

Meeting:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Date:	5 July 2021
	Cabinet		14 July 2021
Subject:	Cultural Strategy Six Monthly Update		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
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Appendices:	A. Cultural Strategy Progress Report Jan - June 2021		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide an update on progress made against the Cultural Strategy for the period Jan 2021 to June 2021
- 1.2 To inform Cabinet of the intention to submit expressions of interest to the Cultural Development Fund and the UK City of Culture 2025.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the information contained in the report and make any recommendations to the Cabinet.

2.2 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that:

- (1) the report is accepted and progress against the objectives of the Cultural Strategy noted.
- (2) the city council submits a bid to the Cultural Investment Fund.
- (3) should the eligibility criteria be met, the City Council submits an expression of interest to the Arts Council England Cultural Development Fund round 2 and submit a full bid should the City Council expression of interest be successful.
- (4) authority be delegated to the Head of Culture, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and Council Solicitor, to
 - a. submit bids to the Cultural Investment Fund and Arts Council England Cultural Development Fund round 2

- b. enter into any grant agreement required by the grant providers
 - c. enter into any necessary agreements with the cultural partners referred to in paragraph 3.3. to facilitate the submission of the applications for funding.
- (5) that an expression of interest for Gloucester being UK City of Culture 2025 be submitted by Gloucester Culture Trust is fully endorsed and supported.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

3.1 Context - The period between January and July 2021 has continued to deliver challenges to Gloucester's cultural sector owing to the ongoing covid-19 pandemic. National lockdown was in place until end March, then England began to unlock in steps according to government directions. This meant that all non-essential retail including cultural venues; cinema, theatres, live music venues, museums and galleries had to remain closed until mid-May. Social distancing remained in place, limiting the capacity of crowds and attendance at outdoor events and stadia. Limited cultural and sporting activity was able to take place during this period. Some planned activity began at Step 3 and it is anticipated further activity will resume at Step 4 – including the long-awaited return of festivals and indoor live events. Cultural Recovery Funds were provided by government and a number of the city's cultural organisations including the city council were successful in applying for funds to see them through this challenging period of Jan – June. A detailed report of the wider activity during this period is shown in Appendix A.

3.2 Cultural Investment Funds

A series of new investment funds were announced by Arts Council England (ACE) and Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in May. The Cultural Investment Fund comprises of 3 schemes – a Museum Estate and Development fund (MEND), a Libraries Improvement Fund and the Cultural Development Fund (round 2). Initial investigations are underway to establish whether the City Council is eligible to apply for the MEND fund in respect of the Museum of Gloucester which requires a fully-costed condition survey of the Brunswick building to demonstrate the need for investment. A survey has been commissioned as part of the Property Services estate management work. Should the conditions of eligibility for this fund be met and the case can be made, an application will be submitted.

3.3 Cultural Development Fund (round 2)

The Cultural Development Fund is a fund intended to support capital investment into cultural infrastructure. Places that have a strategic vision for their development and can demonstrate both cultural maturity and commitment to culture-led growth but need investment in physical and/or digital infrastructure or other assets to accelerate and maximise their impact are encouraged to apply. Following an Expression of Interest (EOI) successful applicants would be invited to develop a fuller application for submission. Amounts of between £2m and £5m may be applied for with evidence of match commitment by the city for a minimum of 15%. This presents an opportunity for Gloucester city council to be able to submit an expression of interest. Sources of match funds are being identified and a bid is being scoped by cultural partners including University of Gloucester, The Music Works, Gloucester Culture Trust and the city council. A bid-writer will be appointed to help with the submission of an EOI.

3.4 City of Culture 2025

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has announced that it is open to expressions of interest for the City of Culture 2025 from towns and cities across the UK. Following the EOI stage a total of 6 applicants will be long-listed and be eligible to seek up to £40,000 to develop a more coherent and detailed bid. The call encourages collaboration between areas geographically linked, but with an emphasis on a lead location.

- 3.5 Gloucester is strongly positioned to take up this opportunity as it is able to demonstrate all of the essential elements that would be required to make the long-list in order to develop a fuller bid and has a very credible evidence base to make the case to be the next UK City of Culture in 2025. The expression of interest stage is a simplified process from previous call-outs with an emphasis on information gathering and 'making the case'. A cross-sector group led by Gloucester Culture Trust will develop the expression of interest for a Greater Gloucester bid – with Gloucester being the lead city with the wider benefits of working with regional partners from neighbouring authorities. Costs for developing this EOI will be covered by in-kind support from Gloucester Culture Trust.
- 3.6 If successful at the EOI stage, Gloucester would be invited to develop a fuller bid. At this stage, the city council would be seeking the financial support offered by the Arts Council England, as well as identifying the necessary funds to support a fully worked up submission. Previous cities that have been successful in hosting the UK's City of Culture have seen enormous benefits to their local economy. An economic impact assessment on Hull that hosted the award in 2017 showed that during the year 5.3 million visits to city added over £300m economic benefits to the city's local economy with a further £22m gross value added to the local economy. Fifty per cent of businesses reported increased turnover due to City of Culture. In terms of social value there was renewed confidence and pride in the place amongst residents. In terms of exposure and reach 66% of the UK population was aware that Hull was City of Culture. This year Coventry is experiencing similar benefits and has attracted additional investment into the city in the years preceding their year of city of culture.

