



## **TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE & LEISURE COMMITTEE**

**24<sup>th</sup> July 2024**

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>BOROUGH OF CULTURE 2024</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE</b>

### **REPORT SUMMARY**

This report presents an update on Wirral's year as Liverpool City Region Borough of Culture in 2024.

The activities outlined in this report contribute directly or indirectly to the objectives in the Wirral Plan 2021-2026:

- Sustainable Environment
- Brighter Futures
- Inclusive Economy
- Safe and Pleasant Communities
- Active and Healthy Lives

The activities outlined in this report directly support the 'People Focused Regeneration' theme in the Council Plan 2023-2027.

This report represents a key decision as it will have a significant impact on communities. The content of this report affects all Wards within the Borough

### **RECOMMENDATION/S**

The Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Note progress in respect of Borough of Culture 2024; and
- (2) Grant delegated authority the Director of Regeneration and Place to make any necessary changes to the programme plan for Borough of Culture agreed by the Committee in October 2023 and to manage associated budget accordingly.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

To update the Committee as to the programme plan for Borough of Culture 2024 at the request of the Chair and to seek approval for the Director of Regeneration and Place to make any necessary changes to the programme plan as Borough of Culture activities are delivered.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 The other option is to discontinue delivery of the Borough of Culture programme.
- 2.2 This option is not considered feasible given the reputational risk as well as the opportunity presented by the initiative to celebrate culture and heritage in Wirral and deliver economic impact, increase visitor numbers and leave a lasting legacy for the creative sector.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 A Culture and Heritage Strategy was commissioned in support of the Council's ambitious regeneration plans and approved by this Committee in March 2022. The importance of the Borough of Culture initiative as an enabler for delivering local outcomes is threaded throughout the Culture and Heritage Strategy.
- 3.2 The Borough of Culture initiative rotates around the Liverpool City Region (LCR) and has five broad principles:
- Getting children and young people involved in culture and heritage and developing their creative skills and talents.
  - Using arts, culture and heritage to improve people's health and wellbeing and achieve other positive outcomes.
  - Encouraging communities to participate in creative activities where they live.
  - Telling Wirral's stories and promoting the borough's culture and heritage offer to local people and visitors.
  - Creating cultural assets and opportunities which will leave a lasting legacy beyond the Borough of Culture year.
- 3.3 An LCR Combined Authority grant for Borough of Culture of £200,000 is awarded to the host borough. This is funded by the Metro Mayor's One Percent for Culture initiative.
- 3.4 Wirral was previously LCR Borough of Culture in 2019. Over 500,000 people (residents and visitors) engaged with cultural events and projects during the year with an overall economic impact of £3.8m. The programme created a fertile

environment for cultural and creative industries to emerge and boosted positive perceptions of the borough.

- 3.5 A partnership Steering Group is in place to support delivery and evaluation of the 2024 Borough of Culture programme chaired by Future Yard as Wirral's first Arts Council England funded National Portfolio Organisation. Wirral's 2024 programme has been co-created in partnership with a stakeholder group of arts, culture and heritage organisations. It is focused on telling Wirral's stories, promoting community activity and increasing access to arts, culture and heritage with a particular focus on young people, inclusion of marginalised groups and sustainability.
- 3.6 A programme plan for Borough of Culture was approved by this Committee in October 2023 (Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee, 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023, Minute 42). A summary of activities in respect of this plan delivered to date and/or underway is set out at 3.10 below.
- 3.7 As detailed in the report to Committee in October 2023, additional resources became available for culture and heritage activities through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Investment Plan and associated delegated approval (Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee, 7th December 2022, Minute 37). This had a significant impact on Borough of Culture in that it is enabling grants to be defrayed to partner and community organisations to contribute to the Borough of Culture programme and legacy outcomes. Direct grant awards to local organisations supported by the UKSPF contribution and/or the LCR Borough of Culture allocation are being managed by the Culture and Visitor Economy Team working closely with the Economic Strategy Team and in line with associated monitoring requirements.
- 3.8 An open grants programme was launched at the beginning of February 2024 and closed in mid-March. The response to this opportunity was unprecedented with a total of 164 applications received for funding. The total 'ask' from the 164 applications received was c.£1.5m. It was necessary to deploy additional staffing resources within Regeneration and Place to support assessment of applications. All applicants were reviewed against a set of basic eligibility criteria then scored against the Borough of Culture principles (see 3.2 above), increasing access to arts, culture and heritage and deliverability. A final assessment and moderation of the scores was undertaken to take into account the capital and revenue funding available (£110,000 capital and £37,000 revenue) and the geographical spread of projects. The projects awarded funding have been announced (following a delay due to the General Election) and are listed at Appendix 1.
- 3.9 The overwhelming response to the grants programme highlights the demand across Wirral for project funding support for arts, culture and heritage. Advice has been provided to unsuccessful applicants including alternative sources of funding which may be suitable for their projects, and links to other resources and support which may be useful. This includes community networking opportunities through Wirral CVS (Council for Voluntary Service).
- 3.10 Borough of Culture events and activities delivered to date, underway and forthcoming include:

