

**Report of Director of City Development**

**Report to the Executive Board**

**Date: 18 March 2015**

**Subject: European Capital of Culture 2023 - Should Leeds bid?**

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: 10.4(3)  Appendix number: Appendices 4 and 5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

On 12<sup>th</sup> February this year Eden Ottoman, a member of Leeds Young Authors, attended an event with over 200 younger artists to discuss the potential of Leeds becoming European Capital of Culture in 2023. She wrote and performed this poem on the night. The first part is shown below and the full poem follows this report.

There are words flowing  
 Through the veins  
 of the people here,  
 Poetry flooding  
 Our high streets  
 You will not find cold  
 Sterile perfunctory  
 You will find beauty in abundance  
 In our tapping feet  
 and our fingers  
 On the pulse  
 Our city will find you,  
 Consume you....

## Summary of main issues

1. In January 2014 the Director of City Development submitted a report which sought to highlight the opportunity for Leeds to submit a bid to become European Capital of Culture in 2023. Members of the Executive Board asked for further discussions to take place with a wide range of stakeholders and asked officers to bring a more detailed report to Executive Board early in 2015, outlining the results of the additional consultation and research. This report responds to those recommendations.
2. Over the course of the last fourteen months, views, opinions, concerns and ambitions have been sought from a broad spectrum of audiences across the city and beyond, as to whether or not the city should bid for this title. The conversation has reached high numbers of people from a wide range of ages and backgrounds with the vast majority of those who took part in the conversations in favour of a bid to become European Capital of Culture 2023.
3. A bid would:  
Build on the momentum and profile gained from the successful hosting of high profile events including Tour de France Grand Départ in 2014 and British Art Show, Rugby Union World Cup and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Leeds International Piano Competition in 2015. Building on the success of the Brownlee brothers, the city is currently bidding to host legs of the World Triathlon Series for three years starting in 2016. If successful, this has the potential to bring a spectacle and opportunities to participate to a very large number of people. Building further, the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Leeds West Indian Carnival 2017 will be celebrated in collaboration with Hull UK City of Culture 2017.

Be set in the context of the city's wider ambitions to compete nationally and internationally, with plans for the HS2 rail link, the redevelopment and reimagining of the brownfield South Bank area, plans for 66,000 new homes in the city and further capital investment with major projects at Temple Works being planned, and the forthcoming developments at Victoria Gate.

- Create the opportunity to profile culture in the rich and varied communities of Leeds and to offer new ways to engage with and inspire those communities, The bidding process and activities in 2023 would value and invest in work in communities in the city as well as in the city centre, and support and develop arts and cultural organisations everywhere
- Accelerate a series of plans already in development to achieve the Council's Best City By 2030 ambitions and firmly embed culture into the ongoing development of the city. It would engage its citizens and impact on some of the economic and social issues the City faces as well as celebrating and promoting its strengths and position in the UK and Europe.
- Give Leeds an international platform for boosting the city's profile not just in the period leading up to the bid but during the period when the bid is being considered and further developed. The entire bid process will give, *from day*

*one*, a narrative arc to this process, increasing energy, purpose and focus. It has been a galvanising force in helping other cities to work across sectors including culture, education, business, community, tourism and health.

- Offer Leeds an opportunity to nurture the talent of future generations from every corner of the City. The GVA of the creative and cultural industries was £71.4bn in 2012 and accounted for 5.2% of the UK economy, and 1 in 18 of all jobs. It is the fastest growing sector in the economy (10%pa). If these successes continue the individual life chances of one or two children in every Leeds classroom from Wetherby to East Ardsley and from Guiseley to Ledsham today are inextricably linked to the strength of the sector in Leeds in 2023 and beyond. We not only need to attract creative and cultural businesses but also retain the very best talented young people, many of whom will be working in the independent creative and cultural sectors.
4. Whilst the opportunity to bid offers significant opportunity to reshape and reimagine the city as a whole and firmly embed culture and arts at the heart of the future development of the city, it also represents a significant investment and commitment from the city council over the next nine years.
  5. The bidding process is lengthy and has a series of criteria that the city would not currently meet. An expression of interest must be submitted by December 2016, with a further and final bid submitted by December 2017, and a decision expected 2018. To bid the city council's cash contribution would include £35,000 which is already allocated in 15/16. In the two following years this would increase to an estimated maximum of £175,000 over three years.
  6. The cost of hosting the title in the year itself has historically ranged from €20million - €80million. With respect to a Leeds bid for both stages of the process we anticipate that the city council would be a minority funder.
  7. Previous funding models have seen local authorities contribute anywhere between 30-66% of the cost of hosting. In the current funding climate and with a move towards co-production and civic enterprise, we anticipate developing a new funding model with a more plural funding base involving partners.
  8. In addition to this Leeds City Council provides much of the city's cultural provision in-house from museums and galleries to venues and large scale events, which would account for a significant percentage of the costs in a host year.
  9. To bid the city must assess its European connections and influence, revisit its culture strategy to reflect its current ambitions in the context of the city's overall development, develop further relationships and deeper engagement with local communities in the shaping and development of a bid and consider the opportunities for regional collaboration in a competition that is focused on cities.
  10. The council and city must communicate its ambition with confidence and verve at local, regional, national and international level. It also needs to take a leadership role in a genuine cross sector partnership with culture at its heart.

