



**Community
Committee**



Report of: Leeds City Council Culture & Sport

Report to: Outer North East Community Committee – Alwoodley, Harewood and Wetherby

Report authors: Leanne Buchan 0113 24 78195 and Sarah Priestley 0113 39 52098

Date: 12th September 2016

For Information

Leeds Culture Strategy (2017-2030) & Leeds' Bid to become European Capital of Culture 2023

Purpose of report

To provide members of the Outer North East Community Committee with an update on the approach taken to develop the new Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030 and the development of a bid for the title of European Capital of Culture 2023.

To seek support from the committee in engaging with local community groups and cultural providers to develop both the new Culture Strategy and the bid for European Capital of Culture 2023.

Background information

Leeds 2023

A year ago Executive Board approved the recommendation for Leeds to bid to become European Capital of Culture 2023, following an intensive year of city-wide consultation and debate.

Over the next two years the city of Leeds will work with partners and stakeholders to develop the bid document, focusing on what could happen in 2023 if we are successful in our bid.

The overall project aims and objectives are:

- To win Leeds the title of European Capital of Culture 2023
- To deliver a bid that is reflective and inclusive of the whole city

The Bid is overseen by the Independent Steering Group, which enjoys representation from the three main political parties and the Leader of the Council is the Deputy Chair. The bid

will be approved by the Independent Steering Group, and officially submitted by Leeds City Council. The submission of the first version is expected to be Autumn 2017.

Culture Strategy

In order to bid for, and ultimately win the title, the city is required to have a current Culture Strategy, from which the bid takes its steer. This strategy should also link closely to the city's wider developmental ambitions according to the criteria of the competition. The report to Executive Board therefore stated that the city council team would:

Work with the people of Leeds, stakeholders and partners to create a culture strategy for the period 2017-2030.

Over the next six to nine months the Culture and Sport team will continue to work with the people to 'co-produce' a new Culture Strategy, setting the underpinning values, defining and shaping our cultures, articulating the value of culture across a range of policy areas and supporting the future creators of the city's vibrant cultural offer.

The new Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030 will set the tone for the Leeds bid to become European Capital of Culture 2023, and provide the framework for its delivery should Leeds be successful in its bid.

Since the development of the previous Culture Strategy the landscape of cultural activities and local government has changed significantly.

Austerity measures have seen funding reductions to culture both from local government and from lottery distributors. However we have also seen more creative approaches from the cultural sector working with Public Health, Adult Social Care and Children's Services to build resilience across their businesses and find innovative new solutions to providing care and support to the people of Leeds.

The way people create and consume culture has also changed; the expectations of audiences are different, and increasingly informed by digital technologies. Barriers between art forms continue to break down and artists move more seamlessly between a portfolio of subsidised, commercial and individual work. Creativity is valued as a key skill across a wide range of careers, not just within the creative sector. Tastes also change, but reading for pleasure remains the most popular cultural activity.

The Commission for Local Government sought to redefine the relationship between the local authority and the people of Leeds, moving towards enabling people to not only have a stronger voice in how services are created and delivered, but in some cases to take on the delivery of services and management of assets. Culture remains one of the best examples of a city activity delivered through an enormous range of individuals and groups at vastly different scales.

The scale and changing context for culture and increasing emphasis on working with stakeholders and communities has led to an innovative approach to the development of a city-wide cultural strategy.

Main Issues

Leeds 2023

- What is European Capital of Culture?

The European Capital of Culture is a prestigious competition run since 1985 to celebrate the cultural offer of cities within Europe. Two cities are chosen each year from two eligible countries. The eligible countries are rotated through European countries, which means there are only 5 times in the next 100 years that the UK can hold a European Capital of Culture year; 2023 is the first of these. The title acts as a spotlight, highlighting and raising the profile of the city and its culture.

UK City of Culture is a different designation given to a city in the United Kingdom. It is administered by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Hull will be the 2017 UK City of Culture.

- Why are we bidding?

The European Capital of Culture competition offers an opportunity to reposition Leeds in Europe and raise our profile internationally; address issues; overcome challenges, and generate a substantial amount of investment in culture, arts, education and infrastructure.

