

**Report of: Principal Officer, Culture and Sport**

**Report to: Outer North West Community Committee**

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## **Should Leeds Bid for European Capital of Culture 2023?**

### **Purpose of report**

1. To inform the Outer North West Community Committee members of the opportunity presented by making a Leeds bid for European Capital of Culture 2023; and
2. To seek your own views on this opportunity and your advice on engaging Leeds residents in the outer north west wards;and
3. If ultimately it is decided that Leeds will make a bid, to advise officers in Culture and Sport on how to engage residents in the outer north west in shaping their contribution to the Leeds bid.

### **Background Information**

4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.

7. 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.
8. For previous cities, bidding has helped to foster urban regeneration, change a city's image increase civic pride in the city and raise its visibility and profile on an international scale

## **Main issues**

9. 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.
10. 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.
11. We are seeking to test support for such a bid from the broadest range of communities, stakeholders and partners. If positive, we will seek help from communities to shape the Leeds bid.
12. This report outlines some of the considerations, challenges and opportunities associated with a bid for this title, and seeks a view from Outer North West Community Committee as to their support to continue the city-wide conversation.

## **Relevance to the Outer North West Community Committee**

### **Access**

13. Major arts and cultural venues in the city are based in Leeds city centre and residents in north west Leeds have to come into Leeds city centre to enjoy what is on offer unless there is an outreach programme or event put on specially in a local venue. Making sure that more events tour here, or that residents have good transport options, good information and affordable access to cultural events taking place in other parts of the city leading up to and during the European Cultural Capital Year is likely to be a priority of residents living in this part of Leeds.

### **Cultural vibrancy**

14. A successful Leeds bid would provide a global platform to festivities in the city in its European cultural capital year and in the five years leading up. There may be local

activities which could be re-energised or expanded by energy going into preparing a Leeds bid. Businesses such as the LBIA airport might use #Leeds 2023 as a focus for plans and developments to the benefit of local businesses. Established organisations and venues such as Yeadon Town Hall, Yeadon Amateur Operatic Society, Guiseley Theatre or Otley Courthouse as examples, will want to plan activities years in advance to celebrate a #Leeds 2023 year in the spotlight.

## **Health and Well being**

15. A Leeds bid would seek to increase rates of participation in culture and sport and encourage everyone to take part, whether as participants, as volunteers, employees, ambassadors and businesses or as audiences. This area is rich in sports activities – cricket, sailing, rugby for example. If social isolation or physical inactivity is a common issue for residents in the outer north west, how could development work toward a Leeds bid for European Capital of Culture support efforts by local people and organisations to combat loneliness, vulnerability, ill health and isolation? Which local organisations and networks should Culture and Sport engage with?

## **Celebrating neighbourhoods**

16. This part of Leeds has highly respected well known visitor attractions in its locality such as Golden Acre Park, Otley Chevin, Horsforth Museum, Yeadon Tarn to name a few. Could a Leeds bid help to uncover, profile and celebrate new, hidden and as yet undiscovered gems in outer north west Leeds?

## **Celebrating Diversity**

17. Could a Leeds bid escalate work to make facilities and amenities in this area DDA compliant, accessible and family friendly? Could a Leeds bid create opportunities for people in outer north west Leeds to make new friendships and enjoy activities they have never seen or heard or tasted before from all parts of Leeds, Yorkshire, Europe and the world? Could it heighten the profile of areas in North West Outer Leeds as places to live work and visit?

## **Corporate considerations**

- Over the next five years the city council is set to become 40% smaller.
- Leeds City Council has stated that a bid would not be resourced and delivered by the city council alone, but by a coalition of partners and on the condition that the bid has backing and support of the city as a whole. A Leeds bid would seek to involve and to be owned by every community in the city.
- Whilst the climate of austerity continues the city must balance this with its ambition to become a truly global city and the role of culture, sport and the arts in this ambition. A Leeds bid could provide a common framework to host the individual visions and ambitions of key city partners.

## **Engagement with the Outer North West Community**

Different approaches are being taken to obtain a range of views from across Leeds of residents, stakeholders, businesses and community groups. We have run simple surveys, held discussion forums and face to face discussions, but not as yet in this specific locality.

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

Consultation is proceeding with representatives of equalities groups and forums and communities.

[www.leeds.gov.uk/leeds2023poll](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/leeds2023poll) is the Leeds City Council microsite for information and consultation where residents can take part in a simple poll to state whether or not they are in favour.

[Leeds2023@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:Leeds2023@leeds.gov.uk) is our email address for inquiries until Spring 2015.

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

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

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

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.

The last UK title holder, 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.

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.

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.

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

A detailed report will be submitted to Executive Board in 2015, testing support for a bid from a broad range of communities and stakeholders.

The report will make a recommendation based on results of consultation and research.

## **Risk Management**

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.

## **Conclusion**

Public and stakeholder response has been largely positive so far.

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.

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.

## **Recommendations**

8. Members are invited to:

- consider and debate the contents of this report;
- assist in taking this consultation out further to communities.

## **Background information**

- **None**