI training**
Work with regional partners (e.g. BCU, University of Wolverhampton, STEAMhouse, BIMM) to identify, promote and co-commission AI training that meets the needs of creatives. Encourage modular, role-specific delivery through micro-courses, bootcamps, and on-demand formats.
2. **Publish and promote a Collaboration Toolkit**
Develop a set of lightweight, practical templates that support SME–studio and SME–university collaboration. Include model MOUs, data-sharing agreements, and IP ownership guidance relevant to AI use in production and storytelling.
3. **Support collaborative pilot projects**
Offer match-funding or brokered partnerships for small-scale collaborative experiments—for example, a freelance designer working with a production house on AI-enhanced campaign content, or a startup paired with a university research team.
4. **Distribute and embed the Governance & Ethics Toolkit**
Make the toolkit a core reference point in all roadmap activity—especially Phases 2–4. Offer training or clinics on how to use the checklist and disclosure templates in real creative projects.
5. **Facilitate peer learning across the cluster**
Create regular opportunities for creatives to share lived experience through knowledge-sharing events, case clinics, and guest speaker sessions. Focus on practical problem-solving around ethical grey areas, rights management, and collaboration.

Example use case

A freelance film editor and a regional TV production company partner to test an AI tool that accelerates first-pass edits. Using a Create Central collaboration template, they agree on roles, data access, and IP terms, including how AI-generated content will be credited. Both participants complete a short course on AI in post-production, including modules on attribution, copyright, and audience disclosure. The experience results in faster workflows, new creative insight, and a case study featured in the Knowledge Hub as a model for collaborative, ethically grounded AI adoption.

3.4 Phase 4: Funding and sector integration

Timeframe: Use when preparing to scale, seek investment, or align with commissioners. Often follows a successful pilot or case study but can also run in parallel.

Investment required: Moderate to high (focused on access to finance, investor readiness, and business support)

Goal

To help creative organisations turn promising AI use cases into investable, fundable, and scalable propositions—by building commercial readiness, improving access to funding, and creating visibility through strategic showcases and commissioner engagement.

Key activities

- Develop a **toolkit to support funding applications**, investor readiness, and commercial storytelling.
- Provide guidance and **one-to-one support to help organisations apply for grants**, secure investment, or pitch to commissioners.
- **Showcase AI-enhanced work** at local, national, and international events.
- **Connect creative SMEs to regional innovation funding** and infrastructure opportunities, including the WMCA AI Growth plans and Innovation Accelerator.

Delivery tools and templates

- Creative AI Commercialisation Toolkit – includes funding templates, pitch decks, commissioner guidance, and investment-readiness checklists
- Grant Application Guide – tailored for Innovate UK, Arts Council England, WMCA, and Create Growth bids
- Pitch Pack Templates – customisable decks for presenting creative AI projects to funders, commissioners, or investors
- Showcase & PR Toolkit – media outreach prompts, event listings, and storytelling tips for exhibition and festival participation
- Strategic Funding Access Map – guide to relevant funding streams and how to align creative AI propositions with regional and national priorities

Delivery recommendations for Create Central

To enable organisations to scale their creative AI activity and attract funding or investment, Create Central should:

1. **Develop and maintain a Commercialisation Toolkit**
Commission a set of practical templates and guides to help creative businesses articulate the value of AI-enhanced work—across grant bids, investment pitches, and commissioner briefs. Include examples of strong use cases and messaging guidance for different audiences.
2. **Offer targeted bid and investor support**
Provide drop-in clinics, bid feedback sessions, or one-to-one mentoring for organisations preparing funding applications or investment pitches. Leverage the Creative UK network, university partners, and WM Growth Company to provide subject matter input.
3. **Showcase creative AI work at strategic events**
Curate regional showcases or secure Create Central-led exhibition slots at events such as Birmingham Film Festival, CogX, Sheffield DocFest, SXSW, and Cannes XR. Promote AI-enhanced work that demonstrates creative, commercial, and ethical strength.
4. **Connect organisations to funding and innovation pathways**
Actively broker links between creative SMEs and regional innovation schemes—including the WM Innovation Accelerator, Create Growth Programme, and immersive tech launchpads in Coventry and Warwickshire. Help businesses align with eligibility requirements and sector priorities.
5. **Help prepare organisations for scaling**
Use the Investor Readiness Checklist (from the toolkit) to run optional scale-up prep sessions with interested companies. Cover legal considerations, IP clarity, business models, and how to manage ethical storytelling as adoption grows.

