

**Report of Director of City Development**

**Report to the Executive Board**

**Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2014**

**Subject: 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input 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. Our corporate ambition is for Leeds to be the best city for culture 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.
2. The next opportunity for a UK city to become European Capital Culture is 2023. Although 2023 would be the year of celebration, an initial intention to bid would need to be submitted by 2016 with an outline bid submitted within the following 10 months. A decision and announcement of successful candidates will be made in 2018. A local authority is not required to lead the bid, but its support is fundamental to likely success.
3. With this in mind the Executive Member for Leisure and Skills and Chief Officer for Culture and Sport conducted initial informal discussions with elected members, internal and external stakeholders and most of the main cultural organisations in the city to seek their views. Following a very supportive response, and in line with the new type of civic relationships proposed in the Commission for Local Government, an open meeting was then held at the Town Hall on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2014.
4. The Town Hall meeting was attended by nearly 300 people. Additional debates took place on the day and via local radio phone-ins and on social media. On Twitter 344 different people contributed 817 Tweets using the hashtag #Leeds2023.

5. The meeting expressed almost universal support for Leeds making a bid, and therefore provides a strong mandate to develop this 'City conversation' over the next nine months to test support for such a bid further from the broadest range of communities, stakeholders and partners.
6. This report outlines some of the considerations, challenges and opportunities associated with a bid for this title, and seeks a view from Executive Board as to the support to continue the city-wide conversation.

## **Recommendations**

7. That Executive Board:
  - i) Consider and debate the issues and opportunities raised in the report in consideration of whether or not to submit a bid for European Capital of Culture 2023.
  - ii) Support continued discussions with a wide range of stakeholders over the next 9-12 months
  - iii) Request a more detailed report, submitted in early 2015, outlining the results of the additional consultation, research and other considerations made at that point.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 This report seeks to highlight the opportunity for Leeds to submit a bid to become European Capital of Culture 2023, and outline the issues and benefits associated with the title. The report also aims to canvas opinion from Executive Board members on this subject.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 European Capital of Culture is a city designated by the European Union for the period of one calendar year, during which that city will host a range of cultural events, which have a European appeal. The competition is open to a select group of two or three countries each year, and cities must bid from those countries to a selection panel of 13 people. The panel is made up of six experts appointed by the country in question and seven appointed by the European Commission. In 2023 the United Kingdom and Hungary are the member states eligible to host the year-long celebration.
- 2.2 The title can only be held by one city in each member state and must be held by one single city even if the bid involves a wider geographical region. Clear leadership from one single city is identified by the European Commission as a key factor of success for any bid.
- 2.3 Bringing the city together to bid is almost as important as winning, as it offers an opportunity to address issues within the culture and arts sector and bring the city, not just its cultural institutes, together under a shared ambition. This consideration has already had benefits in Leeds with the Town Hall meeting being the first time

that the City's cultural sector has come together, alongside some other community and business organisations.

### **3 Social and economic impact**

- 3.1 Only two other cities in the UK have held the title before: Glasgow in 1990 and Liverpool in 2008. It is generally accepted that the image of Glasgow was transformed. In Liverpool the European Capital of Culture was seen as a catalyst for development of the historic Albert Dock area and the Liverpool Echo Arena, creating a lasting legacy of cultural attractions in the city.
- 3.2 The title requires significant local financial resource but brings with it investment both in terms of funding from the European Commission (the Melina Mercouri prize of c£1.24m is awarded three months into the start of the Year provided that the winning city fulfils its commitments and takes into account the selection and monitoring panels' recommendations). Liverpool's bid attracted significant funding from the private sector and from Arts Council England. One of the benefits of starting an early conversation is that it will enable a detailed consideration of the financial implications for Leeds, both in terms of external funding and any requirements from the Council.
- 3.3 There is considerable research on the impact of the title for the cities involved. We know that bidding has an important leverage effect on the development of new or more effective policies and strategies, even in cities which do not win the title. Under the European Capitals of Culture programme a city cannot develop what is already fully developed; it needs to start from the position of being a second or third city. This alone makes the journey as important as arriving at the destination. The commitment to making the bid will produce successful outcomes.
- 3.4 A bid could help us build an international image of a 21<sup>st</sup> century Leeds in Europe and beyond, a vital creative 'can-do' city for future generations with an associated increase in jobs, skills, technological and business capacity; and accelerate improvements to the environment and public realm.
- 3.5 Most title-holders record a measurable impact on visitor numbers and expenditure in host cities during the Year. The average increase in overnight stays per city when compared to the previous year was about 11% before 1995, rising to over 12% in the period 1995 to 2003.
- 3.6 In addition to the title, the benefits of bringing people together to bid are also significant. A bid would provide a common framework to host the individual visions and ambitions of key city partners, show clear, visible leadership and the drive to shape the future. Success could:
  - confirm and enhance Leeds' position on a regional, national and European level.
  - celebrate and promote cultural diversity and be used to dismantle social and economic barriers.