*“Leeds feels as though it is on the cusp of having a huge renaissance with more artists, companies and groups establishing themselves here. I am proud and hopeful, both a West Yorkshire born lad and a Leeds based artist, that Leeds is going to be an explosive and exciting city for culture and the recognition of this through the 'European Capital of Culture' status would be a very fine thing indeed. Good luck!”*

*Imagining the Future #Leeds2023 Facebook post by Leeds resident Anthony Middleton.*

## **Recommendations**

11. Against the backdrop of the scale and breadth of the 12 month city-wide conversation and the resource implications outlined, Executive Board is recommended to:
  - i) Approve the proposal that Leeds will bid to be European Capital of Culture in 2023;
  - ii) Approve the principle that, as far as possible, any such bid or future programme of activity should involve and benefit all the communities of Leeds, whilst also bringing benefit to the wider regional, national and European communities;
  - iii) Request the Chief Officer, Culture and Sport to work with the Executive Member for Digital and Creative Technologies, Culture and Skills to now:
    - Establish a strategic steering group with independent chair to advise on and oversee the development of the bid as per paragraph 5.2
    - Develop proposals for establishing a framework to further the spirit of city-wide conversation, engagement and transparency as per paragraph 5.3
    - Work with the people of Leeds, stakeholders and partners to create a cultural strategy for the period 2017-30;
    - Develop mutually beneficial partnerships with stakeholders across Leeds City Region, Yorkshire and the North to strengthen the bid;
    - Develop a timeline, business plan and communications strategy for the bid.
  - iv) Request that the Director of City Development:
    - Plans for the human and financial resources required for making a bid as outlined in the report;
    - Returns to Executive Board with a progress report later in 2015.

## 1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to brief Executive Board on the city-wide discussions to date with a view to a decision to formally proceed with a bid for European Capital of Culture 2023.
- 1.2 The report summarises the consultation held on whether Leeds should bid and the main issues for consideration.

## 2. Background information

*“You are not awarded the honour for what you are, but rather by convincing the panel of what you will become. The distance between where you are and where you want to be. That’s what wins”*

*Alan Lane, SlungLow Theatre, Holbeck*

- 2.1 The next opportunity for one UK city and one city in Hungary to hold the prestigious title of European Capital of Culture will be 2023. It will be fifteen years before such a chance comes round again and there are only four further opportunities for a UK city this century. The competition is open to all UK cities. Previous UK holders of the title were Glasgow in 1990 and Liverpool in 2008. European cities to have held the title include Berlin, Stockholm, Prague, Brussels and Madrid and smaller cities such as Genoa.
- 2.2 The competition is based around six criteria:
  - cultural and artistic content
  - contribution to long-term strategy for the city
  - European dimension
  - capacity to deliver
  - outreach
  - management
- 2.3 The judging panel comprises European representatives and UK representatives with the latter assigned by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. There is a two-stage process comprising an initial bid and shortlisting, then the final bid and visit. The formal call for applications, which is six years before the title-year, gives a deadline of at least ten months for candidates to submit bids. Experience has shown that most successful cities start their preparation 2-3 years in advance of this call. An initial application is likely to be required at the end of 2016, which will be followed by a full application at the end of 2017 and a decision by 2018.
- 2.4 Any bid requires a city to have a cultural strategy in operation, linked to the city development strategy. Such strategies take time to prepare and start to implement. The process of conversation has highlighted that our Culture Strategy needs to be significantly updated to better reflect the city’s ambitions in the context of a bid.
- 2.5 The criteria also require significant engagement with the citizens of a city. Leeds has made a good start by instigating a conversation in the lead up to this decision being taken but we know that we need to do more. Over the last twelve months we have

worked hard to consult with people in a different way highlighting the conversation and making efforts to widen the scope of this conversation to different groups across the city. However, it is inevitable that we cannot reach all audiences in the depth and breadth of conversation, and we recognise that this is something that will need to continue with more face to face conversations in communities. This way of working expresses the City's values, and it is likely to give us access to great ideas which might otherwise be hidden.