Example use case

A Birmingham-based digital media agency completes a successful pilot using AI-generated video assets for a regional tourism campaign. With support from the commercialisation toolkit, they refine their pitch and secure an Arts Council England R&D grant to develop the concept further. They are then matched with an investor readiness advisor through Create Central and prepare a pitch for a Creative UK showcase. The project is later featured at a regional tech-creative summit, helping them win new clients and collaborations—turning a short-term pilot into a viable commercial service.

3.5 Phase 5: Strategic regional alignment

Target audience: Suited for organisations involved in policy, infrastructure, or ecosystem-building. Often driven by external opportunities (e.g. funding calls, policy refreshes).

Investment required: Moderate to high (focused on integration, infrastructure, and influence)

Goal

To embed creative AI into the West Midlands' wider innovation and digital transformation ecosystem—ensuring creative industries are seen as both a beneficiary and a driver of AI adoption, skills development, and ethical leadership across the region.

Key activities

- Position creative industries as a **formal strand of the WMCA AI Growth plans** and align with initiatives like the Innovation Accelerator and Create Growth.
- Ensure creative organisations are **connected to regional infrastructure, funding programmes**, and testbeds.
- **Influence the development of cultural, digital, and economic strategies** to reflect creative AI's potential for public engagement, inclusion, and cross-sector innovation.
- Contribute to the shaping of **regional AI ethics and governance frameworks**, using creative-sector perspectives and tools.
- Promote the West Midlands as a **national leader in creative AI through case studies**, impact reporting, and advocacy for a regional Centre of Excellence.

Delivery tools and templates

- Strategic Alignment Map – connects creative AI use cases to regional AI, skills, and growth priorities
- Policy Briefing Templates – concise formats for influencing local, regional, and national strategies
- Creative AI Impact Report Framework – guides for capturing jobs, IP, audience reach, and innovation value across the cluster
- Ethics Toolkit Integration Guide – shows how the Phase 3 toolkit supports regional policy on AI assurance, consent, and IP

- Centre of Excellence Scoping Template – outlines vision, partners, services and location options for a potential flagship hub

Delivery recommendations for Create Central

To position the creative industries at the centre of regional AI ambition and unlock long-term impact, Create Central should:

1. **Formalise its role in regional AI planning and delivery**
Secure recognition as a delivery partner within the WMCA AI Growth plans and ensure creative AI is embedded in workstreams such as SME diffusion, AI skills, and digital storytelling. Contribute case studies, policy insight, and use-case data from Phases 1–4.
2. **Broker access to regional funding and infrastructure**
Create signposting tools and guidance to connect creative SMEs with innovation support (e.g. WM Innovation Accelerator, DCMS Create Growth Programme, Immersive Tech Launchpad). Facilitate access to physical infrastructure like STEAMhouse, Enterprise Wharf, and 5G-enabled creative testbeds.
3. **Embed creative AI in policy refreshes**
Engage actively in strategy reviews across culture, digital, smart cities, and inclusive innovation. Use case studies and co-creation pilots (e.g. Urban Jungle AR, Covatic) to show how creative AI supports social value, engagement, and inclusion.
4. **Shape regional AI governance with creative-sector input**
Share insights from the Creative AI Governance & Ethics Toolkit with policymakers developing AI assurance and safety frameworks. Ensure that creative perspectives on IP, consent, attribution and audience trust are embedded in policy pilots and advisory boards.
5. **Promote the West Midlands as a national leader in creative AI**
Publish a **Creative AI Impact Report** highlighting jobs, IP, skills, investment and public engagement outcomes. Explore the potential for a **Creative AI Centre of Excellence** to act as a regional hub for research, training, and business support—hosted in partnership with universities, funders, and production studios.