Leeds' European capital of culture bid will galvanise residents and communities whilst nurturing the creative talent of future generations and industries. The bid offers the opportunity to deepen the place that culture and the arts has in the heart and makeup of the city, embedding it firmly into Leeds' DNA. Bidding and winning will be a transformative experience making a significant contribution to the future course of Leeds.

Culture Strategy

Considering the above challenges and opportunities, this new approach will see the people of Leeds co-produce the strategy. This will be achieved initially via an online blog capturing views, comments and opinion. An initial six month period of consultation starting with representatives from a broad spectrum of the culture sector, including major flagship organisations, community organisations, individual artists and performers, and independently funded cultural businesses, took place in 2015. The insight gathered from this period was used to launch the blogs which suggests a new approach seeking to broaden the definition of 'culture' to include but not be limited to the arts, in the minds of audiences and funders alike.

The first three blogs are attached as Appendix 1 to give a sense of the early work and approach to date. The initial style and tone of the blogs is intentionally informal and discursive in order to open the debate up to a wide range of views. We anticipate a range of individuals from across the city will contribute their own thoughts in the coming weeks and months. There are currently 5 blogs on the site.

Of course not everyone is able to take part in an online debate and so the work will be supported through a range of off-line events, focus groups, meetings, workshops and conversations to ensure the broadest range of views are taken into account. A number of platforms will be used to open up the conversation further including, but not limited to, Leeds City Council Community Chairs Forum; the Sustainable Economy and Culture Partnership Board; the Leeds 2023 Independent Steering and Advisory Groups; targeted focus groups; one to one conversations with interested individuals; social media conversation and debate; and a series of targeted events and campaigns to raise the profile of the approach and the opportunity for involvement. The equalities section of this report notes further scope of consultation.

Crucially, at this stage no decisions have been taken regarding the aims, objectives, values and core focus of the strategy. The team are not consulting on the city council's ideas and suggestions for a Culture Strategy. Instead, taking its leave from the commission and the

approach to the 2023 consultation, the team are seeking a genuine co-authored approach to the development of ideas and ultimately the services and delivery mechanism that will be created as a result. It will then sit as a strategy for the City, not just for the city council. Following the initial conversations that have taken place since the launch of the blog the Culture Strategy may also seek to reposition the value of culture in the city. Often viewed as the ‘nice to have’ or added to conversations about the regeneration of areas towards the end of the project, culture can have transformational effects across a range of policy areas from housing, planning and urban regeneration to health and wellbeing, adult social care, children’s services and education.

The new Culture Strategy for Leeds may not directly create a raft of new cultural policies, but instead will seek to work with policy makers from across these areas. It will investigate how, by placing culture at the start and heart of policy making, how a range of policies could be adapted to enable culture to lead and help to overcome challenges. However, taking the lead from the culture strategy, organisations in the city might then propose for instance a strategy for dance, or an approach to public art which could be living documents, developing and changing through the years.

The initial conversations have sometimes revealed a lack of understanding between different aspects of life in the city which has sometimes led to division where there could be unity. One current example of the proposed values of the new strategy is therefore ‘tolerance.’ The new Culture Strategy could reset our approaches, valuing all cultures equally from local community activities to independent producers and the flagship organisations.

Over the last five years there has been surge in new events, clubs, societies and gatherings. The people who create these happenings are makers of the city’s culture, just as those who make the city’s world class arts and performance offer are also makers of the cultures that define us. These activities are not mutually exclusive, and all their stories need to be told, and supported as part of the new Culture Strategy for Leeds, and indeed the city’s bid for European Capital of Culture 2023.

Conclusion

Leeds 2023

Benefits for Leeds should we win

- Increased economic benefit and return on investment from the increase of tourism before, during and after the host year.
- Sustainable economic growth and job creation across the creative and cultural industries which is already the fastest growing sector of the economy.
- Raising the international and national profile of Leeds, placing it firmly in the league of major cultural players.
- Future investments for the arts, across large and small organisations enabling the city to build a sustainable future for its cultural offer.
- Develop important links to other European cities and realise future funding from major EU commissions.

Benefits if we bid but don’t win

- The actual process of bidding, irrespective of outcome, is recognised as having significant benefits. There are examples of other cities who have bid and lost and gone on to grow their cultural industries and reputation, most notably Newcastle

Gateshead which went on to spearhead the Culture 10 Programme, that realised the full potential of its new capital assets: The Sage, Angel of the North and the Baltic.