### **3. The City Conversation**

- 3.1 In February 2014 when the team were asked to continue discussions with a wide range of stakeholders, no predetermined criteria for this conversation existed other than to start with the simple question of Should Leeds Bid to become European Capital of Culture?
- 3.2 Whilst the question is simple, on the face of it many people didn't know what the title was or they confused it with the UK City of Culture title (awarded to Hull for 2017) which is a relatively recent initiative.
- 3.3 Officers initiated a year-long conversation not solely asking whether we should bid but asking people what culture means to them and how important culture is to their daily experience of living and working in Leeds.
- 3.4 We used a number of platforms to reach people, ranging from extended in depth face to face discussions with people, attending and facilitating meetings to raise awareness to encouraging people to join in a conversation on Facebook, to voting yes/no in a poll or responding to detailed online surveys.
- 3.5 These were all the traditional methods of the Council and we were helped in this by colleagues in Citizens and Communities and the Intelligence Team.
- 3.6 We also contracted The City Talking to produce a series of blogs with the city's independent creative, arts and culture business sector to stimulate conversation across social media channels. See Appendix 3.
- 3.7 The reach has been extended and broadened by support and coverage of local media, examples running from Leeds List and the Yorkshire Evening Post (YEP) and Culture Vulture to the city's active commentators and bloggers.
- 3.8 We have gone some way to reaching some of the cities' communities. For example, Leeds West Indian Carnival regularly shares #Leeds2023 information with its 4,300 followers and reported having received particularly favourable responses to Facebook posts about the "Yes Leeds" YEP campaign, and its "Cultural Jewels" survey.
- 3.9 Whilst the engagement has been wide ranging over many months, we are not complacent that it has reached everyone in the city or is by any means complete. The conversations are ongoing, For instance, as this paper was being prepared conversations were taking place with young people in Seacroft and being broadcast on East Leeds FM.

3.10 The table below lists conversations we initiated. For more detail, including outcomes, see Appendix 2.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Potential Reach</b>
Jan 2014	Public open meeting - cultural, community and business	300
Jan 2014	Leeds City Council's Annual Citizen Culture Survey	Up to 3,000
Mar 2014	Leeds Culture Network – Culture sector	106
May 2014	Citizens Panel – Two focus groups with 18-30 year olds from all parts of Leeds	15
Jul 2014	Breeze Arts Foundation – Representative focus group with members aged 16+	13
Aug 2014	Queer Culture Workshop - Canvassed views about a bid for #Leeds2023 at LGBT cultural community workshop.	30
Aug 2014	Child Friendly Ambassadors Meeting – canvassed views	25
Summer 2014	Breeze Online Survey 47,000 children and young people between 5-25 years old	Up to 47,000
Summer 2014	Breeze video booth consultation –189 children between the ages of 5 and 15	189
Summer 2014	Facilitated discussion through My Leeds My Culture organisers with 16yr old national citizenship service volunteers.	25
Sep-Dec 2014	The City Talking – Online opinion features with the independent Leeds cultural sector	35 interviewed
Sep –Dec 2014	The City Talking (audience) – Website	12,987
Sep –Dec 2014	The City Talking (audience) – Facebook	293,251
Sep –Dec 2014	The City Talking (audience) – Newspaper	125,000
Sep 2014	Leeds Culture Network – a meeting of HE / FE sector representatives and previous ECOC title holders.	68
Sep 2014	Informal lunch hosted for 35 HE/FE sector representatives and previous ECOC title holders.	35 plus
Sep 2014	SCCFRE BME Advisory Group Meeting – views canvassed	10
Oct 2014	Discussion with community leaders organised by Leeds City Council's Citizens and Communities team	9

Nov 2014	Yorkshire Evening Post/ Yorkshire Post – Online poll to a single response question	893,000
Dec 2014	Coverage in Yorkshire Evening Post for results of the poll	30,000
Dec 2014	Lunch time focus group with retired and older people	6
Dec 2014	BBC Radio Leeds	72,000
Feb 2015	Leeds Culture Network: Imagining the Future.	220
Aug -now	Leeds City Council Online Poll - a single response question on Leeds City Council's website	281
Feb 2015	Better Leeds Forum, Leeds University Student Union. Proposal that LUU student body backs a Leeds #2023 bid.	30,000
Now	The conversation is still ongoing across social media and is being monitored by LCC	TBC to date

- 3.11 The conversation to date can demonstrate a significant reach across a broad spectrum of audiences. Critically, over the course of the conversations there has been a majority view in favour of the city submitting a bid to become European Capital of Culture 2023.
- 3.12 Notwithstanding the potential for duplication across media platforms, the total potential reach of the conversation is 1,505,731. This includes conversations with children and young people, older people, the independent culture and arts sector alongside the major culture and arts institutions in the city and Leeds' emerging arts scene, the higher education sector, local and regional media, BME and LGBT groups.
- 3.13 Whilst the potential reach takes the numbers to beyond the population of Leeds the team know very well that there is a stark contrast between awareness and engagement among the above groups. In the case of Leeds University Union the motion was passed by 16 representatives on behalf of a student body of 30,000. We have no sense of how many of those 30,000 are actively engaged in discussions relating to European Capital of Culture 2023, however we now have a commitment of support in communicating with and engaging this audience.
- 3.14 Likewise where media coverage in Yorkshire Evening Post, The City Talking, Leeds List and BBC Radio Leeds has helped us to raise awareness of the conversation and the opportunity to bid, converting this awareness to genuine engagement from the people of Leeds is still to do. Even with the level of support from media organisations, community leaders and the ground swell of conversations, we know there will still be some people of Leeds who are unaware of the conversations and our efforts need to focus on these audiences as we move forward.
- 3.15 In addition to this extensive external conversation there was also significant internal engagement across the city council to canvas view and opinions including:

Leeds City Council Community Chairs Forum which brings together the Chairs of the ten Community Committees debated the opportunity in November and, on considering it to

be a very positive one, agreed to assist officers in taking consultation about a Leeds bid to their communities. Conversation started in December in Horsforth at the Outer North West Community Committee. Further meetings are planned with the other nine committees about how communities can seek benefit from a bid if a decision to bid is taken forward.

The Sustainable Economy and Culture Scrutiny Board, whilst supportive in principle, raised questions about the city's ability to bid in a period of financial austerity and has requested additional information about the likely costs involved to the Authority.

The Sustainable Economy & Culture Partnership Board chaired by the current President of Leeds Chamber of Commerce and facilitated by the Authority with external representatives on it drawn from business, higher education and third sector has pledged total support for a Leeds bid.

All Party Members Briefing to which all 99 elected members were invited to attend an informal briefing and consultation session to further understand what is involved in bidding to become European Capital of Culture and to canvas their views and opinions. Those who attended were supportive of a bid and offered to assist the team in continuing the conversation via their own wards and area committees.

The city council's Best Council Leadership Team hosted a discussion to consider how all areas of the council could respond to the opportunity and what challenges the city council would need to overcome in the context of a bid to secure the title. Following on from this the city council's Audit and Risk team requested a specific briefing to consider how they could best support a bid should it be agreed by Executive Board.

The opportunity to bid was also discussed at the Council's Annual Leadership Conference in October 2014 which was attended by in the region of 300 senior managers from across the Council.

3.16

### **What have we learnt from the conversations?**

*"Making 2023 something that is great for tourism to have people see it and want to come here is important, but it's also important to get everybody in the city involved."*

*Adi Granov, ThoughtBubble Festival*

3.17 Although never intending to undertake the conversation as a vote, we started this process with a single closed question to try to get an instinctive response from the city. We found that the opportunity to bid was far more emotive than we first imagined with a much more qualitative response from focus groups, surveys, online blogs, and social media. Talking face to face to a range of people we have received mainly upbeat responses. Some examples are highlighted below:

*Q: What should a bid achieve for the city and the people of Leeds to make it worthwhile for us to bid?*

- 3.18 Challenge the 'grim up north' perception; raise the profile of Leeds in the UK and internationally; celebrate Leeds as a great place to live. Get across the message that Leeds is here. We're on the map.

*Q: What might be the potential benefits to you, your family, your community if Leeds bid and won it?*

- 3.19 It will bring people together; it will add to a sense of wellbeing. It's an investment in the future, in our young people. It could put the spotlight on different parts of Leeds and bring together different pockets of activity. It should be about different cultures. It should be about everything - lifestyle, sport, Leeds - and it should belong to everyone.

*Q: How might you want to be involved with it?*

- 3.20 Several people pointed to their recent experiences of seeing the Tour De France coming through Leeds and how it showed that people are more than happy to get involved. Individuals seek involvement in different ways - contributing as artists, participants or helping out as volunteers on the "big idea"; helping to plan the year-long programme, or seeking a new experience as audiences. A number of people offered to be community links for it and generate information in their communities as to how to be part of it.

*Q: What about the challenges?*

- 3.21 People identified the main challenges and risks to delivering a successful Capital of Culture year in Leeds as: Leeds residents not being able to afford to go to events; poor public transport links across different parts of the city, especially in the evenings with services shutting down early; poor co-ordination of the publicity; and a host of related access issues.
- 3.22 No one talked about the risk of a poor quality cultural experience or finding nothing to be of interest – no one referred to the potential disappointment of going to see or do something that might turn out to be "not very good." However despite last summer's events views were still expressed about a lack of confidence in the city's ability to deliver and effectively market high quality and profile cultural events. More needs to be done to build confidence and pride in the city's achievements and create a stronger narrative that is representative and familiar to everyone in Leeds, whilst still being ambitious and achievable.
- 3.23 The strength of feeling was in favour of a bid and of planning a programme that would be truly for everyone and take place everywhere in the city. The council was urged to iron out the various failings of our public transport system in time for 2023, highlighting the importance of linking our culture strategy to the overall development strategy for the city.
- 3.24 People said they would be disappointed if Leeds bid and lost, but equally people were sanguine with the overall message being– "it would be worth doing it anyway. Bidding could still bring benefits even if we lose."
- 3.25 More critical and reflective views were to be found online – on twitter, Facebook, for example, and via The City Talking, the online conversation commissioned by Leeds

City Council. Conversation on The City Talking focused on how Leeds as a city defines 'culture' and what space there is for sport and the city's independent business and culture and arts sector in a bid. There were also numerous examples of the conversation taking off independently from our initiatives, not all of which we will have been able to document.