<b>Council-led</b>	<b>January 2024</b>	Launch event in January coinciding with the
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		opening of the <i>Is Anybody Listening?</i> exhibition at the Williamson
<b>February 2024</b>		Grand Admiral Miguel de Grau heritage plaque and street naming unveiling
		Launch of Borough of Culture grants programme
<b>March 2024</b>		Procurement of Borough of Culture events partner Walk the Plank
		Launch of <i>Piece by Peace</i> schools project highlighting inclusion and diversity
<b>April 2024</b>		Opening of the L.S. Lowry <i>Going to the Match</i> exhibition at the Williamson
		<i>Sunday Night Live</i> at the Floral Pavilion showcasing local talent in support of Autism Together
<b>May 2024</b>		<p>Gaia artwork in Birkenhead Park (28<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> May) with 3 days of celebratory performances and activities coordinated by Walk the Plank. This event was highly successful, with key outcomes as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 30,000 people attended (target attendance was 10,000).</li> <li>▪ 108 social media posts, reaching 568,000 people.</li> <li>▪ First photos of Gaia in Birkenhead Park received 8,500 engagements on social media.</li> <li>▪ Media coverage included BBC online (x3), Liverpool Echo (x3), The Guide Liverpool (x4) and BBC Radio Merseyside</li> </ul>
<b>June 2024</b>		Civic and community events marking the 80 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of D Day and the Mallory and Irvine centenary
<b>July 2024</b>		<i>Cool and Creative</i> staff engagement week in partnership with Climate Change Team (week commencing 8 <sup>th</sup> July)
		<i>Piece by Peace</i> schools project sharing event (15 <sup>th</sup> July) at Birkenhead Town Hall
		Wirral Libraries <i>Green BiblioFest</i> events (17 <sup>th</sup> , 25 <sup>th</sup> , 29 <sup>th</sup> July)
		Birkenhead Central Library 90 <sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations (18 <sup>th</sup> July)
<b>August 2024</b>		<i>Green BiblioFest</i> events – Wirral Libraries, Wirral Country Park and Birkenhead Park (1 <sup>st</sup> – 28 <sup>th</sup> August)
		From 1 <sup>st</sup> August <i>Into the Wyld</i> – Williamson Art Gallery & Museum and other locations
		Wirral Theatre Festival – Floral Pavilion (28 <sup>th</sup> – 30 <sup>th</sup> August)
		Luma Latin American engagement event

		(Date TBC)
	<b>October 2024</b>	<i>The Bar at the Edge of Time</i> , Floral Pavilion (9 <sup>th</sup> and 10 <sup>th</sup> October)
		<i>Into the Wyld: Spirits of Peace Symposium</i> , Williamson Art Gallery & Museum (12 <sup>th</sup> October)
		New work <i>Subterranean Elevator</i> at the Williamson by international artist Di Mainstone commissioned in response to regeneration programme
	<b>November 2024</b>	Borough of Culture finale event delivered by Walk the Plank
<b>Partner-led</b>	<b>February 2024</b>	Launch of <i>LOC</i> – workshops for young people throughout the year coordinated by Open Door (activities including calligraphy, sustainable cooking, sculpture and painting)
	<b>March 2024</b>	Launch of <i>The Town is the Gallery</i> – exhibitions and workshops throughout the year curated by Convenience Gallery
	<b>May 2024</b>	The Reader interactive workshops for children, including in partnership with Eureka!
	<b>June 2024</b>	Wirral MakeFest 2024 at the Williamson and Birkenhead Library – a family-friendly festival promoting creativity and STEAM skills
	<b>July 2024</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> – 13 <sup>th</sup> : <i>New Brighton Arts Festival</i> (C Change and Rockpoint CIC and a range of community partners)
	<b>August 2024</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> – 25 <sup>th</sup> : Future Now Festival – Future Yard and other Birkenhead locations 28 <sup>th</sup> : <i>LOC 'Use yer head or lose it'</i> workshop – Convenience Gallery Pop-Up (Open Door Charity)
	<b>September 2024</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> – 30 <sup>th</sup> : <i>A Creative Tri-factor</i> , Make CIC (Make CIC)