Expected outcome

By the end of this phase, the creative industries will be **strategically embedded** in the West Midlands' long-term AI strategy—contributing to infrastructure, skills, ethics, investment, and public engagement. The region will be recognised as a **UK leader in creative AI adoption**, with scalable models that demonstrate how responsible, human-centred AI can drive both

economic growth and cultural innovation. This alignment will result in a **step change** in AI capability, confidence and impact across the West Midlands creative ecosystem.

4. Toolkits for action: Turning strategy into delivery

This roadmap is underpinned by a set of practical toolkits that translate strategy into action. While each toolkit is introduced within the relevant phase, this section outlines how they come together as a collective resource base—explaining how they interact, what Create Central needs to do to activate them, and how they drive long-term value for the region.

Together, the toolkits reduce friction for SMEs and freelancers, embed ethical best practice from day one, and unlock pathways to experimentation, funding, and scale. Hosted on the **Creative AI Knowledge Hub** and continually updated, they will form the backbone of roadmap delivery—ensuring the cluster can implement AI confidently, responsibly, and with real creative and economic impact.

The toolkits serve three key functions:

1. **Lower the barriers to AI adoption**
With ready-to-use templates, practical guides, and clear language, the toolkits make it easier for creative organisations—regardless of size or AI experience—to get started quickly and safely.
2. **Embed responsible and ethical practice**
Governance, consent, IP, and transparency are not treated as afterthoughts. These principles are woven into every toolkit to ensure AI adoption is values-led, audience-aware, and rights-respecting.
3. **Enable scalable delivery across the region**
By standardising processes (e.g. pilot design, ethics review, commercialisation planning), the toolkits help Create Central and its partners deliver support efficiently and consistently—while also adapting to the specific needs of different sub-sectors or localities.

The toolkit ecosystem

Below is a summary of the different toolkits and how they align with each phase of the roadmap.

1. **Creative AI Readiness & Governance Assessment** (Phase 1)
A self-assessment tool that helps organisations understand their AI maturity, surface creative opportunities, and reflect on governance readiness. It also provides valuable aggregated data to help Create Central segment the cluster and target support effectively.
2. **Curated AI Tool Directory** (Phase 2)
A regularly updated directory of accessible, off-the-shelf AI tools relevant to creative workflows. It includes short descriptions, use cases, ethical flags, and user experience tips to support experimentation and build familiarity.
3. **Pilot Design Toolkit & Case Study Template** (Phase 2)
A lightweight set of tools for designing and delivering practical pilots. It helps organisations define creative goals, identify the right tools, apply ethical safeguards, and evaluate outcomes. A linked case study template captures learnings in a format that can be shared across the cluster.
4. **Creative AI Governance & Ethics Toolkit** (Phase 3)
A practical guide to help organisations use AI responsibly. It includes checklists, disclosure templates, consent and attribution models, and plain-language guidance on IP, audience transparency, and risk management. It can be applied across all roadmap phases and projects.
5. **Collaboration Toolkit** (Phase 3)
A collection of agreements and templates designed to support co-creation and partnership working—especially between freelancers, SMEs, studios, and universities. Includes IP sharing templates, joint delivery MOUs, and guidance for working with AI-generated content.
6. **Creative AI Commercialisation Toolkit** (Phase 4)
A set of resources to help organisations translate successful AI pilots into investable or fundable propositions. It includes grant application guides, investor-readiness checklists, pitch deck templates, commissioner engagement advice, and media promotion tools.
7. **Strategic Alignment and Policy Tools** (Phase 5)
A suite of resources to help position the region as a national leader in creative AI. Includes policy briefings, funding alignment maps, and a framework for capturing and reporting creative AI impact across jobs, IP, and public engagement.

