

The Functional Economic Geography of Coventry & Warwickshire

Economies do not neatly fit within administrative boundaries, and there is strong interest in understanding “real” economic geographic areas that represent how businesses and individuals interact on a daily basis.

The strong economic inter-connectivity between the city of Coventry and the county of Warwickshire has been identified and demonstrated across a range of studies¹ over the years, and indeed was recognised in the Royal Commission on Local Government in England back in 1968. Over 80% of the residents living in the Coventry & Warwickshire area also work in this area (Census 2011), demonstrating a very high level of self-containment. Analysis of commuter flows, housing market areas, travel to shop/leisure, and business sectors have all consistently shown a strong degree of connectivity between the two areas.

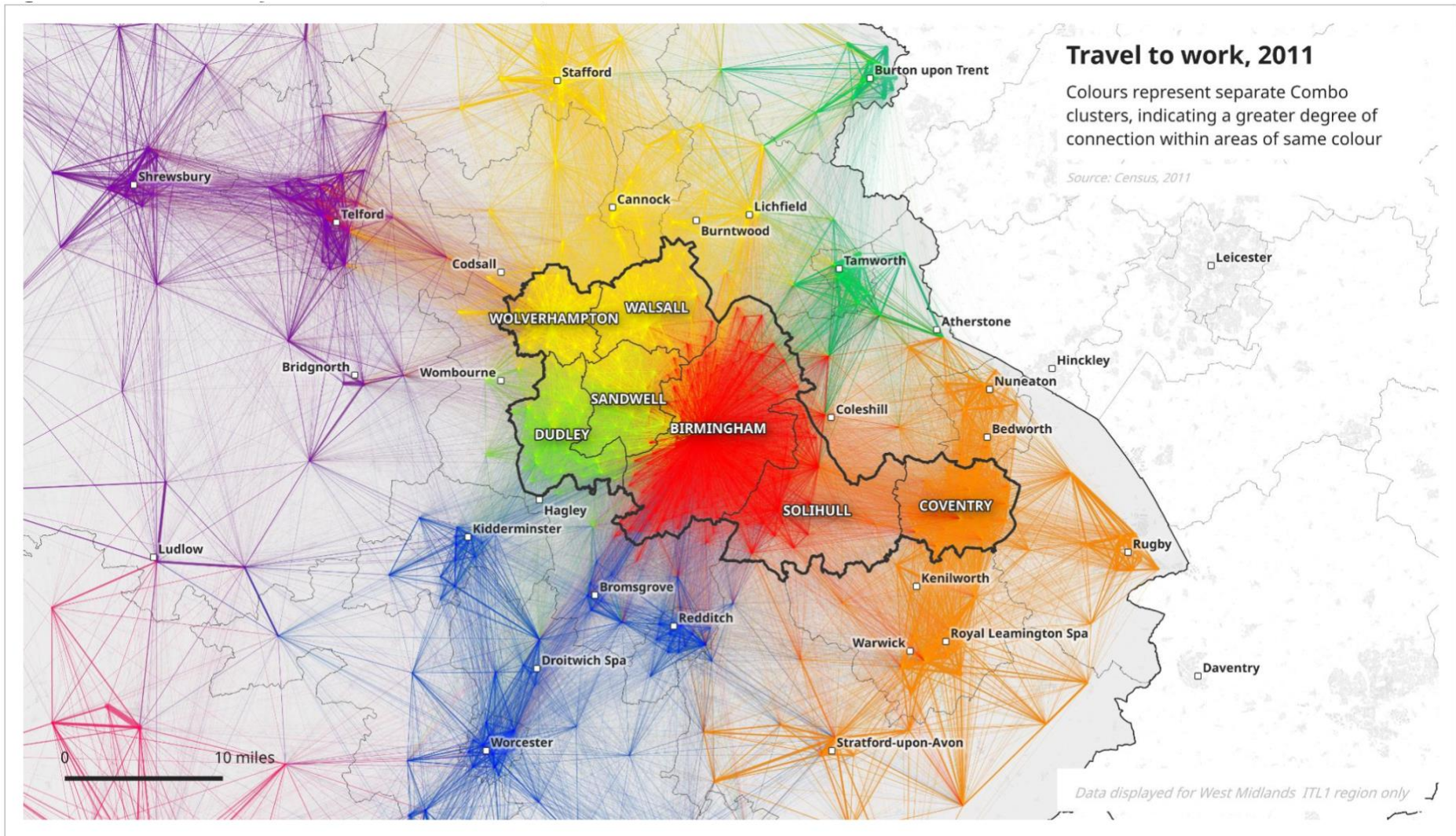
The most recent study that has been undertaken was a report by SQW, City-REDI and Automatic Knowledge for the West Midlands Combined Authority - <https://www.wmca.org.uk/documents/research-and-insights/wmf-economic-geographies-of-the-west-midlands/>)

The following presents a short summary of key findings from this report.

