



**LEEDS 2023** YEAR OF CULTURE

# BUSINESS PLAN

APRIL 22 – MARCH 24

# We should be loud and proud

Gabby Logan, Chair of LEEDS 2023 and Kully Thiarai, CEO and Creative Director of LEEDS 2023

Leeds is a very special place. Its history, the people and the buildings, are all testament to a city with a rich heritage that has evolved through the many generations of talented people who all call it 'home'. We can rightly boast a cultural and artistic pedigree to rival any global city. So, it's no surprise that a growing list of supporters and partners are backing LEEDS 2023 to deliver an amazing and transformational year of culture that celebrates the city's cultural life, embracing arts, sports, food and people's everyday creativity.

Leeds has always displayed a quiet confidence about its past, but LEEDS 2023 is also about the here and now, and the future. Living, relaxing, studying or working in Leeds, we all know what makes this Yorkshire city so unique. From January 2023 for 365 days we will be Letting Culture Loose so, finally, the rest of the world can catch up and join us for this

cultural celebration. But it's not just about appealing to those outside of the LS postcodes, LEEDS 2023 will be better, bolder and brighter when we harness the talents of those who have a real sense of ownership and pride of place for their home city. We urge everyone to get involved, make their voices heard, and be a part of this lasting cultural legacy.

2021 saw the city begin to emerge from the grip of Covid-19, and that recovery is still very much a work in progress. LEEDS 2023 will play a vital role in helping Leeds to regain its social and cultural mojo, bringing people back together and encouraging audiences to immerse themselves in performance, spectacle and art as part of the mental and spiritual healing process. Our sports clubs and stadiums are, once again, reverberating with the chants of fans all wanting to reconnect and embrace live sporting fixtures. Every event, occasion or gathering is offering



Gabby Logan (Chair of LEEDS 2023) and Kully Thiarai (CEO and Artistic Director of Leeds Culture Trust)  
Photography Ant Robling

the opportunity to share extraordinary experiences with our friends and loved ones and helping to reanimate our city.

It's this powerful mix of culture and sport that really makes life worth living and stops us being robots going through life's motions. If we don't have colour, vibrancy, choices and challenges then we become two dimensional entities devoid of passion and ambition.

Importantly, LEEDS 2023 will also be a driving force in Leeds's economic recovery with forecasts predicting the creation of an extra 2,300 jobs in the regional creative industries, an additional £114m coming into the visitor economy and an overall 8:1 return on investment for every pound we spend.



Recent years have been unimaginably challenging for us all and we are now facing a future that perhaps is even more uncertain with geopolitical events unfolding across Europe. Despite this, there is still huge optimism and opportunity threaded throughout Leeds Culture Trust's Business Plan. We will continue to review and finesse our objectives to capitalise on the hard work and investment that has already taken place to maximise the potential throughout the year until the final curtain comes down on LEEDS 2023's programme in December 2023.

LEEDS 2023 is a once in a lifetime opportunity for the city to really make its mark and leave a legacy far beyond what will be achieved and showcased in 2023. By working together and combining our strengths we can keep our ambitions burning brightly.

We have achieved a huge amount already and we're delivering on a dream that many thought was impossible. That's why it is as important today as it was at the start of this journey to embrace every role within LEEDS 2023; whether that's an individual

artist or supporter, an enthusiastic community hub getting involved, or the city collectively coming together.

We should be loud and proud, and not afraid to shout out and showcase our arts, culture and sporting pedigree. With that level of confidence will come even more riches that will spill out beyond the city and help to establish West Yorkshire on the global cultural map.

We can't and shouldn't underestimate the power of dreaming; dream the impossible and suddenly we have Channel 4 opening its headquarters in the heart of Leeds city centre, or we're celebrating the British Library of the North coming to Temple Works. And dreams come in all shapes and sizes. It could equally include Samuel L. Jackson fans catching a glimpse of their hero in Leeds or in Halifax's Piece Hall as he films the latest instalment of the Marvel movie franchise. Who knows what might be around the next corner for our great city and region?

