

Report of the Chief Officer Culture and Sport

Report to Sustainable Economy & Culture Scrutiny Board

Date: 17 February 2015

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?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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. 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' wider best city ambitions.
2. European Capital of Culture is an annual designation awarded by competition between European cities. The winning cities go on to mount a year-long programme of cultural events that showcase the cultural excellence of the city, broaden access to culture for its citizens and act as a catalyst for economic and social developments.
3. Leeds City Council has stated 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. Questions were raised in the previous Sustainable Economy & Culture Scrutiny Board regarding the potential financing of the bidding process in this period of austerity when all our public services including culture and sport, face further cuts in funding in 2015 and beyond. This report looks in more detail specifically at the funding of the bidding process (the funding of the year itself, should the City decide to bid and succeed, is not covered in this report).
5. In this context it should also be noted that the work involved over the coming twelve months to prepare for a bid - not least the development of a city wide cultural

strategy - is activity that is already required and will not be wasted irrespective of a decision to bid and/or its eventual success or failure. For instance, the cultural strategy will focus our cultural objectives and support capacity building by the cultural sector to support delivery of the city's overall Best City by 2030 aims.

6. All UK cities will be bidding in a very different fiscal environment from previous UK bids. The City Council has sufficient lead-in time to develop partnerships and agreements to deliver a good bid. Discussions are well developed with potential external partners.
7. Specific details around funding are included in the 'resources and value for money' section of this report.

Recommendations

8. Members are invited to:
 - i) consider and debate the contents of this report;
 - ii) Indicate member support for progressing arrangements over the coming twelve months as outlined in this report, should the city decide to bid.
 - iii) Request officers to come back with a progress report in February 2016.

1 Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 To provide members with information about the costs and benefits of preparing to mount a Leeds bid for European Capital of Culture 2023.
- 1.2 To obtain the Board's support for Culture and Sport to progress with the work over the next twelve months.

2 Background information

- 2.1 The European Capital of Culture 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. It will be fifteen years before such an opportunity comes round again.
- 2.2 The winning UK 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.
- 2.3 Competing against the other UK cities 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.
- 2.4 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. All interested UK cities must declare their intention to bid in December 2016. Bids will be completed in mid-2017 for shortlisting.
- 2.5 The final selection of the winning UK city based on revised bids will be in 2018.

3. Main Issues

- Benefits of Bidding

- 3.1 The work of preparing a European Capital of Culture bid is an opportunity for a city to generate considerable cultural, social and economic benefits for itself, even if it does not go on to win the bid.
- 3.2 It can leverage value for a city in terms of escalating work on an ambitious goal. For Leeds, making a bid will be a significant milestone on the journey to being Best City by 2030.
- 3.3 The bid process has helped other cities to unlock creative solutions to problems, whether they are environmental, regarding infrastructure or about tackling health, employment or transport issues. There is also notable evidence from unsuccessful cities, such as Norwich or Newcastle & Gateshead, that there are significant advantages to be gained from bidding for the European Capital of Culture competition despite not winning it.

3.4 What of cities that win? The last UK title holder, Liverpool, still continues to count huge benefits from securing the 2008 European Capital of Culture. Massive amounts of positive media coverage have helped to change perceptions of Liverpool. In the actual year the city saw 9.7 million visitors (a 34% increase); a £753.8 million boost to the economy and 85% of residents said they thought the city was a better place to live than before.

- **EU Guidance**

3.5 The EU bidding guidance makes it clear that a bid has to be for and about the whole city and its citizens and neighbourhoods. It is not about just a city centre. A Leeds proposal would seek to involve and to be owned by every community in the city. Work has begun on this over the past year from within the Authority, utilising existing resources.

3.6 The European Capital of Culture competition has a number of criteria that the city does not currently fully meet. For instance, for Leeds to bid, the city requires to develop a new culture strategy to focus its long term cultural goals and to develop its image and profile, and to develop new partnerships in Europe and abroad.

4. Corporate Considerations

A Leeds bid could provide a framework to host the individual visions and ambitions of key city partners. 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. Best City 2030 sets a clear and bold ambition for Leeds to move forward, make smart investments and take calculated risks to put the city firmly on the map.

The positive response by members of the public to Leeds Grand Depart 2014 Tour De France was an important test of the city's appetite for hosting cultural events and it showed that Leeds has the capability to successfully manage and deliver a major European event - Leeds came into its own this year with the hosting of the Tour De France Grand Depart which touched residents across the city, and brought in thousands of visitors, boosting the local economy. Some of the most positive reported benefits have been those that are hardest to measure; pleasure, enjoyment, fun - and feeling positive about the city and our community.

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 Officers have helped initiate a year-long conversation of whether we should bid or not and this is nearing its conclusion. In order to reach a range of people we have used a number of platforms although would still not claim that this process has been comprehensive. The conversations would broaden and deepen should we decide to proceed with a bid. Examples of the platforms for the conversation are listed below;

4.1.2 Leeds City Council Community Chairs Forum which brings together the Chairs of the ten Community Committees has debated the opportunity and on considering it to be a very positive one have agreed to assist officers in engaging local communities with it.