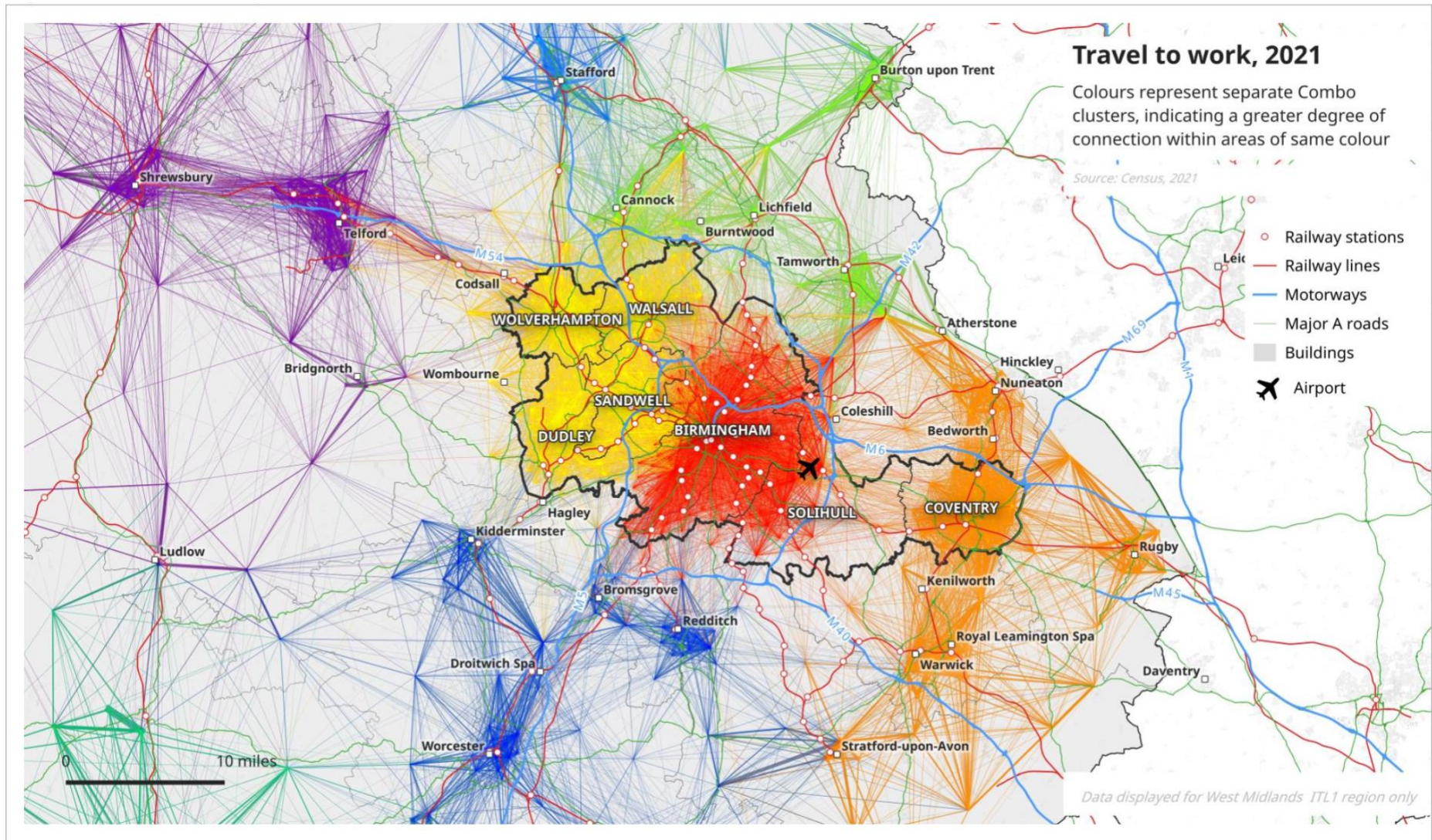
1. Travel to Work:

Data from both the 2011 and 2021 Census was looked at, given that the 2021 Census was undertaken mid-pandemic and home working was higher everywhere. However, despite this, both data sets analysed demonstrate a clear Coventry & Warwickshire travel to work area.