- build a strong cultural programme and environment to attract international visitors, create greater co-operation with other European cities.
- leverage the value of the city working as a team on an ambitious goal which could unlock creative solutions to environmental, infrastructure and transport improvements such as the South Bank.
- share expertise across the EU and worldwide and accelerate innovation.

3.7 A bid also offers an opportunity to develop a clear narrative and cultural identity for the city, clearly and consistently articulating the offer to residents, businesses, investors and visitors and raising the profile of the city internationally.

#### **4 Main issues**

4.1 Timing is crucial for Leeds as bidding cities must be able to clearly demonstrate a track record of delivering programmes that have a global appeal and in particular reference European integration. In this, the host year for the Tour de France Grand Départ, Leeds has the opportunity to shine on a European and international stage and prove its capability in delivering a programme of scale and diversity.

4.2 This follows the recent delivery of the new world-class Leeds Arena and further investment from both public and private sector in cultural developments including the recently opened contemporary art gallery, The Tetley, and the refurbishment of The City Varieties. In addition to this Leeds' reputation as a host city is growing with major events such as Rugby League World Cup, BBC Sports Personality of the Year and in future years the British Art Show and Rugby Union World Cup. The staging of the Grand Depart of the Tour De France in 2014, will be the next big occasion where Leeds will have a world-wide audience.

4.3 Leeds needs to consider how to balance the need to continue the momentum gained by recent developments and successes within the cultural and sporting arena, with the increased budget pressures and conflicting demands of services and citizens.

4.4 A major consideration is the question of how would achieving this award make any difference to those living in poverty in the city? How could bidding for the title make a difference to a 10 year old living in poverty now who will be an adult in 2023, or to a young woman of 20 not in education, employment or training now and who will be 30 in 2023? We know that in general, and despite excellent programmes of education and engagement, our cultural riches do not always serve everyone equally, or make a difference to their lives. If our proposal for European Capital of Culture did not directly address this question and involve every community in the city, we should perhaps not bid.

4.5 The city council cannot do this by itself. It is an ideal opportunity for us to be more enterprising, for business and partners to be more civic and our public more engaged. A platform such as this offers an opportunity to embrace the civic enterprise agenda and move from the role of a provider to become an enabler to others in the city.

- 4.6 If we do bid, not winning is the most obvious single risk. However, Leeds is arguably not currently even the best city for culture in Yorkshire! Sheffield's Crucible Theatre holds the title of best regional theatre and Hull has just won the competition to be UK City of Culture in 2017 (the national equivalent of the European competition). Bradford's city pool provides a new opportunity for the city to revitalise its cultural profile, The Hepworth Wakefield recently welcomed its one millionth visitor in record time.
- 4.7 We have our own huge strengths of course but, outside of the city, Leeds itself does not really have an identifiable cultural profile outside of retail. It is notable that hardly any of our major arts institutions have a titular Leeds identity. Think of *Opera North*, *Northern Ballet*, *West Yorkshire Playhouse*, *Yorkshire Dance*, *Northern School of Contemporary Dance*. Currently, is Leeds much less than the sum of its remarkable parts? What would it cost financially and in terms of commitment from the sector to address these issues in the lead up to the bid submission? Could it be done in time?

