



Purpose: For Decision

# Committee report

Committee	<b>CABINET</b>
Date	<b>15 JULY 2021</b>
Title	<b>CONTRIBUTION TO DEVELOPMENT OF SOUTHAMPTON CITY OF CULTURE BID 2025</b>
Report of	<b>CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT</b>

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Southampton 2025 trust, with the support of Southampton City Council, have committed to submitting a bid to secure Southampton becoming the UK City of Culture 2025. A successful bid is seen as bringing cultural and economic benefits to the wider Solent region, as well as the city itself, as the area continues to recover from the worst effect of the Covid-19 pandemic
2. A key element of developing a successful bid is the demonstration of support from local and regional partners. To this end the Council has been approached by the Southampton bid team to provide political, practical and financial support for the bid linked to the Island's key transport, tourism and maritime associations with the city. Previous hosts of the UK City of Culture have been able to evidence significant cultural and economic benefits for their city and wider region linked to staging the year-long celebration.
3. Development of the Island's cultural and environment assets is a key objective of the 2019 "Inspiration Island" regeneration strategy and one of the Cabinet's early stated priorities is to "elevate the role of creative industries as part of our regeneration strategy".
4. A financial contribution of £10,000 from the Council is being requested that will confirm the Isle of Wight as regional partner to be included with the Expression of Interest for the bid, required to be submitted in July 2021. Further support of up to £50,000 linked to the development of project activity on the Island is proposed, contingent on the bid being successful. The result of the bid will be announced in Spring 2022.
5. The report recommends support for the bid by the Council contributing an initial £10,000 to become a "regional partner" and instructs council staff to work with the bid

team to establish the specific activities, promotional opportunities, cultural and economic benefits arising from partnering a successful bid, and that any further funding required as a regional partner should the bid be successful be a first call in the council's regeneration budget in future years.

## BACKGROUND

6. At the Southampton City Council Annual General Meeting in May 2019, a joint motion was carried to support and progress a UK City of Culture 2025 bid ('the bid') for Southampton (see background papers).
7. It was agreed that Southampton should invest in bidding to be the UK City of Culture in a meaningful way, given the long term economic benefits; opportunities for young people; regional, national and international profile raising for the City as well as helping to address the social needs of the city, using culture as a catalyst to bring the City together and drive change.
8. Since this agreement, the impact of the coronavirus pandemic has been felt by all, making this investment even more timely, as becoming the UK City of Culture 2025, would also be an important element in the region's recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.
9. As an example, throughout 2017, the value of tourism to the city of Hull, as a result of being awarded UK City of Culture status was £300M, with over six million visits to the city. One in four businesses within the city employed new staff and more than 800 new jobs were created in the cultural and visitor economy sector leading up to the year itself.
10. During Hull's year of being the UK City of Culture in 2017, 9 out of 10 residents engaged with at least one cultural event and over 56,000 school children took part in activities, with 34% reporting improvements in their self-esteem.
11. The Southampton 2025 Trust is responsible for delivery of the bid on behalf of the city and any winning bids, programming, marketing and communications, fundraising, community engagement and legacy for Southampton's UK City of Culture 2025. The Trust (in its current form) was established in early 2020 by founding partners Southampton City Council, University of Southampton, Solent University Southampton and GO! Southampton (the city's Business Improvement District).
12. In addition to the resources directly provided by Southampton City Council, the development of the bid is supported by significant dedicated resources provided by the bid partners, GO! Southampton, Solent University and University of Southampton, as well as the resources of many business, creative and third sector partners across the City.

## STRATEGIC CONTEXT

13. Active participation in the City of Culture bid also fits with our latest [Corporate Plan 2019-22](#) which with the corporate priorities of growth, regeneration, opportunity and wellbeing. The strategic aim for the bid is economic regeneration based and reflected in the Council's adopted policies.