### 3.26 Reflections on the conversation

3.27 The opportunity presented is a very emotive issue as it asks the city to consider where it wants to be in nine years' time, not just from a cultural and creative perspective, but how we want to use culture and the arts to benefit all people of Leeds not just those who already enjoy access to the arts.

3.28 Most poignantly a large proportion of the conversation centred on future generations and what this would mean for them. The opportunity to consider how we nurture and retain talent, how we provide opportunities for employment and growth for those who struggle to find a way in the education system, and how we support the independent creative spirit in the city were repeatedly raised throughout the conversation. This quote from a young artist who struggled to adapt to the education system is representative of that mood:

*"Nine years is not very far away in terms of finishing degrees and getting established. Being Capital of Culture offers a huge platform for art and creativity. There's a lot of talent here, and they don't all go to art college; some of them can't get in or don't come from the right background. You can see the talent that goes wasted because of choices people have made in their past. That shouldn't stop creativity. Everyone has a past."*

*Mikkel Uller, Founder Dynamite Project, Seacroft*

3.29 The issue of the city's cultural identity and the lack of a current culture strategy were raised both from those in support and those against a bid. For those against, there were concerns that a bid would force the city and its cultural offering to be shaped to fit the criteria of a bid at the expense of a 'Leeds' identity. One of the consultation posts on The City Talking summed up this tension:

*"And I guess that's the fear at the heart of the words 'Leeds, Capital of Culture, 2023'. Forced culture; a tenuous movement, a hurried identity and an unsubstantiated designation. Hashtag Culture. Culture Factor, in which we're the wide eyed kid, armed with only a Dylan Record and a dream, told us just before we're about to go on, that although our own song is just as good, the judges want to hear something that they know so 'just sing that Jake Bugg one'."*

*Giuseppe de Luca, Singer Songwriter Leeds band Goodbye Chanel, City Centre.*

## 4. Main Issues

4.1 The main issues for consideration when deciding whether or not to bid are:

- **Capacity and resources** - The city council is facing significant budget cuts and staff reductions over the coming years.
- **Strategic direction** – The city will need to develop a new culture strategy to reflect its current approach and ambitions for the culture sector.
- **International profile** – The city will need to significantly raise its profile, links and cultural contribution to Europe.
- **Competition versus transparency** – Leeds will be in direct competition with other UK cities therefore some elements such as budgets and artistic content of the final bid will have to remain confidential until after the bid submission.
- **Regional context** – There are calls from key stakeholders for a City Region bid, however the criteria sets the competition as a city level competition.

4.2 Each of the points above is considered in turn below.

### 4.3 **Capacity and resources**

4.4 There will be an opportunity cost to the bid, and, if we win, to the programme itself. For the city to be confident that 2023 will deliver benefits across Leeds, and not draw off energy and resources from essential services and targets, it will be necessary to address the questions of inclusiveness in a very robust manner.

4.5 All departments of the city council face budget constraints over the coming years and a bid to become European Capital of Culture 2023 will not only be of benefit to the Culture and Sport service. As budgets become further constrained, supporting all areas of the economy and education will become increasingly difficult.

4.6 Much of the work needed to submit a bid is work that the city needs regardless of the decision to bid. Even without bidding, the city needs to rethink its approach to developing a strong cultural offer, develop better links with the private sector, raise its profile at national and international level and embed the cultural offer in the future economic development of Leeds.

4.7 Over the past year the equivalent of 1.5 FTEs within the Culture and Sport Service have managed the city conversation, drawing also on the expertise and in-kind support of colleagues and external partners. It is anticipated that this team would be augmented by more officer time across a broader cohort of services.

4.8 Whilst the city council faces cuts in the immediate term, 2023 offers the city an opportunity to re-think how it can work as one, bringing together stakeholders from all backgrounds to join behind a single cause to maintain and grow a high quality cultural offer with less of the burden for delivery held by the city council.

