

Report of Cluny Macpherson, Chief Officer, Culture and Sport

Report to Scrutiny Board (Sustainable Economy & Culture)

Date: 18 November 2014

Subject: Should Leeds Bid for European Capital of Culture 2023?

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	X Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. The European Capital of Culture is a year-long festival held by European Cities. The designation rotates between European nations and the next opportunity for a UK city to hold the designation is in 2023, in association with a winning city in Hungary.
2. The winning city is appointed by the [European Union](#) and gets the right to host a year of cultural events with a strong European dimension. The award is high profile and prestigious. Previous UK cities to hold the title were Glasgow in 1990 and Liverpool in 2008.
3. Competing to be European Capital of Culture 2023 will attract national and international attention to our city in the three year bidding period - and if we were to win it, in the five year period leading up to the Year.
4. UK cities thinking of bidding for 2023 are starting their consultations and preparations now as it takes at least a year to put a bid together. The selection of the UK city will be made by an international panel of experts through a two stage process of pre-selection and final selection.
5. Leeds City Council Executive Board will receive a report and recommendation in February 2015 outlining the results of consultation with local stakeholders and relevant background information to inform a decision of whether or not to prepare a Leeds bid.

6. All interested UK cities must declare their intention to bid in December 2016. Bids will be completed in mid-2017 for shortlisting. The final selection of the winning UK city based on revised bids will be in 2018.

Recommendations

7. Members are invited to:
 - i) consider and debate the contents of this report;
 - ii) assist in taking this consultation out further to communities.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To inform the Scrutiny Board members of the findings of discussions which have so far taken place with stakeholders and members of the public about whether or not Leeds should bid for European Capital of Culture 2023;
- 1.2 To seek your own views and your help and advice on engaging Leeds residents;
- 1.3 To advise officers in Culture and Sport on how you wish to be engaged with further developments.

2 Background information

- 2.1 There was an overwhelmingly positive response to the question: Should Leeds Bid? at a public meeting at Leeds Town Hall in January last year attended by 300 people. Executive Board at its meeting soon afterwards on 22 January approved officers holding further discussions with residents and stakeholders during 2014.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 European Capital of Culture is an annual designation awarded by competition between European cities. The winning cities will mount a year-long programme of cultural events that will showcase the cultural excellence of the city, broaden access to culture for its citizens and act as a catalyst for economic and social developments.

Cities have used the prestige of the title, and the energy that goes into winning the bid and putting on the festival, to stimulate their overall development.
- 3.2 The EU bidding guidance makes it clear that a successful bid has to be for and about the whole city and its citizens and neighbourhoods. It is not about just a city centre.
- 3.3 For previous cities, bidding has helped to foster urban regeneration, change a city's image and raise its visibility and profile on an international scale.

4 Corporate Considerations

- 4.4 A Leeds bid could provide a common framework to host the individual visions and ambitions of key city partners. A Leeds proposal would seek to involve and to be owned by every community in the city.

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.2 Different approaches are being taken to obtain a range of views from Leeds residents, stakeholders, businesses and community groups. We have run simple surveys, held discussion forums and face to face discussions.

- 4.2.1 Findings from the Annual Citizens Survey February 2014.

Over 75% of respondents were positive when surveyed in the annual citizen's panel questionnaire conducted for three weeks from w/c 24th February 2014.

1125 people answered the question : ***Do you think Leeds should bid for ECoC 2023?*** 870 (77.33%) said **Yes**; 255 (22.67%) said **No**.

- 4.3 Of people who said Yes, many commented that it will benefit the city in terms of profile and boosting the economy and see it as an investment in the future of Leeds. Of people who said No, many commented that the Council cannot afford to, that Leeds cannot compete with other cities on an international level, and requested supporting an alternative which might be of wider benefit.
- 4.4 A number of respondents in both categories commented that a bid should not be at the expense of public services and should secure support from a range of sources.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 Consultation is proceeding as follows:

Citizens panel focus groups - The team is conducting a series of focussed discussions with small groups of people through the Citizens Panel.