What Create Central needs to do

To bring these toolkits to life and ensure they serve the creative cluster effectively, Create Central should:

- **Commission their development**
Work with design partners, early adopters, and subject matter experts to co-create each toolkit. Prioritise clarity, reusability, and real-world relevance.
- **Host and maintain the toolkits on the Creative AI Knowledge Hub**
Ensure resources are easy to find, use, and update. Assign a content lead to manage versioning, feedback loops, and regional relevance.
- **Integrate toolkits into all roadmap activity**
Toolkits should not sit on the shelf—they should be used actively in workshops, pilot funding, mentorships, bid support, and policy advocacy.
- **Promote them across the cluster**
Use events, peer learning forums, and newsletters to raise awareness of the toolkits and encourage creative organisations to use them confidently and creatively.

These toolkits are not just support materials—they are the **engine** of roadmap delivery. By investing in them and embedding them across all phases, Create Central will empower the region's creative sector to adopt AI in a way that is fast, fair, future-facing, and economically transformative.

5. Appendices

APPENDIX 1: Creative AI Readiness & Governance Assessment

Purpose:

To help creative organisations understand their current level of AI maturity, identify where AI could enhance their work, and assess their readiness to use AI responsibly and ethically.

Structure and Format

- **Total time to complete:** 15–30 minutes
- **Format:** Online form (or downloadable PDF), with automated or guided summary outputs
- **Audience:** Freelancers, SMEs, studios, content producers, marketers, designers, commissioners
- **Outputs:** AI maturity score, creative opportunity highlights, governance readiness rating, recommended next steps

Section 1: AI maturity and awareness

Objective: Understand where the organisation is on its AI journey

Sample questions:

- Have you used any AI tools in your creative workflow? (Yes / No / Exploring)
- Which functions have you applied AI to? (e.g. editing, design, audience insight, copywriting)
- How would you describe your confidence in understanding how AI works?
- What are your top perceived barriers to using AI? (e.g. cost, skills, ethics, unclear value)

Output: AI maturity level (e.g. early-stage, exploratory, embedded)

Section 2: Creative AI opportunity mapping

Objective: Identify where AI could provide creative or operational value

Sample questions:

- In which areas could AI support your current practice? (Multiple choice: ideation, scripting, editing, marketing, interaction, etc.)
- Are you exploring AI to enhance creative expression, speed up delivery, or reach new audiences?
- What kinds of tools would you be most interested in trialling? (e.g. generative text/image, personalisation engines, motion capture, automated design)

Output: Suggested AI use cases or tool categories to explore, linked to tool directory

Section 3: Governance and ethical readiness

Objective: Assess awareness and preparation for responsible AI use

Sample questions:

- Do you have policies or agreements in place for IP and ownership of AI-generated content?
- Are you confident in securing consent for data (e.g. voice, image, likeness) used in training or outputs?
- Do you disclose to audiences when AI tools are used in production or performance?
- Are you aware of ethical risks such as bias, misinformation, or deepfake misuse?
- Have you consulted any guidance on fair use or attribution for AI-assisted work?

Output: Governance score and flagging of key gaps; links to the **Creative AI Governance & Ethics Toolkit**

Section 4: Support needs and next steps

Objective: Connect respondents to the right support and resources

Sample prompts:

- Would you like support with funding, training, collaboration, or commercialisation?
- Are you interested in piloting a creative AI tool or project?
- Would you benefit from being matched with a mentor or advisor?
- Would you be willing to share your AI journey as a case study?

Output: Personalised roadmap with links to:

- AI tools and pilot templates (Phase 2)
- Skills and training offers (Phase 3)
- Funding or pitch resources (Phase 4)
- Governance support (Phase 3 Toolkit)

Optional: Benchmarking dashboard (for Create Central/cluster lead use)

- Aggregate insights from respondents (anonymised) to:
 - Segment organisations by readiness and support need
 - Identify top priority areas for training, funding, or ethics guidance
 - Track adoption and ethical awareness trends across the region

APPENDIX 2: Creative AI Readiness & Governance Assessment - Questions

Section 1: AI maturity and awareness

1.1 Have you used any AI tools in your work to date?

- Yes, regularly
- Yes, occasionally
- Not yet, but I'm exploring
- No, and I'm unsure where to start