4.0 Social Value Considerations

- 4.1 More than 9 in 10 Hull residents engaged in at least one cultural activity. 71% of Hull residents would speak positively about Hull. 2400 volunteers created 337,000 hours of volunteering. Increase in employment opportunities, job creation and volunteering across sectors including hotels and hospitality, catering, tourism and more have been outcomes of previous host cities. There will be similar benefits brought to Gloucester from a successful bid to be the UK City of Culture.
- 4.2 Social value is integral to the delivery of the Cultural Strategy and this will continue to be a focus for the strategy in future. Culture and cultural activity in the city can provide far-reaching benefits to citizens' health, well-being, skills and help develop social cohesion and a sense of place. Cultural participation in activities such as Events and Festivals can bring disparate communities together to celebrate and collaborate.

5.0 Environmental Implications

- 5.1 The updated Cultural Strategy (2021-2026) includes actions linked to climate change and the environment.
- 5.2 The council is committed to achieving carbon neutrality in future and so the investment into greener more efficient buildings through the Cultural Development Fund and a strong environmental emphasis on a city of culture year would progress the city in its ambitions to cut carbon use and find green solutions to cultural activity in the city. Investment will result in more sustainable buildings and infrastructure.

6.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 6.1 The alternative would be not to submit expressions of interest to Cultural Investment Funding bids. More investment is required into Gloucester's cultural infrastructure and these funds provide an opportunity. Not applying for them is ***not recommended***.
- 6.2 Applying at a later date for a future year to bid for City of Culture – ie. in 4 years' time for 2029. There is evidence that Gloucester on a positive trajectory with its cultural development and that delaying for a further four years would lose the momentum gained in recent years. This option is ***not recommended***.

7.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1 **Cultural Development Fund** - The city has developed its cultural activity, partnerships, impact and reach over the past 5 years. Further cultural development and investment in the city's infrastructure is needed and the Cultural Development Fund is a very good opportunity for Gloucester to continue to demonstrate its ambition and commitment to drive the city forward with a strong cultural offer. Investment in cultural assets in the city will contribute to boosting the economy, instil greater local pride in residents and ultimately make Gloucester a more attractive place for visitors and businesses.
- 7.2 **City of Culture** - The Great Place evaluation demonstrated that Gloucester is ready for this opportunity to showcase its progress more widely and embed culture across the city. Gloucester Culture Trust are a respected and trusted partner of GCC and have a credible track record with funders, sponsors partners, artists and communities in the city. They are well-placed to lead a bid for UK City of Culture and have the skills amongst their staff and board and contacts to produce a high-quality EOI.

8.0 Future Work and Conclusions

- 8.1 Develop and submit EOI for UK City of Culture by 19 July 2021
- 8.2 Develop and submit EOI for CDF#2 – by 23 July 2021
- 8.3 Subject to the outcome of the EOIs further work may be required to scope fuller bids.

9.0 Financial Implications

- 9.1 It is recommended that an expert bid-writer is appointed to help write the EOI for the Cultural Development Fund bid. Partners will be sought to contribute to the costs of appointing a bid writer.
- 9.2 Costs for the writing of the EOI for the City of Culture bid will be covered by in-kind by GCT who will lead the bid.
- 9.3 Should either EOI be successful budget would be required to be identified to pay for the development of a fuller bid. Funding would be sought from ACE (in the case of City of Culture bid) and partners involved in the bid. In respect of the CDF bid partners would be asked to contribute towards the costs of a bid-writer.

10.0 Legal Implications

- 10.1 The City Council should consider entering into agreements with the cultural partners referred to in this report setting out the respective roles and responsibilities in submission of bid funding. Legal advice should be sought if there are proposals that any of these partners would provide match funding.
- 10.2 GCC would be the accountable body for the funding applications and will need to ensure that the funds are spent in accordance with grant terms and conditions.
- 10.3 Any contractor required to help draft any EOI would be appointed in accordance with council's contract rules.

(One Legal have been consulted in the preparation of this report)

11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

- 11.1 Risks of not submitting EOIs - Low
- 11.2 Risk of submitting EOIs – Low.

12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

- 12.1 The PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact, therefore a full PIA was not required.

13.0 Community Safety Implications

- 13.1 None

14.0 Staffing & Trade Union Implications

- 14.1 None

Background Documents: Gloucester's Cultural Vision and Strategy 2016 – 2026 (updated 2021)

<https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/media/1372/cultural-strategy.pdf>

Cultural Development Fund round 2 information from Arts Council

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/cultural-development-fund-round-two>

City of Culture 2025: Expression of Interest: guidance for bidders

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-city-of-culture-2025-expression-of-interest-guidance-for-bidders>