- 4.1.3 The Sustainable Economy and Culture Scrutiny Board, whilst supportive in principle, has requested further information regarding the city's ability to bid in a period of financial austerity and to go on to win the bid and to deliver a year long cultural programme in 2023.
- 4.1.4 The Sustainable Economy & Culture Partnership Board for the city with representative members from business, higher education and third sector has pledged total support for a Leeds bid.
- 4.1.5 The Annual Citizens Culture survey with a significantly even demographic spread, was positive when conducted in February 2014, with 77% of people voting in favour- 1125 people answered the question : *Do you think Leeds should bid for ECoC 2023?* 870 (77.33%) said Yes; 255 (22.67%) said No.
- 4.1.6 External consultation The Authority commissioned an external provider to take the consultation out to people in the city over a period of four months from August to December 2014. It was conducted through *The City Talking* <http://thecitytalking.com/leeds-2023> - an online and print platform for Leeds established by Hebe Media. (Final evaluation by *The City Talking* will accompany the report to Executive Board in March).
- 4.1.7 Yorkshire Post Newspapers has conducted its own survey of views from its readership.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 Focussed discussions about whether or not to mount a Leeds bid also were conducted with groups representing Child Friendly Leeds, Older People, Migrant and Refugee communities, LGBT communities.
- 4.2.2 Young people (not so young in 2023) were engaged through events at Breeze events and directly through the breeze networks.
- 4.2.3 Further details about public and stakeholder opinion will be covered in the report to Executive Board in March.

4.3 Council Policies and City Priorities

- 4.3.1 A bid to become European Capital of Culture 2023 underlines the stature of the city as a venue for global events which is a key element of our 'Best City' ambition. It has the potential to support the child and age friendly outcomes, Leeds as a tourist destination and greater understanding of Leeds as an important cultural hub.
- 4.3.2 Done strategically and well, a bid will assist in supporting the city to achieve health and well-being targets, increase rates of participation, create new jobs and boost skills, and add to civic pride in our city.
- 4.3.3 Other cities report a range of positive and unexpected outcomes from bidding, we would expect this to be the same for Leeds. The City would change.

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 There is not a fixed budget for bidding or for the preparatory work behind a bid – each city will be different. In terms of the bidding period the authority would commit staff time and has currently allocated an indicative cash amount of £35k pa. It is anticipated that the remaining resources will be found from partners both in terms of in-kind support and cash and that the authority would ultimately be a minority funder.
- 4.4.2 Detailed discussions with potential partners are ongoing.
- 4.4.3 Given that there are a number of years before a final bid is produced it is not possible to fully outline all the costs involved.
- 4.4.4 Over the past year the Culture and Sport team have utilised resources from within its existing team, plus a significant in-kind support from stakeholders and a small amount of sponsorship. This has covered all the costs of the evolving ‘conversation’ about the bid.
- 4.4.5 Should the proposal to bid be agreed the next stage would also benefit from existing staff resources, and an indicative allocation of £35k has been made from current budgets over the next three years to engage both specialist external advice and to support related activities.
- 4.4.6 The HE sector has been exceptionally supportive of the ambition to bid.
- 4.4.7 The University of Leeds is keen to become a partner and we are in advanced discussions with them at a senior level over the nature of that partnership. Leeds Beckett University has committed to cover some initial costs of external European bidding advice. We have entered discussions with other organisations about supporting a Leeds bid. We hope to be able to have an update on this position shortly. We will also work to source private sector support.
- 4.4.8 Officers in Culture and Sport anticipate drawing a bid team together for the coming twelve months. The exact nature of this ‘bid team’ – including its governance and accountabilities - is as yet unconfirmed but we anticipate options will be presented as part of the Executive Board paper in March.
- 4.4.9 The bidding process will require a team with wide ranging skills and experience. For instance in European bid development and in fundraising and managing stakeholder relationships, and in partnerships. It will be vital that communities are fully involved.
- 4.4.10 In conclusion
- If Leeds bids it will make its bid like all other UK cities, against today’s tight fiscal environment. It is up to each bidding city as to how it shapes its bid and what it seeks to do.
 - Costs of managing stakeholder relationships, financial and legal and project management will be resourced over the next twelve months from within the current team within Culture and Sport.
 - Officers are engaged in detailed negotiations with partners to build a resource for a successful bid.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 A fuller report evidencing what support there is for a bid from a broad range of communities and stakeholders will be submitted to Executive Board in March. The report will make recommendations based on results of consultation and additional evidence.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 The costs involved to the Authority over the next twelve months will be equivalent to the previous year and will be found from within existing resources in Culture and Sport. The team will solicit support from external partners to carry out additional work.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 Public and stakeholder response has been largely positive and in favour of a Leeds bid, despite the current background of hard economic times and uncertainty. The work involved over the coming twelve months to prepare for making a bid by developing a new cultural strategy, by re-focussing our cultural objectives and building the capacity of the cultural sector to support and strengthen the city's overall Best City by 2030 aims, is work that is already required and will not be wasted if ultimately it is decided not to take forward a bid.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 Members are invited to:
- i) consider and debate the contents of this report;
 - (ii) Indicate member support for progressing arrangements over the coming twelve months as outlined in this report, should the city decide to bid.
 - (iii) Request officers to come back with a progress report in February 2016.