1.2 If yes, which areas have you applied AI to? (Select all that apply)

- Editing or post-production
- Subtitling or transcription
- Generative image or text creation
- Audience insight or marketing personalisation
- Scripting or idea generation
- Live performance or interaction
- Other (please specify): _____

1.3 How would you describe your current confidence level using AI tools?

- High – I use them confidently
- Medium – I'm experimenting, still learning
- Low – I'm not confident or need help
- Very low – I don't understand AI yet

1.4 What are your biggest barriers to using AI in your work? (Select up to 3)

- Lack of skills or training
- Concerns about ethics or IP
- Not sure which tools to use
- Cost or access to technology

- Lack of time or resources
- Unsure how it fits with my creative values
- Other (please specify): _____

Section 2: Creative AI opportunity mapping

2.1 In which areas do you think AI could enhance your work? (Select all that apply)

- Story or script development
- Editing or post-production
- Visual or sound design
- Performance or interactivity
- Marketing or audience targeting
- Content localisation (e.g. translation, subtitling)
- Audience analytics or engagement
- Not sure yet

2.2 What would be the main reason you would use AI in your work?

- To save time or increase efficiency
- To enhance creative output or experimentation
- To reach new or more diverse audiences
- To stay competitive or modernise
- Other (please specify): _____

2.3 Which types of AI tools are you most interested in trying?

- AI-assisted video editing
- AI-generated images or visuals
- AI-generated text or scripts
- Auto-subtitling or transcription
- Chatbots or conversational tools

- Personalisation or recommendation engines
- Other (please specify): _____

Section 3: Governance and ethical readiness

3.1 Do you have clear internal guidance on using AI in your creative process?

- Yes – formal policies or guidelines exist
- Informal guidance or case-by-case decisions
- No – but we’re developing something
- No – we haven’t thought about it yet

3.2 Are you confident in managing intellectual property for AI-generated content?

- Yes – we understand and address IP considerations
- Somewhat – but it’s a grey area for us
- No – we need help understanding this

3.3 Do you obtain consent when using people’s voice, image, or likeness in AI training or outputs?

- Always
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Not applicable / not sure

3.4 Do you disclose when AI is used in the creation of your work (to audiences, funders, collaborators)?

- Always
- Sometimes
- Rarely or never
- Not sure what’s required

3.5 Are you aware of any ethical risks that could arise from your use of AI?

- Yes – and we actively manage them
- Somewhat – we're aware but unsure how to respond
- No – we haven't considered this yet

Section 4: Support needs and next steps**4.1** Which of the following would be most helpful to you right now? (Select up to 3)

- Practical training on AI tools
- Mentorship from experienced users
- Guidance on IP, ethics or governance
- Funding for pilots or experiments
- Help designing or running an AI project
- Commercialisation and investor readiness support
- Opportunities to showcase my work
- Just learning more about what others are doing

4.2 Would you be interested in...

- Taking part in an AI pilot project?
- Receiving tailored guidance or mentorship?
- Being featured as a case study?
- Attending or speaking at an AI knowledge-sharing event?
- None of the above at this time

4.3 Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your experience or interest in AI?

[Open text box]

APPENDIX 3: Five high-impact, business-specific AI use cases examples for the creative industries in the West Midlands

Below are listed five high-impact AI use cases for the creative industries in the West Midlands, tailored to SMEs and smaller creative companies. Each use case is grounded in real sector needs, offers a practical route to adoption, and has the potential to act as a catalyst for wider uptake and growth across the cluster. These examples are provided not only as practical models, but also as inspiration—highlighting the types of projects that the cluster and individual organisations could and should aim for. They can be used to build a growing backlog of creative AI opportunities that drive economic growth, innovation, and sector leadership across the region.

1. AI-assisted localisation for global content delivery

Theme: Scaling content for global markets

Challenge: Many SMEs and micro-studios produce high-quality video, audio, or interactive content—but lack the capacity to adapt it for international markets. Manual translation, subtitling, and voiceover localisation is expensive and time-consuming.