- The bid itself is transformative; the sheer process of asking ‘should we bid’ has already seen a significant increase in self-confidence in the cultural sector with many players responding “We are already a Cultural capital”. This is a refreshing new degree of assertion. Cultural organisations are already forming new strategic alliances and looking at their place on the wider stage in new ways.
- Other sectors, for example transport, are seizing the bid as an opportunity to provide shape and momentum to progress their own agendas.

Why Leeds will win

- The bid will show evidence of engagement with communities and support for the bid from the business community.
- The city will convince the judging panel that it is willing to take risks both artistically and in exploring the issues of modern society.
- One of the key elements of the competition is that cities must collaborate with other European and international cities to learn from each other and share ideas and challenges. We will demonstrate the city’s relationship with other parts of Europe.
- We will build confidence in the city to deliver a strong bid for Leeds to become European Capital of Culture, locally and regionally.
- We will increase awareness of Leeds as a significant destination for culture, nationally and internationally. We will steadily increase the city’s international profile and partnerships.
- Leeds is a city built upon diversity and its people originate from many parts of the world. Our diversity will be an important part of the bid and has great significance for the turbulent times Europe is facing.
- The whole city is united in its support for the bid which will in turn engage all people in the city, young, old, inner city, suburban, in a welcoming and accessible program that celebrates Leeds diversity and richness whilst not shying away from examining the challenges we face.

Culture Strategy

Given the changes to the landscape of both the cultural sector and local government, and the city’s decision to bid for European Capital of Culture, a new approach is needed to the development of a new Culture Strategy for Leeds, to cover the period 2017-2030.

There is significant appetite and support from both the culture sector and other stakeholders approached to date for a co-produced methodology, working with the people of Leeds to develop the new Culture Strategy, setting the underpinning values, creating a new definition of our cultures, articulating the value of culture across a range of policy areas and supporting the future makers of the city’s vibrant cultural offer, as the city embarks on its bid to become European Capital of Culture 2023.

Recommendations

Outer North East Community Committee is requested to:

- consider and debate the contents of this report;
- comment on the approach to developing the new Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030;

- suggest other groups, networks, organisations and individuals who could contribute to the new Culture Strategy and the bid for European Capital of Culture 2023.

Appendix 1 - Additional information on Leeds Capital of Culture Bid

Competitors in the field

Leeds was the first of the UK cities to declare its intention to bid for European Capital of Culture. We were followed by Dundee, East Kent, Milton Keynes and now Bristol. Cardiff and Nottingham have recently expressed an interest. The definitive list will only be known in December 2016 when DCMS makes the formal call-out.

Key Dates

1985 – The first city of culture was Athens (followed by Florence in 86 and Amsterdam in 88).

1990 – Glasgow holds the title for the year, the first British City to do so.

2008 – Liverpool becomes the first English city to hold the title.

2016 – Current European Capitals of Culture are Wroclaw in Poland and Donostia, San Sebastian in Spain.

2023 – The next year a city from the UK can hold the title, alongside a city in Hungary.

Previous UK Cities

- Liverpool

The last UK title holder, Liverpool, benefitted enormously from hosting the 2008 European Capital of Culture. The city saw:

9.7 million visitors (a 34% increase);

£753.8 million boost to the economy;

10% rise each year in arts audiences;

5.5 million visitors at the seven largest attractions;

85% of residents said the city was a better place to live than before; and massive amounts of positive media coverage that helped change perceptions.

- Glasgow

30,000 people now worked in the city's cultural and creative industries, one of the largest concentrations of the creative economy outside London.

The number of live performances - whether music, theatre or dance - had risen by 82% since 1992

1990 truly changed the image of Glasgow – it was a milestone event, helping both to transform the city's reputation in the UK and abroad, and to restore self-confidence and pride

Glasgow City Council saw 1990 as part of a strategic investment programme, which would ensure the long-term future of the cultural sector and contribute greatly to economic and social regeneration.

The title European Capital of Culture is awarded to two European cities each year that are best able to demonstrate their cultural richness and diversity. So competing to be European Capital of Culture is not just about what Leeds is, but what Leeds can become and which visions it can achieve.