## **5 Corporate Considerations**

### **5.1 Consultation and Engagement**

- 5.1.1 On 7<sup>th</sup> January 2014 a public open meeting was held at Leeds Town Hall. The meeting was attended by a diverse range of more than 300 stakeholders including the culture and arts sector, business community, colleagues across Leeds City Council and third sector organisations.
- 5.1.2 The event posed the question of whether or not the city should bid. Themes of value, geography, cost and ambition were all explored as part of the debate which was a starting point for consultation which, it is proposed, will continue over the next nine months and aim to include those not in the room, in order to ensure the widest possible consultation.
- 5.1.3 In addition to this the conversation was continued across social networks with the twitter hashtag #Leeds2023 trending on the day of the event making it one of the most talked about topics in the city. Over the days following the event a number of blogs have been published in overwhelming support of a bid, and continuing the conversation about what the bid would need to achieve and include to be considered successful. See [Appendix 1](#) for a selection of tweets from the conversation, most of which are in favour of a bid with others raising useful considerations.
- 5.1.4 During the week of the event the twitter conversation reached 455,548 accounts with a combined exposure of 2,507,540. The top ten contributors to the conversation were all Leeds based and have an interest in the culture and arts sector, but the conversation also included media, academics, the private sector, food, drink and hospitality businesses and the creative design sector. Without any previous contact, the current chair of the decision panel for European Capital of Culture even surprised us by getting involved in the Twitter discussion. A report is attached as Appendix 2.

5.1.5 The conversation across social media, and the resulting blog and media coverage has been captured: <http://storify.com/CultureAndSport/should-leeds-bid-for-european-capital-of-culture-2>. As the conversations online continue this link will be updated to track and review the feedback.

5.1.6 Over the next 9 months further consultation is planned across Leeds in a variety of settings. These include an online discussion forum, the Citizens panel and direct communication with the 42,000 Young people who have a Breeze card. Additionally, staff within Culture and Sport will support community and cultural organisations that want to find out more about the bid and what it could mean to them.

## **5.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

5.2.1 All issues of equality and diversity will be considered as part of the consultation process, which will comply with Leeds City Council policies.

## **5.3 Council policies and City Priorities**

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

5.3.2 The Best Plan includes the ambition to develop a cultural network. The Town Hall meeting also served to develop this priority and the service is currently planning a number of networking events in the next year to maintain the momentum.

## **5.4 Resources and value for money**

5.4.1 Funding will be required to support a bid and address current issues in the lead up to the submission of a bid, should the city decide to submit an entry for the title.

5.4.2 In addition to this resources will be needed in the form of a dedicated project team to manage and deliver the bid.

5.4.3 The Council has already been approached by a private sector organisation interested in financially supporting this work and by another public sector organisation offering additional resource. These conversations are on-going.

5.4.4 Clearly, should the Council decide to bid then the funding implications for the Council and the City will need to be fully outlined. It is therefore proposed that funding implications are looked at in detail over the next 9 to 12 months so that they can be reported back to Executive Board in early 2015.

5.4.5 In considering the financial implications, officers will look at the current financial pressures that the Council faces, balanced against the long-term ambition the city holds and the cultural and economic benefits that will accrue.

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

5.5.1 The report is subject to call in.

## **5.6 Risk Management**

5.6.1 Should a bid be considered appropriate a full risk register will be developed to consider all issues as outlined above.

## **6 Conclusions**

6.1 The bid for European Capital of Capital represents a significant opportunity for the city both in the journey to the bid and in the winning of the title. However the council alone cannot deliver a bid and there are real challenges ranging from funding to engagement of key stakeholders and inclusivity across the city.

6.2 There is a marked economic benefit should Leeds be chosen as the UK title holder in 2023, both in terms of European funding and private sector investment, but also as a catalyst for future investment in subsequent years. If programmed well, the social benefits could be huge working towards the city's long held ambition of narrowing the social divide and growing the profile of the city internationally leading to further cultural gains.

6.3 If the city is to bid it would need to make its intentions known by 2016, and will need to have the support of a wide range of stakeholders, not just the cultural sector. To this end a great deal of consultation and engagement across the city is needed over the next nine to twelve months to establish the appetite and support for making a bid.