We can't do this without you, so join us, and let's find out together.



# About

Hang Linton  
performing at the  
Launchpad Festival  
2022, supported by  
LEEDS 2023  
Photography  
Sarah Oglesby



There's extraordinary stuff in this city, some things we don't even realise are here, so for one whole year we're throwing open the doors and we're making ourselves known.

## **We're Letting Culture Loose.**

We're a city that's as much about food, as it is about dance, as much about art as it is about sport. We're a place where people turn old into new, disused into reused, broken into ground-breaking.

We've spent long enough being quiet about it, so now's the time to shout about culture, perform it, make it and imagine it every day, in every part of the city.

**When this place speaks, it has a proper story to tell.**

# LEEDS 2023

## Diversity, inclusivity and accessibility

We know culture is everywhere in our city and it has the power to change lives. We also know that the arts, culture and creativity can mean different things to different people and that not everyone feels they can access the creative opportunities they might want to. We want to help change that. We are committed to working alongside our communities and help remove barriers so we can all participate in celebrating our city's extraordinary creativity, in all its forms.

## Sustainability

LEEDS 2023 is committed to delivering a landmark year of arts and cultural events in Leeds that provides benefits to local communities and economies, with a focus on minimising the negative impact on the environment through innovative and creative solutions. Leeds City Council is committed to making Leeds a carbon neutral city by 2030 and LEEDS 2023 will support this by ensuring high standards of sustainability policy and action. Sustainability is a key aspect of our vision and legacy and will be central to our organisation, day to day operations and the artistic programme for the year of culture. We will place a focus on raising awareness of environmental issues and solutions. Aiming to inspire and empower the people and businesses of Leeds to assume their role in ensuring Leeds is a healthy, thriving city.

## Background + Governance

Our journey began in 2015 when the city originally decided to bid to be European Capital of Culture in 2023. After a lot of hard work across the city, hopes were dashed at the last minute when UK cities were no longer eligible to compete, following the country's vote to leave the EU. But that wasn't going to stop us. With cross-party support, the backing of more than 20 local businesses and a public poll in the Yorkshire Evening Post, the city collectively said, "Let's do it anyway!" Leeds City Council retained its financial commitment to LEEDS 2023 and established Leeds Culture Trust (LCT) as a charity in 2019 with an independent Board of Trustees chaired by Ruth Pitt. Kully Thiarai was recruited as LCT's Chief Executive and Creative Director, beginning her role in January 2020. In January 2022, Gabby Logan MBE took up post as the new Chair of LEEDS 2023.



Photography Danny North

**Our Vision** – A thriving Leeds where creativity fuels opportunities for everyone.

**Our Mission** – To deliver a transformational year of creative experiences connecting and benefitting people now and into the future.

**Our Values** –

**We're compassionate:** we've a big heart and we look out for each other; we believe we're stronger together.

**We're bold:** we're not afraid of using our spirit, imagination and creativity to make a difference.

**We're confident:** we're Leeds! We've got this!

**We're inventive:** there's no rule book; we'll seek out fresh ideas and new ways of doing things



# Audiences/ Participants/ Stakeholders

At the heart of LEEDS 2023 are the city's residents. We have an ambition to engage with at least 75% of households across all 33 wards in the city. To do so, we are working in partnership with a whole range of organisations that include Leeds City Council, schools, further and higher education institutes, as well as third sector organisations.

We have a diverse portfolio of funding stakeholders that span the public, private and philanthropic sectors. Our main funder is Leeds City Council and, to date, we have secured additional funding from Arts Council England, Leeds Community Foundation, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and Esmée Fairburn Foundation. We have also secured private sector sponsorship from businesses in the city. Regional and National Government remain a focus of engagement as we seek funding opportunities through the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and DCMS.

