

## **BRIEFING NOTE**

### **COVENTRY: UK CITY OF CULTURE 2021**

#### **1. THE AIMS OF UK CITY OF CULTURE**

- 1.1 The UK City of Culture programme is a Government initiative and is administered through the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. It was originally developed to build upon the success of Liverpool's year as European Capital of Culture in 2008, which had significant social and economic benefits to the city.
- 1.2 The UK City of Culture programme provides cities with the opportunity to access the benefits derived from bidding for a prestigious cultural title and the opportunity to be centre stage nationally. It is focused on creating a national cultural event, spread over the course of a title year, concentrated in a particular city or area.
- 1.3 Derry-Londonderry was the first city to be awarded the title for 2013, Hull was the second City of Culture in 2017 and Coventry is to be the third in 2021. The next city to win the title is announced as the previous holder's year comes to a close – meaning a city has 3 years to prepare and mobilise.
- 1.4 The title of City of Culture does not have specific funding allocated to it from central Government. It is expected that investment will be drawn down from a mixture of private investment and public funding sources. The City of Culture is an opportunity to create new partnerships, to build resident's aspirations whilst bringing communities together to celebrate the rich heritage and unique qualities of city. It is also an opportunity, through culture, to raise the profile of the city, to attract new investors and to enable significant regeneration.

#### **2. HULL AS CITY OF CULTURE 2017**

- 2.1 The City of Culture initiative remains a relatively new scheme, but the benefits and its legacy are already becoming clear. Derry/Londonderry reported more than 1 million visitors to the city in 2013 and an increase of 20% in bed and breakfast and hotel bookings. The city also attracted 30 business conferences to the city and 40 new businesses were started.
- 2.2 The best and most recent example of the impact of the City of Culture, where detailed data was tracked accurately throughout, is Hull 2017. The University of Hull was tasked with analysing the impact of the year upon the economy from the beginning. Their interim report has now been published.
- 2.3 Ahead of City of Culture 2017, Hull developed a readiness and legacy programme which used the themes of Place, Product, Positioning and People. It was designed to maximise the benefits of being awarded the

title and clarify priority areas for direct investment such as infrastructure, destination promotion and marketing, capital, and skills development.

- 2.4 As a result of this readiness plan Hull City Council was seemingly successfully in using the City of Culture as a catalyst to accelerate development and regeneration. Investment was drawn down from its pre-existing City Plan and the capital commitments it made to Hull New Theatre and Feren's Art Gallery allowed the city to lever significant additional national funding from Government via the Northern Powerhouse and from Heritage Lottery Fund. Its investment in tourism also enabled the city to secure regional packages of funding from the Explore England Fund.
- 2.5 The City of Culture title can bring significant inward investment to a city and its surrounding area. Hull attracted major national investment towards its programme budget for 2017, with Arts Council England, Heritage Lottery Fund, Big Lottery, British Council and the University committing to the programme. East Riding of Yorkshire Council also worked with Hull to stage several events in towns across the county and invested £1m in a package of grant funding and support.
- 2.6 Early in the planning stages Hull aligned its City Of Culture readiness and legacy plans to the City's wider economic plan. Subsequent investment into the city has been over £3.4 billion since 2013, of which £216m specially relates to the 'World Class Visitor Destination' strand of the Hull City Plan – which the City of Culture became a primary part.
- One in four businesses in the Hull took on new staff in 2017
  - At least £22m of GVA was added to the local economy
  - Approximately 800 new jobs created in the creative and visitor economy in the three years leading up to 2017
  - £81.6m of 'full attribution investments' were made (i.e. where investment was highly unlikely to have occurred without the City of Culture)
  - £137.9m of 'partial attribution investments' were made (where City of Culture was seen as an important factor in accelerating or increasing investment)
  - £297.1 of 'minor attribution investments' (where investment was not directly linked to City of Culture but was attributed to an enhanced investment environment)
  - The estimated value of tourism for Hull in 2017 was £300m
- 2.7 The City of Culture also had a huge impact on community cohesion and health and wellbeing with 8 out of 10 participants saying that being part of a project made them happier and 34% reported improvements to self-esteem of children and young people. There was also a 9% increase in the confidence of Hull residents to take part in or join in with cultural and non-cultural activities.