3.11 The marketing and communications plan for Borough of Culture has evolved as the year has got underway. Whilst extremely positive, the unprecedented level of engagement from partners and communities in the grants programme and in general since the report to Committee in October 2023 has impacted on the capacity of the team to undertake targeted briefings and roll out other awareness raising activity. In response to this growing interest, resources were focused on a partner and community launch event in January 2024 which was extremely successful in showcasing Wirral's plans for the year and facilitating networking amongst a range of stakeholders.

3.12 Following the launch, marketing and communications activity has focused on:

- Finalising a dedicated website for Borough of Culture ([www.wirral2024.com](http://www.wirral2024.com)) which is now live and where partners and communities can upload their events and activities.

- Issuing guidance to partners re: use of the Borough of Culture logo and wider marketing and communications considerations for promoting funded projects and other activity.
- Developing an agreed plan for the use of Council communications channels to align with Council plan priorities and build awareness among staff, residents and visitors.
- Producing a new Wirral culture and visitor guide showcasing the borough's arts, heritage and leisure offer (with the resources available through the Liverpool City Region Strategic Investment Fund Destination Marketing project).

3.13 As mentioned in paragraphs 3.8 and 3.11 of this report, the response to Borough of Culture from partners and communities has been significant and, in addition to the activities already planned, there are numerous opportunities to shape and develop the programme and its legacy moving forward. The Committee is therefore requested to grant delegated authority to the Director of Regeneration and Place to make any necessary changes to the programme plan for Borough of Culture agreed by the Committee in October 2023 and to manage associated budgets accordingly. This includes any additional monies which may become available through grant funding, for example through a review of expected spend across the entire UKSPF Phase 1 programme.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 In respect of the resources available for delivering cultural programming, it has previously been noted by the Committee that, in setting the budget for 2021/22, £620k budget was permanently removed as a saving in respect of the Culture and Visitor Economy function.
- 4.2 An annual budget of £50,000 was retained to support development and engagement activities. This entirety of this budget in the current financial year and for the 2024-25 financial year has been earmarked for Borough of Culture development and delivery. A further budget of £15,000 is available annually specifically for heritage activities.
- 4.3 Borough of Culture is further supported by:
- LCR Combined Authority revenue contribution for Borough of Culture in 2024-25 - £200,000.
  - UK Shared Prosperity Fund - a total of £328,000 for culture and heritage capital and revenue projects (across 2023-24 and 2024-25) – the broad objectives for allocating these monies to support culture and heritage and local creative activities is set out in the investment plan agreed with the Combined Authority. The Director for Regeneration and Place has delegated authority to deliver this investment plan and oversee any necessary change controls (ERH Committee, 7th December 2022, Minute 37).
- 4.4 The use of Town Deal monies for public art (£148,500 capital) is also aligned to the Borough of Culture programme given the opportunity to engage with partners and communities on its use.

- 4.5 £111,000 for culture and heritage volunteering and social action from the UKSPF allocation has been incorporated into a 'one front door' project commissioned by Public Health and delivered by Wirral CVS and is being managed accordingly.
- 4.6 Any expenditure relating to Borough of Culture has been undertaken in line with the programme plan agreed by this Committee in October 2023 and Council procedures. As indicated in 3.13 above, the Committee is requested to grant delegated authority the Director of Regeneration and Place to make any necessary changes to this plan and to manage associated budget accordingly. This includes any additional monies which may become available through external grant funding.

## **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Standardised and/or one off Grant Funding Agreements with external parties for the delivery of Borough of Culture activities utilising external grant funding (i.e., LCR Combined Authority Borough of Culture grant and/or UK Shared Prosperity Fund) are being issued in consultation with Legal Services.

## **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS**

- 6.1 To deliver the 2024 programme and legacy outcomes, staffing resources are being deployed within Regeneration and Place on a temporary basis to support the Culture and Visitor Economy Team. Corporate support is in place, e.g., in respect of marketing and communications.