Finally, LEEDS 2023 would not be possible without the active involvement of the artists, creative practitioners, cultural organisations and sporting partners of the city. We remain internationalist in our approach, developing relationships with national and international artists, companies and organisations as well as Embassies from across the world.



Community sharing event for the Meanwood Road Project, a commission through My World My City My Neighbourhood  
Photography Tom Charlesworth

# Strategic Aims and Objectives

## To unlock opportunities for everyone to find enjoyment and live their best life through participating in creative activity

- Enhance the cultural education of children in the city
- Increase opportunities for people of all ages to access new skills and work
- Contribute to improving the health and wellbeing of our citizens
- Boost digital skills and increase the tools for communities to learn and develop their creative talent

## To boost engagement in culture particularly among people who face barriers because of their experience or circumstances

- Boost the visibility, representation and participation of our diverse communities through the LEEDS 2023 creative programme
- Improve the social connections between our communities
- Increase public engagement with the city's cultural heritage, green spaces, parks and nature
- Increase audiences to cultural activity, including from those facing barriers

## To lead and showcase cultural transformation

- Amplify and bring international visibility to the work of existing artists and our exceptional artistic and cultural communities
- Produce and curate original work, and attract partnerships, of a national and international significance to Leeds and the region
- Build capacity and grow creative talent in Leeds and the wider region
- Increase knowledge and understanding of the climate crisis and work sustainably to support Leeds' ambition to be net zero by 2030



LEEDS 2023 Roadshow  
Photography Ant Robling





**To play an active role in the city and region's social, economic and cultural recovery from the pandemic**

- Boost Leeds' reputation and profile as a cultural destination
- Increase employment opportunities in the cultural industries and support the retention of our creative talent within the city and region
- Generate an economic boost to the city and wider region including increased tourism and visitor spend
- Improve the understanding and influence of culture's role in transforming the city and wider region and improving people's lives

The Promise of a Garden by the Performance Ensemble, supported by LEEDS 2023  
Photography Zoe Martin

**To create a diverse, inclusive and values driven organisation that can effectively deliver LEEDS 2023 and its legacy**

- Raise and manage effectively the funds required to deliver a 12 month programme of creative activity that includes a creative education programme and skills/capacity building programme
- Design an operating model that is effective and efficient and embeds digital across the operations, artistic programme and communications
- Develop effective marketing and communications that support our fundraising and stakeholder engagement, as well as build profile and audiences
- Develop a robust research and evaluation framework that measures impact and reach
- Recruit and develop staff with the right skills, expertise and values to deliver LEEDS 2023



# KPIs

- Increased participation\* in culture from people who face barriers by at least 10% (barriers of experience or circumstances)
- 75% of households in Leeds participate\* physically or digitally in at least one event in 2023 (either as an audience member, participant or volunteer)
- Three out of four people are proud to live in Leeds
- Double the Council's investment of £10.7m to deliver LEEDS 2023
- 10% increase in visitor numbers to Leeds during 2023 (usual year on year 4% increase plus additional 6%)

As a result of which:

- At least £100 million extra direct and indirect revenue to Leeds visitor economy in 2023
- At least 1,000 additional FTE jobs (direct and indirect) in Leeds visitor economy in 2023

- At least 1.5 million additional visitors to Leeds and West Yorkshire

As a result of which:

- At least £40 million extra direct/indirect economic impact for the visitor economy of rest of West Yorkshire
- At least 2,000 extra jobs in the creative industries as a result of LEEDS 2023
- Deliver a volunteering programme with 1000 participants

\*participation defined as any kind of engagement physically or digitally with the activity or events of LEEDS 2023 programme



Jazz North at Leeds Jazz Festival, supported by LEEDS 2023  
Photography Ellie Slorick

# The Programme

**The vehicle through which we will deliver our aims and objectives**

12 signature events and many other creative experiences will happen all over our city. From dance to design, art to architecture, poetry to pop, sculpture to sport, grassroots community theatre to performances on our world-class stages, there will be something for everyone.