14. The Isle of Wight identifies as part of the Solent economic region and works in close partnership with neighbouring authorities on areas of common concern and opportunity.
15. The Council's regeneration programme sets out potential to achieve higher levels of growth and to support regeneration and increase prosperity. The programme also highlights that infrastructure investments will be required to enable the identified opportunities in the Regeneration Strategy 'Inspiration Island' 2019–30; to be realised through the coordination and management of a range of key projects and work-streams aimed at driving regeneration and economic growth and delivering place-making benefits.
16. The Island strongly values its cultural heritage and the role cultural and creative industries is a key area of future economic opportunity as the Island recovers from the pandemic. The Island is home to landmark cultural events, such as Cowes Week and the Isle of Wight festival and the cultural history of the Island is a major draw for island visitors. The designation of the Island as a UNESCO Biosphere in 2019 was also recognition of the importance of the Island's cultural life as a contributor to quality of life. All these factors contribute to the Island as a significant partner to the Southampton 2025 bid helping improves its competitiveness when set against other cities and regions.
17. The Island is developing a stronger relationship with Arts Council England who have indicated an intent to support Island based culture organisations due to the under representation of Arts Council funded projects on the Island. Partnering with the City of Culture bid will position the Island's cultural offer to attract further Arts Council support.
18. Appendix 1 of the report sets out the further background to the bid, the benefits arising to previous City of Culture winners and the benefits of becoming a "regional partner".
19. The other strategic plans that relate specifically to the recommendations within the report include, but are not limited to:
  - the Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the Isle of Wight 2018-21;

## CONSULTATION

20. To date the Southampton bid team have undertaken significant consultation activity and received a large number of survey responses from the city and wider region. This has included stakeholder engagement sessions with: Artists, Cultural and Creative Sectors, Businesses, Residents, Councillors, statutory partners and key institutions in the city. Most importantly, the consultation continues to focus on reaching residents from across the region, encouraging participation from underrepresented groups to ensure that many city-wide voices are heard and contribute towards shaping Southampton's bid. The outcomes of the consultation activity are in the process of final analysis and have been added to the extensive baselining research already undertaken by the University of Southampton and Southampton City Council.

21. Further consultation activity on the cultural opportunities to be realised on the Island, should the bid be successful, will take place in the further development of the bid's programme of activity. Specific projects linked to the promoting the Island's tourism economy, maritime heritage, music offer and Biosphere status have formed the basis of discussions with the bid team to date.
22. Using the data gathered to date, the themes for Southampton's bid are developing and will inform the programme of activity for 2025. This information is critical to shaping the full bid application which will be submitted, if successful at the initial Expression of Interest stage, in Autumn 2021.
23. The City of Culture for 2025 will be then be announced in Spring 2022.

#### SCRUTINY COMMITTEE VIEW

24. The views of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee will be advised to the Cabinet verbally during consideration of this report.

#### FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

25. There is currently no budget allocation for supporting the bid in the Council's budget for 21/22, however the initial investment of £10,000 can be funded from within an existing budget for strategic partnerships.
26. The potential economic benefits of a successful bid as experienced in other areas are set out in Appendix 1.
27. Should the full bid be successful the further £50,000 (£10,000 per annum) needed to maintain the Council as a "regional partner" would need to be budgeted for as a first call on the regeneration budget in future years up to and including 2026.

#### LEGAL/PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

28. Subject to certain restrictions, none of which apply here, Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 gives the Council a general power of competence to do anything that individuals may do, including making financial contributions to activities which contribute to the wellbeing or benefit of its community and residents.
29. Based on the experience of previous UK City of Culture processes, it is anticipated, that the Council will be asked to enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Southampton 2025 trust and possibly the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sports (DCMS) should the bid be successful. This would relate to the Council's further involvement in supporting bid implementation in the lead up to, during and following 2025.
30. This MOU would have the Council commit to acting as a guarantor for delivery of the programme and other contractual arrangements made with the Trust. This is in line with the commitments made by previous winning city's such as Hull and Coventry.
31. The support and financial commitment from the Council will demonstrate the continued value and support the Council has, for the development and submission of a successful bid. This will in turn strengthen the Bid and enable the team to cite the

Isle of Wight Council and other partners as examples to lever further investment from a wide range of organisations, agencies and individuals.

32. The post successful bid funding outlined within this report will only be triggered if Southampton wins the UK City of Culture 2025 title.

## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

33. The Council, as a public body, is subject to general and specific duties under equality and diversity legislation and as such has a duty to impact assess its service, policies/strategies and decisions with regards to diversity legislation and the nine protected characteristics (race, gender reassignment, disability, age, sex and sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership). There are no direct implications for the Council's duties under the terms of the Equality Act 2010 arising from the recommendations in this paper.