¹ See for example: Functional Economic Geography Topic Paper undertaken for the Coventry & Warwickshire Economic Assessment in 2011 (<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/business-support/economic-analysis-research/5>), and the Functioning Economic Geography of the West Midlands in 2006 (<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-les/gees/staff/BrysonFunctioningEconomicGeogofWMids.pdf>)



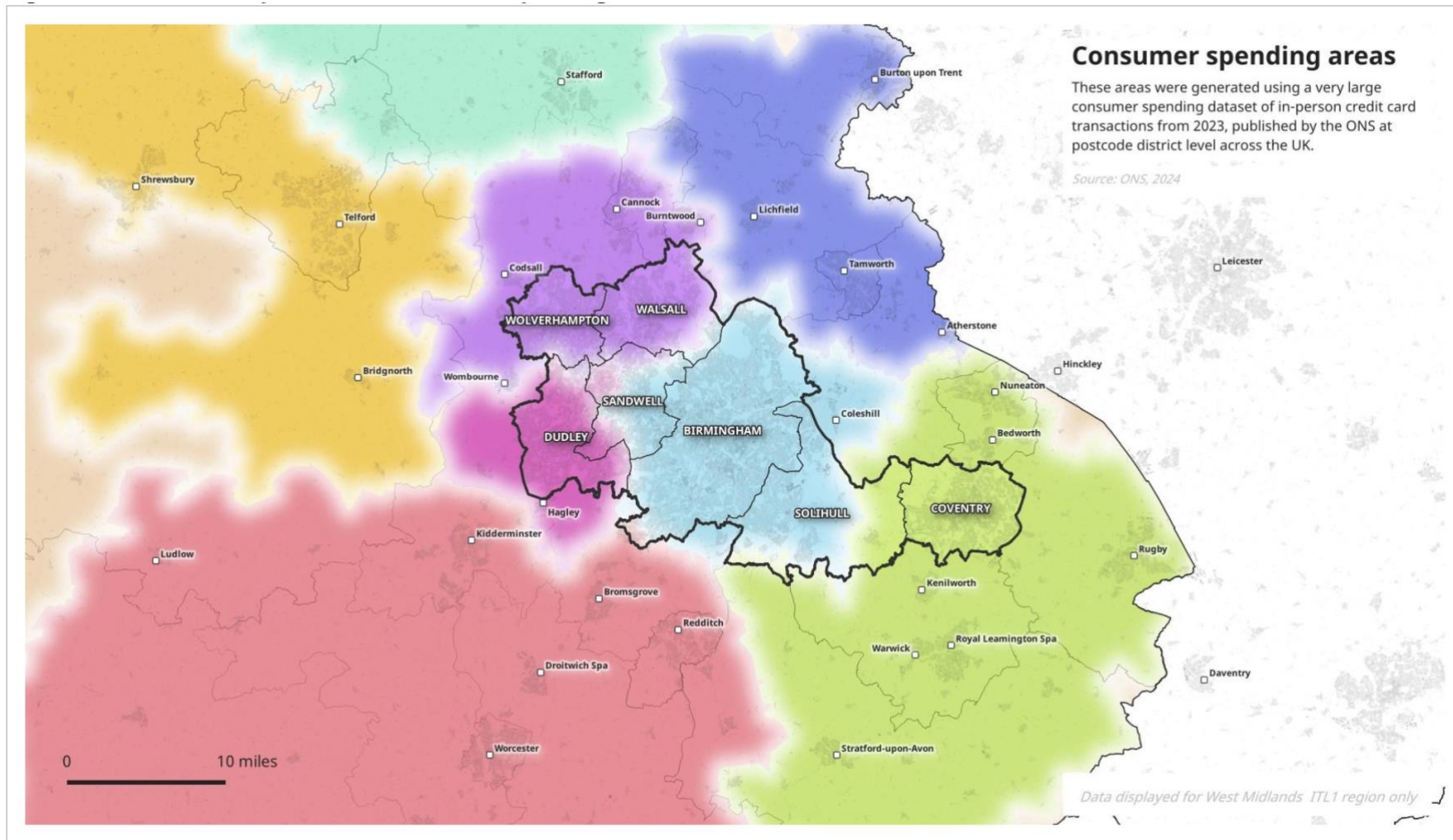
Source: Automatic Knowledge analysis of travel to work data, Census 2011