We're working with artists based locally, nationally and internationally and local communities to create a celebration that's for Leeds, with Leeds and inspired by Leeds. LEEDS 2023 will be an explosion of colour, noise and brilliance that will show the world in our city and our city to the world.

We will work in three ways:  
**Produce, Partner, Promote**



# Produce

The 'Produce' programme is an opportunity for LEEDS 2023 to lead by example. It's about where we can fill a gap, influence and make long term change and help the city try new things. Most importantly, it's about doing things we haven't done in Leeds before. The programme is produced in house by the LEEDS 2023 Creative Team, in collaboration with hundreds of artists, organisations and communities.

12 signature projects will act as grounding points throughout the year and take place in locations throughout the city. Each project brings to life the different programming themes through ambitious and surprising creative commissions, accompanied by:

**Co Creation** – where all 33 wards and the many incredible and diverse communities of Leeds can be active contributors to the year. From mass participation moments to employing 33 community leaders as Neighbourhood Hosts.

**Creative Learning** – with opportunities for every school in the city to take part in a radical and unique programme, including collaborations with the Leeds Cultural Education Partnership.

**Children & Young People** – who will take the lead in a series of projects created and led by the next generation.

**Skills and capacity building** – supporting the creative industries and people across Leeds and West Yorkshire to learn new skills, change, adapt and grow the cultural ecology.

We are working with local, national and international artists to realise each of the 12 signature projects which range from a magical opening event celebrating all that we love about Leeds, to surprising interventions bringing communities closer to nature, take overs led by Children & Young People as well as projects pushing the boundaries of the relationship between creativity, science and engineering.

In order to ensure the programme is delivering to our aims and ambitions and is feasible within the financial and operating parameters, each project undergoes a rigorous feasibility process. This looks at the creative idea, the audience reach and impact, deliverability

implications, sustainability measures, access and legal and finance requirements. A green lighting process is in place through which signature projects are passed, and meetings are set on a rolling basis to discuss projects as they complete feasibility and fundraising targets are met.

Photography Ant Robling



## Partner

The 'Partner' programme asks the cultural organisations of the city 'What can we do together, using LEEDS 2023 as a catalyst, that we haven't been able to do in Leeds before?' Working in partnership with local, national and international partners to make incredible things happen in the city, and show off the wealth of cultural infrastructure Leeds really has.

The programme seeks to increase the capacity of the city to collaborate, champion unique and surprising partnerships and increase Leeds's international profile. We will be both hyper-local and internationalist in our approach. Currently we are working in partnership with over 50 local organisations, 10 national organisations and in 22 international countries / territories.

LEEDS 2023 international programme is centred on our ambitions to connect and work with the diaspora communities of the city. 170 plus languages are spoken across Leeds, and we will create opportunities for artists in Leeds to come together with artists from around the world and explore diasporic stories and connections with our city. Celebrating the world in our city and our city in the world.



Street Food at Leeds West Indian Carnival  
Photography Maria Spadafora

## Promote

The Promote programme is where LEEDS 2023 can be inclusive and welcome a broad range of projects to our programme. This will largely be through our digital platforms and marketing activity. Wherever possible, and when a project speaks to the aims and objectives of LEEDS 2023, we will aim to include it in our Promote programme. As part of this, we will offer a standardised package of marketing support. This will be in exchange for brand association, presence on our core marketing channels and participation in evaluation surveys. Promote projects may be identified through the Partner programme, but we will also have a 'Get Involved' route live on the website from Summer 2022, enabling us to respond to future requests. Promote will be a way for LEEDS 2023 to capture and list cultural activity across West Yorkshire, aggregating this into our concentrated programme of activity. We are currently reviewing what additional and bespoke support LEEDS 2023 may be able to offer Promote projects. This will likely be on a case-by-case basis, for example, non-cash support, engaging with volunteer programme etc.