Children and Young People - A video box survey was conducted at the Breeze Festivals in the summer. 189 children between the ages of 5 and 15 responded positively and made suggestions for what might be included.

A short life online survey to Breeze Card holders was promoted through facebook, twitter and email. Out of 75 responses made during September almost all said Yes. Most respondents were in the 19 plus age range.

http://www.breezeleeds.org/news/1987/Could_Leeds_be_European_Capital_of_Culture_in_2023

- 4.2.2 A Citizens Panel Focus Group, with a small number of representatives of equalities groups, and forums and communities took place last month and was overwhelmingly positive about the potential social impact for communities of mounting a Leeds bid.
- 4.2.3 Online consultation - we have contracted a third party to consult on our behalf with audiences who would not normally engage with the Council through traditional consultation methods and platform views of groups from across the city:
- 4.2.4 <http://thecitytalking.com/leeds-2023> the online and print platform went live in August and continues until December. It has 57,000 facebook followers and 10,000 twitter fans and it circulates 20,000 in print. Through a business partnership arrangement with the YEP it also reaches the YEP readership.

An evaluation report of the findings of this consultation will be submitted in December. Interim findings show the majority respondents to be positive or very positive about a Leeds bid.

- 4.2.5 www.leeds.gov.uk/leeds2023poll is the Leeds City Council microsite for information and consultation where residents can also take part in a simple poll to state whether or not they are in favour.

- 4.4.6 Leeds2023@leeds.gov.uk is our email address for inquiries until February 2015.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

- 4.3.1 Leeds aims to be the Best City in the UK by 2030. Measuring cultural outcomes is not simple but being officially, the best city for culture in Europe seven years ahead of that schedule would be a positive indication of success and in line with Leeds' best city ambitions

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 Preparing a European Capital of Culture bid can be an opportunity for a city to generate considerable cultural, social and economic benefits, even if they don't go on to win the bid. It can leverage value for the city in terms of escalating work on an ambitious goal. It can help to unlock creative solutions to problems, whether they are environmental, or about infrastructure or about tackling health, employment or transport issues.
- 4.4.2 Costs vary enormously from city to city. The last UK title holder, Liverpool, reported an operating budget of £140 million for the six-eight year period leading up to the Year and a programme budget of £12million for the 2008 Year itself. Liverpool counted a range of benefits from securing the 2008 European Capital of Culture. Massive amounts of positive media coverage helped to change perceptions of Liverpool. The city saw 9.7 million visitors (a 34% increase); a £753.8 million boost to the economy and 85% of residents said the city was a better place to live than before.
- 4.4.3 The costs of mounting a bid can be considerable, but it is up to each bidding city as to how it shapes its bid and how much it spends. Winning is not dependent on the size of bid. Costs for different winning cities over the 60 year life of this competition have varied greatly from £12million to £130 million.

Leeds City Council has stated clearly from the start of consultation that a bid will not be resourced and delivered by the city council alone, but by a coalition of partners, and on the condition that a bid has backing and support of the city as a whole.

- 4.4.4 All UK cities would be bidding in a very different fiscal environment from previous UK bids. With nine years to prepare, the City Council has lead-in time to develop partnerships and agreements with stakeholders to resource and deliver a good bid.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 A detailed report will be submitted to Executive Board in early 2015, testing support for a bid from a broad range of communities and stakeholders.
- 4.5.2 The report will make a recommendation based on results of consultation and research.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 Consideration will be given to the potential impact and legacy that bidding for and winning this designation will have on the people of Leeds. Consideration will also be given to the potential negative impact on the city's reputation of deciding not to bid, or of putting in a bid but not winning.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 Public and stakeholder response has been largely positive so far.
- 5.2 The success of the start of Leeds Grand Depart 2014 Tour De France in the summer showed that Leeds has the capability to successfully manage and deliver a major event.
- 5.3 The positive response by members of the public to Leeds Grand Depart was an important test of the city's appetite for hosting major cultural events in the future.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 Members are invited to:
- i) consider and debate the contents of this report;
 - ii) assist in taking this consultation out further to communities.

7 Background documents¹

- 7.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.