AI solution: Use AI-powered tools to automatically transcribe, translate, subtitle, and voice-clone content into multiple languages—accelerating global distribution. Tools like Papercup, Descript, or Deepdub can help automate the process while retaining creative control.

Impact:

- Enables export of West Midlands cultural products at low cost
- Increases revenue potential for small studios and independent creators
- Encourages ethical AI use around consent, voice likeness, and disclosure

Scalability: Low barrier to entry, suitable for SMEs in film, podcasting, immersive media, and online content

Catalyst potential: Demonstrates how AI can unlock global audiences for regional content with minimal resources

2. Script-to-screen AI production support for micro-studios

Theme: End-to-end creative automation for content creation

Challenge: Small production teams often spend weeks developing treatments, scripts, shot lists, and editing plans—limiting their ability to scale or experiment.

AI solution: Use a chain of AI tools to support early-stage development and pre-visualisation:

- Generative AI for moodboards and concept design (e.g. Midjourney)
- Scriptwriting prompts and formatting (e.g. Sudowrite, ScriptBook)
- Shot listing and storyboard generation (e.g. Boords with AI integration)
- Rough-cut editing suggestions based on AI analysis of raw footage

Impact:

- Dramatically reduces time-to-first-draft for visual storytelling
- Makes rapid prototyping and pitching more feasible for small teams
- Encourages creative experimentation and reuse of content across formats

Scalability: High-value to video production, advertising, and marketing SMEs

Catalyst potential: Shows how AI can augment creative workflows end-to-end, rather than automate one task

3. Hyper-personalised audience engagement for cultural SMEs

Theme: Audience growth and retention for small festivals, theatres, and content platforms

Challenge: Cultural organisations and SMEs struggle to retain audiences in a crowded digital landscape, especially when marketing budgets are limited.

AI solution: Deploy lightweight AI-driven personalisation tools (e.g. Recombee, Qubit) to tailor newsletters, content recommendations, and ticket offers based on audience behaviour, interests, and local relevance.

Impact:

- Increases audience retention, loyalty, and conversion for regional culture
- Enables small teams to deliver the kind of digital experience associated with larger platforms
- Can be trialled with low technical overhead using existing CRM or CMS systems

Scalability: Ideal for independent cinemas, theatres, music venues, festivals, and streaming platforms

Catalyst potential: Bridges digital inclusion and revenue generation—especially for grassroots creative orgs

4. Ethical AI-driven casting and talent discovery

Theme: Diversifying creative pipelines and reducing bias in production

Challenge: Many small studios and commissioners rely on informal networks for casting, which limits diversity and reach.

AI solution: Pilot an AI-assisted casting platform that surfaces regional talent (actors, voice artists, creators) based on tagged performance reels, bios, and portfolios—using natural language search and facial/voice matching tools (with consent). AI filters can suggest talent that match creative briefs in inclusive ways.

Impact:

- Reduces bias and opens up new talent pathways
- Makes regional casting more discoverable and data-driven
- Supports fair attribution and IP protection through integrated consent tracking

Scalability: Suitable for independent producers, virtual production studios, casting agents, and live performance SMEs

Catalyst potential: A showcase for responsible AI in talent sourcing and regional inclusion

5. Real-time AI-assisted co-creation tools for immersive experiences

Theme: Future-facing formats in gaming, XR, and interactive storytelling

Challenge: SMEs in immersive tech often struggle with the cost and complexity of real-time content generation (e.g. live audience input, adaptive dialogue, real-time asset rendering).

AI solution: Deploy generative AI and voice-to-text tools to enable audiences to interact with virtual characters, explore dynamic environments, or shape narrative paths in real time. For example:

- Interactive XR installations that respond to user dialogue
- Games with adaptive narrative structures powered by AI
- AR trails with voice-enabled guides generated on the fly

Impact:

- Pushes the creative boundaries of what small studios can deliver
- Encourages new forms of co-creation and audience engagement
- Helps position the region as a leader in immersive and generative storytelling

Scalability: Suited to immersive theatre companies, XR startups, experimental game dev studios

Catalyst potential: Captures national and international attention for innovation, and draws in funding, partnerships, and media coverage



AND Digital