

Report to the Active and Cohesive Overview and Scrutiny Committee

4 October 2017

UK City of Culture



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 A briefing report on the actions the Borough Council is taking to support the Stoke-on-Trent City Council bid to be nominated as the UK City of Culture 2021.

2. Background

- 2.1 In September 2016 Cabinet agreed to support the Stoke-on-Trent City Council Bid for the UK City of Culture 2021 title as a key partner through appropriate Borough Council Elected Member and officer involvement.
- 2.2 On 14th July 2017 Stoke-on-Trent was one of five cities short-listed along with Coventry, Paisley, Sunderland and Swansea.
- 2.3 The final bid documentation was submitted electronically in early September 2017 with hard copies to follow by 3rd October 2017. Early October gives the opportunity for verbal clarification before a visit to Stoke-on Trent from the Judging Panel on 17th October 2017. The panel consists of Phil Redmond (TV producer and screen writer), Marcus Fairs (architectural journalist), Lord Rowe Beddoe and Martyn Henderson (DCMS).
- 2.4 Now that the technical requirements of the submission have been completed the current phase of work is focussing on Programme Development, Budget and Funding, Legacy or long term impact, as well as preparation of an itinerary for the Judging Panel's forthcoming visit.

2.5 Initially fifteen projects will be put forward that tell the story of Stoke-on-Trent. These need to be of sufficient scale and ambition, have a lasting impact, attract a sizeable audience, be of importance to the cultural sector and never before seen.

2.6 In making a city of culture themes and content that “speak with a Stoke voice” are being developed in a way that cultural product from Stoke can go global.

3. Questions to be Addressed

3.1 *What support is the Borough Council providing to support the City of Culture Bid?*

4. Borough Council support

4.1 We will urge local people to attend events through joint promotions and talk about it, go to activities and speak positively about them. We will encourage people to think big and dream hard about how ‘Together we make the City’ (acknowledging the strong inter-relationships between the Borough and the City from an economic, social and environmental perspective). At a practical level officers will continue to support the bid by responding promptly to the various requests for information and support. In addition we will seek to align planned cultural activities within the Borough with the aims and objectives of the City of Culture bid / programme and further information in this regard is set out in the section below.

5. Supporting Information

5.1 The Philip Astley programme for 2018 (consisting of Homecoming, the Heritage Lottery funded Philip Astley Project, and the New Vic Circus Past, Present and Future, which all link to the national Circus250 (a UK wide celebration of 250 years of the circus in 2018) is making a great contribution to City of Culture 2021. In relation to these events in particular the Borough is being recognised for the delivery of a strong cultural programme. Of particular note is the return of internationally acclaimed No Fit State Circus, which will be resident in the Borough from 2nd February 2018 to the end of April to develop and perform their new show “Lexicon” as well as hosting the National Circus School and conference.

5.2 These events are further enhanced by working with Appetite – a Creative People and Places programme based in Stoke on Trent, local artists Entrepreneurs, CANS (Creative Arts North Staffs) and Newcastle BID – to create more large scale artworks and in particular improvements to the appearance of the town centre subways.

5.3 Council Officers also supported the City Council and Cheshire East Council with the “Great Places” bid, which although unsuccessful, has contributed

content to the youth programme in the City of Culture bid and is being used for other funding bids, for example by providing material for the YMCA's recent application to Dream Fund. The whole process has been extremely useful especially in strengthening links with the City and Cheshire East.

- 5.4 The Borough Council is a member of the Stoke on Trent and Newcastle Cultural Education Partnership and have worked hard to secure Newcastle a part in this. Meetings are attended by Regeneration Officers and staff from The Brampton Museum, with a particular focus on providing quality information, advice and guidance on careers and employment in the arts, culture and heritage sectors.
- 5.5 £3.2m has already been committed to the Borough since we obtained HLF Priority Development Area Status in 2013 and this level of investment is supporting the destination ambitions of City of Culture 2021.
- 5.6 Next steps are to explore how we can link the Newcastle business community into City of Culture 2021, in particular using the Business Boost annual competition, Newcastle BID, business Connects meetings held at King Street Studios and also, in refreshing the Economic Development Strategy to place inclusive growth and the cultural economy at the heart of the strategy.
- 5.7 The Borough is well represented at the Stoke-on-Trent City of Culture 2021 Cultural Forum, taking an active role in bid development by informing the development of content and specific work streams as required by the strategic group as well as developing cultural capacity and cultural connections through partnership.

6. Invited Partners/Stakeholders/Residents

- 6.1 None

7. Constraints

- 7.1 None

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 Continue to support the bid and follow progress.

9. Relevant Portfolio Holder(s)

- 9.1 Amelia Rout, Leisure and Culture
- 9.2 John Williams, Town Centres, Property and Business

10. Local Ward Member (if applicable)

- 10.1 Not applicable

11. Background Materials

11.1 None

12. Appendices

12.1 None