## **7 Recommendations**

7.1 That Executive Board:

- i) Consider and debate the issues and opportunities raised in the report in consideration of whether or not to submit a bid for European Capital of Culture 2023.
- ii) Support continued discussions with a wide range of stakeholders over the next 9-12 months.
- iii) Request a more detailed report, submitted in early 2015, outlining the results of the additional consultation, research and other considerations made at that point.

## **8 Background documents <sup>1</sup>**

8.1 None

**9 Appendices** - Appendix 1 and 2 contains summary results of social media activity in respect of the discussions on 7<sup>th</sup> January.

<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.

## Appendix 1: Tweets from the consultation event 7<sup>th</sup> January

 **Alan Lane**  
@slunglowalan Follow

Almost all the examples from history used today have been from 19th century. We can afford to be less backward looking #Leeds2023

4:37 PM - 7 Jan 2014

← ↻ ★

 **Anthony Clavane**  
@LUFCPromised Follow

#Leeds2023 European City of Culture? Of course, no-brainer. @ClunyM @Lucinday @tomriordan Come on Leeds! [yorkshireeveningpost.co.uk/news/latest-ne...](http://yorkshireeveningpost.co.uk/news/latest-ne...)

8:39 AM - 8 Jan 2014

5 RETWEETS

← ↻ ★

 **Duke Studios**  
@Dukestudioleeds Follow

#Leeds2023 lots of pre pre work needs to be done & 2014 needs to be captured in a cohesive way-especially if theres a specific msg on bid

5:46 PM - 7 Jan 2014

← ↻ ★

 **Anamaria Wills**  
@Anamariacida Follow

Links to Europe are the keynote and a reward of this #leeds2023 - lets look outward! Incl our twinning partners!

4:41 PM - 7 Jan 2014

← ↻ ★

 **Julian Pearce**  
@jules\_pearce Follow

Unfortunately unable to make #Leeds2023 debate. To me, capital of culture isn't about celebrating culture, more regenerating troubled cities

4:35 PM - 7 Jan 2014

← ↻ ★

 **Steve Green**  
@stevegreen39 Follow

good luck for #leeds2023. As current chair of selection panel for ECOCs look at the criteria. They are very different to UK City of Culture.

3:04 PM - 7 Jan 2014

1 RETWEET

← ↻ ★

 **IdeasFestivalBristol**  
@Festivalofideas Follow

Some interesting points at [#leeds2023](#) on whether that city should bid to be European Capital of Culture in 2023 (Bristol looking at, too).

8:46 PM - 7 Jan 2014

2 RETWEETS Reply Retweet Favorite

 **leeds citizen**  
@leedscitizen Follow

Jolly sesh at leeds town hall for [#Leeds2023](#) [#leeds2023](#) Good panel. Nice tone. Cheers [@Lucinday](#) & [@ClunyM](#)

8:06 PM - 7 Jan 2014

2 RETWEETS 1 FAVORITE Reply Retweet Favorite

 **Daniel Ingram-Brown**  
@daningrambrown Follow

[@bighistoryleeds](#) that's ok! Was just looking through all the [#Leeds2023](#) tweets. Sounds like the meeting had a lot of energy!

5:51 PM - 7 Jan 2014

Reply Retweet Favorite

 **Little Spads**  
@BloodyNoraDJ Follow

Comment about access and parking. Many Leeds events don't consider those of us who have to catch the last bus at 10:30pm [#leeds2023](#)

4:16 PM - 7 Jan 2014

2 RETWEETS 2 FAVORITES Reply Retweet Favorite

 **Nick Lawrence**  
@Nick\_\_Lawrence Follow

[#leeds2023](#) has cultural diversity & history to achieve EU Capital of Culture but need to demo what makes us stand out as a leading Euro City

8:17 PM - 7 Jan 2014

Reply Retweet Favorite

 **Simon Wallis**  
@simonpzwallis Follow

Positive, passionate & ambitious thinking about the role of culture for the city & region at [#Leeds2023](#) something great begins here

6:21 PM - 7 Jan 2014

1 RETWEET Reply Retweet Favorite