### **3 COVENTRY CITY OF CULTURE 2021**

- 3.1 Coventry City Council began forming its bid in June 2015 and 13,000 people were consulted as part of the bid process. The Coventry City of Culture Trust was established later in 2015 to lead the bid partnership with the Council, University of Warwick and Coventry University. The City of Coventry also committed £250,000 towards facilitating the bid at that stage.
- 3.2 In December 2017 the City of Coventry committed £4.75m of their corporate reserves to the build-up programme, title year and legacy (spanning the period between 2018 and 2024) in the eventuality that they would win the title.
- 3.3 Coventry was awarded title of City of Culture on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017, as Hull's year came to a close.
- 3.4 £6.1m was allocated by the City of Coventry for their Readiness Programme from 2018/19 onwards to develop capacity, invest in cultural capital, infrastructure development and funds for jobs and skills in order to maximise impact.
- 3.5 A £5m capital investment programme has been established in order to lever in additional funds (the aim is to attract external investment totalling £90m).
- 3.6 Already, it is believed that Coventry has realised over £28.5m of media coverage through the bidding and award processes alone, raising the city's profile nationally.
- 3.7 The City of Coventry developed a partnership Cultural Strategy 2017-2027 for which City of Culture will be an accelerant, a catalyst achieving wellbeing and economic outcomes. With a £921m capital programme already in place from 2018 to 2023, the City also has clear economic and regenerative goals to which City of Culture could make a clear and substantial contribution.
- 3.8 The Coventry City of Culture Trust is aiming to fundraise over £24m in order to fund the programme. Over 100 commercial businesses are already backing the bid and provide sponsorship.
- 3.9 The Trust has already established a Capacity Building and Development fund. The Coventry UK City of Culture Fund has been launched in partnership with the Heart of England Community Foundation, which will administer the fund.
- 3.10 There are two streams of funding available for artists, charities and other organisations to apply for. The first is the Get Ready Fund, with grants of up to £2,000 available, which can support a range of activity to help prepare for 2021. That could be everything from research, development and feasibility studies through to covering the costs of training or skills building courses.

3.11 The second is the Road to 2021 Fund and this offers grants of up to £10,000. It is aimed at those who want to trial projects which may form part of the programme in 2021, or to develop new partnerships across the arts and cultural sector. Those applying for grant funding are being encouraged to consider the four themes of Coventry's UK City of Culture programme:

- Being Human
- Moving
- Underground
- Reinvention

and to think about how their proposed activity will help to achieve step changes across the city. Coventry's Final Bid document can be viewed **HERE**

3.12 The Coventry City of Culture Trust also aims for 20 new cultural or creative small to medium sized businesses to relocate / start up in the City (adding an estimated benefit of £20m).

3.13 The Trust appointed their Chief Executive Officer and Artistic Director in the summer of 2018. The final programme for the City of Culture 2021 won't be released until 2020, although a lot of it has been planned as it was incorporated in their original bid.

#### **4 WARWICK DISTRICT & THE CITY OF CULTURE**

4.1 Although the City of Culture initiative is very much geographically focused on the City of Coventry - Warwick District Council, Warwickshire County Council and the surrounding district / borough councils in Warwickshire are already members of a supporting group, in recognition that the inward investment generated by the City of Culture will have a significant ripple effect across the region.

4.2 Warwickshire County Council are co-ordinating a joint response to the City of Culture on behalf of this group of local authorities and hope to be able to invest up to £1m from their reserves in order to ensure that the impact of the title is spread across the County. There is the potential for the south of the County, Stratford-Upon-Avon and Warwick District, to benefit disproportionately from the City of Culture, as it is likely that cultural audiences travelling in from outside of the region to participate in the City of Culture will also be attracted to the region's primary cultural attractions.

4.3 Two leading arts organisations based in the District, Motionhouse and Armonico Consort, were actively involved in the bid process and are committed to being involved. The Royal Shakespeare Company will also take up residency in the Coventry during 2021.

- 4.4 Warwick District Council Officers have formed a working group, including the Deputy Chief Executive, Business Manager, Strategic Economic Development Officer, Arts Manager, Arts Development Officer and Marketing & Communications Officer. This group has a meeting scheduled with the Coventry City of Culture team in March of 2019 in order to discuss how Warwick District Council can create a complimentary programme of events which encourage participation and attendance within the District. It is likely that this will involve partner organisations and focus on the District's digital strengths.
- 4.5 The City of Culture does offer an exciting and unique opportunity to bring Warwick District's creative sector together and to explore opportunities for collaboration on a national stage in order to raise the profile of the District.
- 4.6 The primary risk for Warwick District Council is that audiences for cultural events in the District are attracted to the programme in Coventry to the detriment of those cultural organisations and venues operating in the District.
- 4.7 A secondary risk is that creative businesses and talent based in Warwick District will relocate to Coventry leaving the District's creative infrastructure weaker.
- 4.8 By intervening and coordinating a complimentary programme of events badged under the City of Culture banner Warwick District will benefit from increased footfall through cultural tourism and increase participation and attendance.