### 4.9 **Strategic direction**

*“For me Leeds just isn’t as good as some of our neighbours at shouting about itself. Some of our neighbours (in the north west) just aren’t actually as good as they make out, too ... how we can start now on creating better connections across the city and the creative / culture industries. Get music talking to the arts, talking to films, design and digital”*

*Simon Fogal Creative Director, I Like Press & Music, Quarry Hill*

- 4.10 Bidding cities are required to have a cultural strategy in place.. The competition offers us a timely opportunity to review and update its existing, and somewhat dated Culture Strategy. This will be a chance to redefine the city's view of 'culture', set out where the city hopes to be in nine years' time and show how winning the designation of 2023 could enable the realisation of that vision.
- 4.11 'Leeds Best City 2030' sets a clear and bold ambition for the city to move forward, making smart investments and taking calculated risks to put the city firmly on the map. Policymakers across the world see culture as a central part of delivering the priorities and strategies of urban government. Culture has a key role to play in placing Leeds on the international stage, in raising our game and dragging our cultural light out from under the bushel.
- 4.12 Much has changed since the last strategy: from the growth and expansion in the independent scene over the past five years, to the delivery of large scale events; from the continuing success of major cultural players in Leeds, to the rise of the regional agenda, from a time of relative neglect of the arts to the realisation of their crucial value to so many areas where we are determined to raise our game.
- 4.13 The strategy must also answer what support Leeds can give back to the region and how a bid for European Capital of Culture might enable this.

#### 4.14 **International profile**

*"Leeds has got more international cultural activity than many other cities but it has never consciously and strategically promoted it. The city has plenty of European links which are developed by individual organisations but not necessarily shared by our institutions as part of a strategy to promote the city."*

*Professor Franco Bianchini, Professor of Cultural Policy and Planning, Leeds Beckett University.*

- 4.15 One of the key challenges and opportunities of the bid will be to explore and articulate how connected we are as a city to Europe and internationally.
- 4.16 Leeds has a strong track record of working internationally e.g. in South Africa, China and specific cities in Europe, but culturally needs to engage more with European networks. We should explore and celebrate the international links of our artists, arts companies, universities, cultural producers and businesses.
- 4.17 The true extent of the city's European cultural connections has never been mapped but we are anecdotally aware of a number of organisations who repeatedly tour work to Europe, host European work and artists in Leeds, receive EU funding and advocate on behalf of the city in this arena. Based on this evidence which was uncovered from the conversations over the last twelve months we believe that our European connections are more extensive than they might first appear, but that we aren't capitalising on these connections to build profile and reputation in this space.
- 4.18 The cultural sector in Leeds is adept at securing European funding for culture and arts projects while the city council has a track record of securing ERDF and RGF funds for

economic development. Taking these two strengths together we can generate new opportunities to overcome the city's overall lack of profile at European level and boost support for the existing cultural offer while budgets are strained.

#### 4.19 **Competition versus transparency**

4.20 The bidding process itself is fundamentally a competition and success or failure is primarily based on a written proposal for a year of activity. In order to give Leeds the greatest chance of success we need to promote ourselves with confidence whilst keeping aspects of the bid confidential from other bidding cities until quite late in the process. This may seem to present a conflict with our open conversation to date.

4.21 In the current climate of austerity there is also, quite rightly, a particular focus on how public bodies spend their money but the funding proposals of both the bidding process, and even more so of the actual year's activity are something we would need to keep outside the gaze of our potential competitors. The resources and value for money section of this report provides further detail.

4.22 For these reasons, and because the journey to 2023 has reached the next stage, Executive Board is asked to consider approaches to governance and accountability.

#### 4.23 **Regional context**

*"Bidding for European Capital of Culture in 2023 would be a major part of kick-starting a much needed initiative and it – surely – has to be a City Region bid to capitalise on the cultural resources located directly in the city linking with those of us who contribute in the wider area".*

*Simon Wallis, Director, The Hepworth Wakefield*

4.24 From the conversations at city level there was an overwhelming strength of feeling that Leeds must stand alone in a bid. A sense that a bid could be used to finally develop a sense of identity for Leeds captured the imagination of many different groups who consistently express the frustration that despite having an enviable cultural offer of international standing, the city still fails to build a strong narrative for this offer and therefore is perceived to be unable to capitalise on this for future generations.

4.25 The conversation has not been lost on our neighbouring cities and there has been much discussion about the potential to bid as a city region or as a collective of cities. The criteria states that the bid must be made as a single city.

4.26 However, regional support has been a defining factor in the success of other bids and is a beneficial thing to have for any city as it moves forward. Whilst events like the Tour de France and initiatives such as the Yorkshire Sculpture Triangle start to build these connections, the new Leeds cultural identity will increasingly have to reference the regional cultural offer. It will be important to focus on Leeds in the bid but there is obvious potential to build the cultural strengths of the city region including Bradford (UNESCO City of Film and disability theatre), York (UNESCO City of Media arts), Halifax (Piece Hall, Dean Clough), Huddersfield (contemporary music festival) and Wakefield (Hepworth Gallery, Yorkshire Sculpture Park) into a bid.

4.27 A bid will need to balance the ability to appeal to a global audience and be European facing, with the desire to retain a sense of local identity and local value.

## **5. Governance and Accountability**

5.1 We would need to find a way by which those writing the bid can be trusted and empowered by the City to bid on its behalf. The process would balance city-wide engagement with confidentiality on some of the key bid contents and budgets in order to keep ahead of other competitors. We anticipate the bid would need to be signed off by a steering group and by the Council.