Behind the scenes at filming of The Magician, a short film by Slung Low with Leeds Peoples Theatre  
Photography Slung Low

## Community Engagement, Creative Learning and Volunteering Programmes

A core part of our approach is to maximise engagement and participation through a variety of approaches. These include a creative learning programme with education providers, skills, capacity building and talent development through our programme activity and a volunteering programme, which aims to attract 1000 people, to help us deliver our Year of Culture in a range of roles.

We will form a community of people through volunteering who advocate for LEEDS 2023 and our mission, both through their volunteer roles and in the wider community. We will focus on creating exciting and high-quality opportunities that are accessible to everyone who wants to take part. Through our volunteer roles and projects, we will maximise opportunities for gaining skills, knowledge and confidence, as well as supporting wellbeing and encouraging people to make new connections.

Our ambition is that our community engagement, creative learning and volunteering programmes are representative of the communities of Leeds, and drawn from all parts of the city, through inclusive recruitment practices and removing barriers to participation.

LEEDS 2023 will act as catalyst to improve and increase access to a diverse range of cultural activities and opportunities across the city, supporting and growing existing best practice and exploring new models of engagement where necessary.



# Creating a Sustainable Legacy

## Passing the Baton On

LEEDS 2023 is committed to delivering a sustainable legacy that lives on after Leeds Culture Trust winds up in 2024. We will be working with the Council and with our partners in the city to share our insight, learning and relationships that can support culture to play a continuing role in the social and economic development of the city. We will also support partners across the region such as Kirklees Year of Music in 2023, Calderdale and Wakefield 2024 and Bradford City of Culture 2025.

### Physical Legacy

While we will not lead on capital building projects, we will have a stake in cultural building developments and artworks in the public realm that will be realised after 2023:

#### Smeaton 300

The redevelopment of Fearn's Island in Leeds Dock will celebrate the incredible story of the Leeds-born, founder of civil engineering, John Smeaton; this will be a partnership between Leeds City Council, Foxglove, Canals and Rivers Trust and Gardiner and Theobald.

#### The National Poetry Centre

A new national home for poetry in the UK with the Poet Laureate Simon Armitage as patron – a regional, national and international centre evolved through a partnership between LEEDS 2023, Leeds City Council and The University of Leeds.

#### British Library North at Temple Works

In partnership with the British Library we will deliver a series of exciting and ambitious projects designed to bring the Temple area alive and build relationships with neighbouring communities.

#### David Oluwale Memorial Sculpture

The creation of a new public sculpture by an internationally renowned artist in Leeds' new City Park as a memorial to David Oluwale.

#### City Square

A temporary major art commission for the 2023 year, which will help to create a brand new welcome to the city.

Young People viewing Nature At Night by The Lantern Company and Roma Yagnik, commissioned by the British Library for Light Night Leeds 2021  
Photography Hannah Poklad



## A skilled workforce

Our legacy will also be delivered through skills development and capacity building for individuals and organisations, centred on our creative skills and volunteering programmes. This work will build links within and across communities and develop a committed local workforce and enhanced infrastructure capable of supporting a range of events in the culture, sports and other sectors, as well as retain talent in the city and region. Through job creation we will also unlock opportunities for people to build a career in the city and maximise the potential of the cultural and creative industries in the city and region.

## Strengthened networks

We will create new partnerships with the business sector and national and international partners that can be passed to others in the city enabling ongoing collaboration and support. This in turn will help to strengthen the cultural and creative sectors in the city.

## Boost the profile of the city

Through LEEDS 2023 we will shift perceptions of Leeds and enhance its reputation as a cultural destination to attract more businesses to invest and more tourists to visit to drive up the visitor economy, working with Visit Leeds and other tourism partners.

## Increased wellbeing

Through our activity we hope to provide an increased sense of pride and belonging in the city and boost people's sense of well-being. With our commitment to delivering a green year of culture we also aim to support Leeds' ambition to reduce its carbon footprint providing a cleaner and greener city in which to live.



For further information go to  
[www.leeds2023.co.uk](http://www.leeds2023.co.uk)

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YEAR OF  
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