Source: Automatic Knowledge analysis of travel to work data, Census 2021

2. Consumer spending:

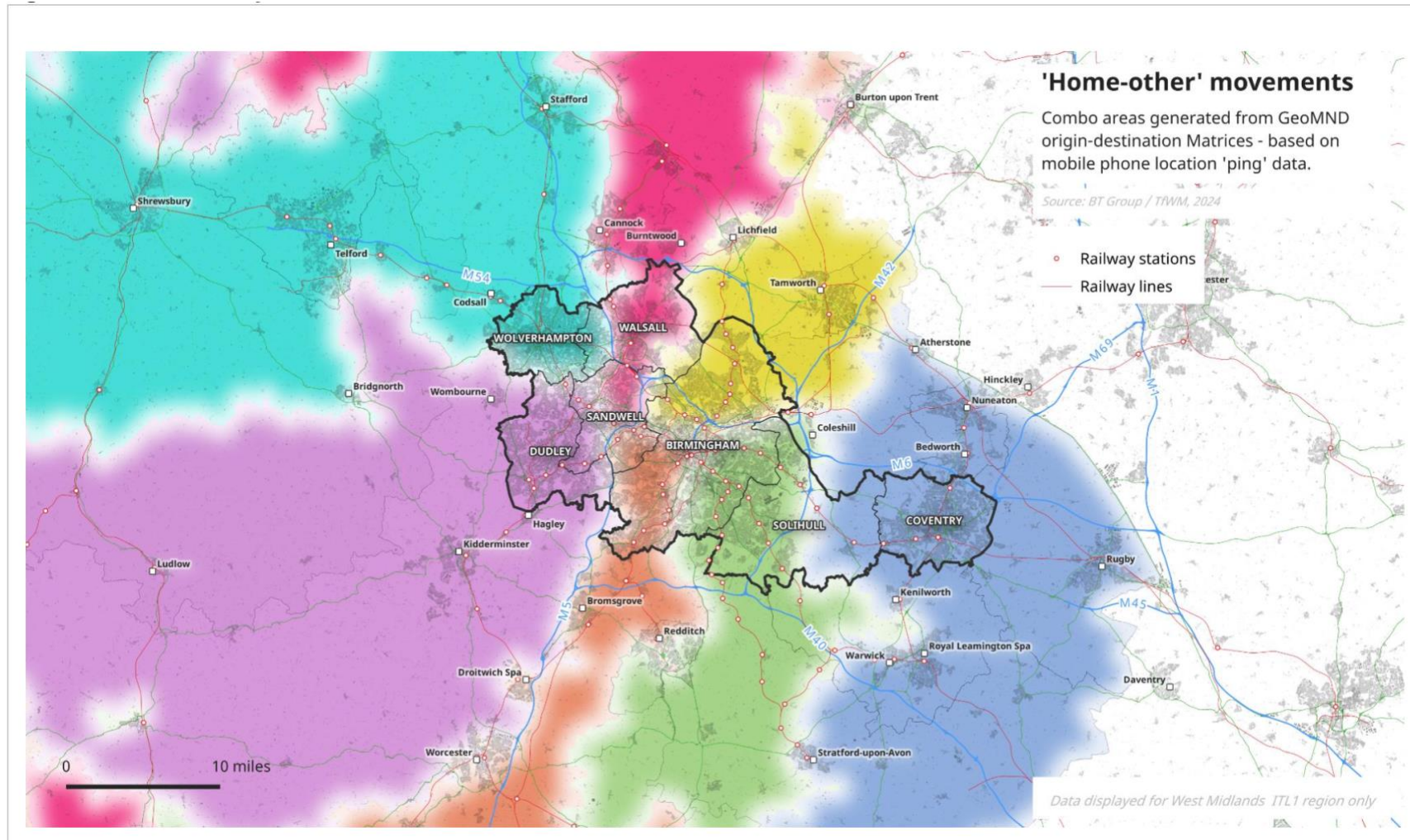
Data on consumer card spending, based on data on the home of the consumer and location of the merchant, has been recently released by ONS and by excluding online shopping, presents a map of where residents predominantly undertake spending activity based on their home location.



Source: Automatic Knowledge analysis of consumer card spend data, ONS

3. Mobile Network Data

Mobile phone generated origin-destination GeoMND (Mobile Network Data) show where mobile phone users are travelling to/from and provide an indication of the duration of dwell time. From this information it is possible to establish the likely purpose of individual journeys. This analysis excluded journeys to work, and looked at movements for other purposes, which could include retail, leisure and recreation activities.



Source: Automatic Knowledge analysis of GeoMND (Mobile Network Data), 2023