5.2 The steering group would be focused initially on the bid but with a mind to delivery models should we be successful. The group would need to be determined based on their knowledge, skills and approach rather than for being 'the usual suspects'. Diversity will be important, not to tick a box but to ensure the bid benefits from the widest range of voices, ideas and perspectives. It is envisaged that a small selection group, chaired by the Executive Member for Digital and Creative Technologies, Culture and Skills (who would also be the Council's representative on the steering group) would oversee the appointments.

5.3 The spirit of the city-wide engagement would continue through the development of the bid. This was highlighted by a number of commentators and one recent suggestion for how it could be undertaken was published on The Leeds Citizen Blog:

### ***"COULDN'T WE THINK ABOUT HANDING OVER THE BID TO THE PEOPLE OF LEEDS?"***

*It would be easy. All you'd need to do would be:*

*Get a list of everyone who pays council tax, randomly select 20 old and young from each postcode, lock them in a room and tell them to get on with deciding what the European Capital of Culture will be like in their bit of Leeds. These "juries" will invite and welcome local people and organisations coming to them to pitch ideas. They'll weigh the pitches up ...  
... and what they say goes.*

*The Leeds Citizen, Leeds blog*

5.4 Another suggestion is for a series of open access meetings hosted in different community settings. These could be facilitated by Ward members and local cultural organisations. Proposals are at an early stage.

## **6 Corporate Considerations**

6.1 A recurring theme has been that a bid should not be made at the expense of essential public services and the Council should seek support from a range of sources. A key message going forward will be to ensure that bidding brings investment and economic benefits to the city.

## **7 Consultation**

- 7.1 Details of the extensive and varied discussions with a large number of people are included in the appendices.

## **8 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

- 8.1 Representatives of the different equalities groups that we have interviewed so far have been overwhelmingly positive about the potential positive impact of mounting a Leeds bid. However this conversation must continue and must endeavour to increase the range of diverse opinions and engagement.
- 8.2 Further details about public and stakeholder opinion received by the Authority through this consultation are covered in the Appendix to this report.
- 8.3 The associated Equality Impact Assessment has also been appended for information.

## **9 Council policies and City Priorities**

- 9.1 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 family agenda, Leeds as a tourist destination, business engagement and greater understanding of Leeds as a cultural hub.

## **10 Resources and value for money**

- 10.1 There are two distinct aspects of the costs: the costs of bidding and the cost of then hosting. In both cases the cost of bidding needs to be weighed up against the benefits, those benefits having been articulated elsewhere in this document.
- 10.2 Whilst the cost of bidding for the 2023 title can be seen as 'at risk', we have to consider the possibility that Leeds would not win and the investment would appear to be 'lost'.
- 10.3 There are two considerations which ameliorate that risk. Firstly, a considerable amount of the bidding process activity would need to be done in any case, for example, Leeds will need to write a new cultural strategy irrespective of a 2023 bid. Secondly, there is a good deal of evidence that cities that bid but lose nevertheless use the bidding process to find other benefits. Norwich became UNESCO City of Literature; Dundee is now UNESCO City of Design; Newcastle Gateshead spearheaded the Culture 10 Programme, that realised the full potential of its new capital assets: The Sage, Angel of the North and the Baltic.

### **Bidding cost**

- 10.4 The cash costs for bidding include; ongoing consultation across the city, stakeholder engagement, fundraising, cultural strategy development, marketing, support to the steering group and the production of the bid document itself. The Council's cash contribution would include £35,000 which is already allocated in 15/16. In the two following years we anticipate this would increase, to an estimated maximum of £175,000 over three years. This would nevertheless make the authority a minority funder of the bid in cash terms. A draft income and expenditure budget is included in

the confidential Appendix 4 in order not to release information publicly to competitor cities.

- 10.5 The related core staffing costs to LCC Culture & Sport over three years is c£285,000 over three years. The creation of a new cultural strategy, which will be a core element of activity would require resource allocation irrespective of any bidding process. Some additional support staff will be required as the bid develops. The ambition is for the strategic lead to remain within the service, with contributions of further staff from across the council.
- 10.6 Staffing will also need to be supplemented by external partners. We have already been allocated, at no charge to the Council, expert support of Franco Bianchini, Professor of Cultural Policy and Planning, Leeds Beckett University. (Mr Bianchini has been directly involved in the ECOC programme for a number of years including with the most recent successful bid for the Italian city of Matera).
- 10.7 Evidence from past host cities suggest it has historically been challenging to gain partner support for the bidding process as the immediate benefits can be less clear. We are delighted therefore that we have already attracted firm expressions of cash and in-kind support from Leeds University and Leeds Beckett University.