## OPTIONS

34. The options available to the Council are as follows:

**1. No financial Contribution from the Council** – This option is not recommended as it would not assist the chances of the bid to win the competition. This option would be seen as a lack of commitment to the process and would damage the potential for securing funding from other sources. If the bid were still successful there would be indirect benefits to the Island of visitors to the area in 2025 choosing to spend some time on the Isle of Wight.

**2. Lower financial contribution** – This option is not recommended as it is anticipated that a lower financial contribution would be damaging to the bid application and would not be seen as favourable during the judging process, showing a lack of ambition to win the title.

**3. Higher financial contribution** – This option is not recommended. A higher contribution could be used positively, but the model to develop the funding request focused on using comparator data to develop an evidence-based request and the justification for a higher contribution is not considered to be viable.

**4. Delay the decision on funding until post the Award of the Title** – The Council could defer its decision on providing funding until post the award to the winning location. However, this option is not recommended as it would damage the potential for the bid to win the competition. This option would be seen as a lack of commitment to the process, other competitors with confirmed neighbouring Local Authority funding would be placed in a stronger position within the bid process.

**5. Support the Southampton 2025 expression of interest for the bid by confirming the Isle of Wight as a regional partner and providing an initial £10,000 contribution for this purpose** – This is the recommended option enabling the Island to play a greater role in shaping the bid to secure maximum possible benefits for the Island should the bid be successful.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

35. A Risk Register is in place which identifies the key risks, together with the associated actions and mitigations, in respect of the development and delivery of the bid. The risk register has been developed by the bid team and is reviewed on a bi-monthly basis by the bid team or as required. The key risks are summarised below.

36. An identified risk is that the bid does not win the UK City of Culture competition. In regard to the bid itself a requirement of the bid process is the development of a plan in the event that the region is not successful to ensure that the region capitalises on the bidding process and still reaps benefits from this process. Options for this will be developed in the coming months.
37. A risk aligned with this paper, is that the Council does not commit to the required funds and/or does not agree to become a “regional partner”. This would be seen as a lack of commitment to the process, would damage the potential for the bid to win the competition. Other competitors with confirmed partner Local Authority funding would be placed in a stronger position within the bid process. The mitigating action for this risk is the completion of this paper to highlight the commitment by the Council in the bid process.

## EVALUATION

38. Acting as a supporting regional partner to the 2025 City of Culture bid enables the Council to advance its cultural regeneration activities with the significant profile afforded by a successful bid.
39. The development work involved in creating a complementary programme of Island activities to form part of the programme for the bid will act as a major stimulus to growing the profile and economic contribution of the Island “cultural” industries.
40. The resulting specific benefits to be achieved, with accompanying monitoring, include
  - Increased visitor numbers to the Isle of Wight attributed to the successful bid
  - Increased profile in local and national media of the Island as a cultural destination
  - Increased Arts Council funding committed to Island cultural organisations
  - Increased participation in cultural activities by residents in our most deprived communities

## RECOMMENDATION

1. To support the Southampton 2025 expression of interest for the UK City of Culture bid by confirming the Isle of Wight as a regional partner and providing an initial £10,000 contribution for this purpose, from within the existing budgets available for strategic partnerships.
2. To instruct council staff to work with the bid team to identify the most appropriate programme of activities to take place, should the bid be successful, to support the Island's cultural regeneration and maximise the economic and cultural benefits for the Island.
3. Should the SO2025 bid be successful, delegate the decision regarding further council support of £50,000 to support Island implementation of the bid's proposed activity programme to the Cabinet member for Regeneration and Business Development. then the additional funding as a regional partner of £10,000 per annum for the five years up to and including 2026 be the first call on the council's regeneration budget in each of those years.

## APPENDICES ATTACHED

Appendix 1 – City of Culture bid information.

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

Joint motion to support and progress a UK City of Culture 2025 bid for Southampton  
<http://www.southampton.gov.uk/modernGov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=122&MId=3823&Ver=4>

Contact Point: Chris Ashman, Director, Regeneration, ☎ 01983 821000  
Ext. 6275 e-mail [chris.ashman@iow.gov.uk](mailto:chris.ashman@iow.gov.uk)

CHRISTOPHER ASHMAN  
*Director of Regeneration*

CLLR JULIE JONES-EVANS  
*Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Business  
Development*