### **Hosting cost**

- 10.8 In terms of the year itself, the estimated cost is based upon research and advice from other cities, both UK and European. We will take into account that in the current climate all cities considering a bid for this title will seek to minimise costs as much as possible. The current guidance states:

*“Budgets for ECOC vary considerably; recent programmes (i.e., not including any infrastructure or buildings) have ranged from 20m euros to over 80m euros. At the bidding stage it is unrealistic for exact projections of future funding sources. The bid-book must have a realistic budget, with enough information to show the degree of certainty on each budget line.”*

- 10.9 It is the experience of bidding cities that once they have won, attracting financial support is much less challenging than during the bidding process. Taking the guidance above if Leeds were to be successful there would be an expected minimum commitment of €20million to host the title, with funding raised from a range of sources besides the Council. These would be likely to include Arts Council England, Lottery distributors, private sector sponsorship (local and national), trusts and foundations, LEP, European funding, earned income and philanthropy.
- 10.10 Previous funding models have seen local authorities contribute anywhere between 30-66% of the cost of hosting. In the current funding climate and with a move towards co-production and civic enterprise we would anticipate that a new funding model with a more plural funding base would be developed.
- 10.11 In addition to this Leeds City Council is unique among local authorities in that much of the city’s direct cultural provision is delivered in house from museums and galleries to venues and large scale events, which would account for a significant percentage of the costs in a host year. Using this model the city council’s contribution is likely to

equal that of other cities but with a lower percentage of net cash towards the year of activity.

- 10.12 Nevertheless, for Leeds it would be a very significant investment for the authority. The total is likely to be in excess of the £3.8m to support the Tour de France which lasted for 2 days rather than a full year and created c£100m of economic benefit to Leeds and Yorkshire. The authority's own contribution would most likely be specifically focussed on activity within our communities, and on core support for operational elements and marketing.
- 10.13 An illustrative budget for the year is included as confidential Appendix 5 in order not to release information publicly to any competitor cities.

## **11 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

- 11.1 The report is subject to call in.
- 11.2 The information contained in Appendices 4 and 5 is exempt under Access to Information Rule 10.4 (3) as it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). It is considered that the public interest in maintaining the content of Appendices 4 and 5 as exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

## **12 Risk Management**

- 12.1 Over the next five years the city council is set to become -much smaller with the culture and sport service facing further cuts in 2015/16 following on from previous cuts, restructures and the pressures of delivery with a reduced team as a result of voluntary redundancies. Whilst the climate of austerity continues the council and the city is committed to, and determined to achieve, our ambition to become a truly global city and recognise and support the role of culture, sport and the arts in this ambition.
- 12.2 There will need to be a clear strategy by which city region projects are taken forward and sufficient leadership from within Leeds City Council to lobby for a share of city region funding.
- 12.3 The city council's Audit and Risk service have been consulted and should a bid be considered appropriate, a full risk register will be developed to consider all issues as outlined above.

## **13 Conclusions**

- 13.1 Leeds is well positioned and would benefit from making a bid to the EU Capital of Culture programme. There is already significant support from stakeholders, the public and press.
- 13.2 It will be crucial to have involvement and engagement across the city in a Leeds bid.
- 13.3 A decision to bid needs to be taken now to allow enough lead in time for preparing a winning case.

## **14. Recommendations**

- 14.1 Against the backdrop of the scale and breadth of the 14 month city-wide conversation and the resource implications outlined, Executive Board is recommended to:
- i) Approve the proposal that Leeds will bid to be European Capital of Culture in 2023;
  - ii) Approve the principle that, as far as possible, any such bid or future programme of activity should involve and benefit all the communities of Leeds, whilst also bringing benefit to the wider regional, national and European communities;
  - iii) Request the Chief Officer, Culture and Sport to work with the Executive Member for Digital and Creative Technology, Culture and Skills to now:
    - Establish a strategic steering group with independent chair to advise on and oversee the development of the bid as per paragraph 5.2
    - Develop proposals for establishing a framework to further the spirit of citywide conversation, engagement and transparency as per paragraph 5.3
    - Work with the people of Leeds, stakeholders and partners to create a cultural strategy for the period 2017-30;
    - Develop mutually beneficial partnerships with stakeholders across Leeds City Region, Yorkshire and the North to strengthen the bid;
    - Develop a timeline, business plan and communications strategy.
  - iv) Request that the Director of City Development:
    - Plans for the human and financial resources required for making a bid as outlined in the report;
    - Returns to Executive Board with a progress report later in 2015.

## **15. Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

15.1 None

## **16. Appendices**

16.0 Poem by Eden Ottoman

16.1 Appendix 1; EU Criteria and Guidance for Bidding Cities

16.2 Appendix 2; Leeds consultations in more detail

16.3 Appendix 3; Report from The City Talking

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

16.4 Appendix 4; Income and expenditure budget for bidding process (Confidential)

16.5 Appendix 5; Illustrative budget for 2023 year of activity (confidential)

16.6 Appendix 6; Equality Impact Assessment