## **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 7.1 A key risk is the failure to progress the decisions requested which would impact on planning and delivering a successful programme and legacy outcomes within the resources available. This could lead to reputational damage to the Council as well as undermining the economic and social outcomes of the regeneration programme and associated opportunities.
- 7.2 A number of key mitigations are in place to ensure successful delivery, including a robust programme and risk management approach and clear terms of reference for the Borough of Culture Steering Group. Further scrutiny, particularly in respect of financial management, is being undertaken through the appropriate corporate mechanisms.
- 7.3 Operational risks in respect of Council events and activities taking place as part of Borough of Culture will be managed via the Wirral Event Safety Advisory Group. Delivery partners will be expected to submit event notifications as appropriate.

## **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 Extensive consultation has been undertaken to develop the Borough of Culture plan and to create positive and productive partnerships with culture and heritage stakeholders.

8.2 Borough of Culture delivery is predicated on the need to engage communities as widely as possible to ensure the programme's success. As indicated elsewhere in this report, local communities and organisations have responded well to the opportunity thus far.

## 9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Inclusion is a key theme and workstream of the Borough of Culture programme. Targeted action has already been undertaken to promote inclusion and diversity throughout the year.

## 10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Sustainability is a key theme and workstream of the Borough of Culture programme. Targeted action has already been undertaken to promote sustainability throughout the year, working closely with the Council's climate change team and a range of partners.

## 11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Community wealth building is a key consideration for the Borough of Culture Steering Group particularly in respect of ensuring that local artists and creatives benefit from programme opportunities and can access the resources available.

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## APPENDICES

**Borough of Culture Grant Awards**

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Birkenhead Culture and Heritage Strategy](#)  
[Arts Council England Let's Create Strategy](#)

## SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Tourism, Communities, Leisure and Culture Committee	8 <sup>th</sup> March 2022
Birkenhead Culture and Heritage Strategy and	



<b>Museums Service Strategy</b>	
<b>Tourism, Communities, Leisure and Culture Committee</b>  <b>Culture and Heritage Strategy and Borough of Culture Planning</b>	<b>25<sup>th</sup> October 2022</b>
<b>Economy, Regeneration &amp; Housing Committee</b>  <b>UK Shared Prosperity Fund</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> December 2022</b>
<b>Tourism, Communities, Leisure and Culture Committee</b>  <b>Borough of Culture 2024</b>	<b>19<sup>th</sup> October 2023</b>

APPLICANT	PROJECT	LOCATION	LEGACY IMPACT	REVENUE AWARD	CAPITAL AWARD	TOTAL AWARD
Friends of Birkenhead Park	Visualising Birkenhead Park: Past and Present	Birkenhead	<i>Project will make a significant contribution to visitor experience</i>	-	£13,710.00	£13,710.00
Grove Street Primary School	Grove Street Community Art Studio & 'Arts for All' Day	New Ferry	<i>Project will make a significant community contribution through creative activities</i>	£1,300.00	£17,781.78	£19,081.78
Wirral Poetry Festival	Wirral Poetry Festival 2024	Wirral-wide	<i>Project will further develop a community-led festival which engages communities across Wirral and will continue in future years</i>	£5,000.00	-	£5,000.00
Port Sunlight Village Trust	A Stitch in Time	Port Sunlight and local communities	<i>Project will deliver high levels of creative community engagement and unlock local heritage</i>	£3,500.00	£10,000.00	£15,000.00
471 Routes CIC	Inspire Tour	Wirral-wide	<i>Project will showcase Wirral creatives and local venues in an innovative way</i>	£3,425.00	-	£3,425.00
Liscard Community Links CIC	Liscard Sound and Vision	Liscard	<i>Project will involve multiple partners to deliver creative activities for young people</i>	£5,000.00	£12,807.00	£17,807.00

<b>APPLICANT</b>	<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>LEGACY IMPACT</b>	<b>REVENUE AWARD</b>	<b>CAPITAL AWARD</b>	<b>TOTAL AWARD</b>
			<i>and build local networks</i>			
<b>Friends of Wallasey Library</b>	<b>Wirral Story Patchwork Project</b>	Wallasey	<i>Although relatively low cost, the project will have a significant impact on target groups</i>	£1,428.00	-	£1,428.00
<b>The Hive Wirral Youth Zone</b>	<b>Young People's Choirs and Musicians Performance Programme</b>	Borough-wide	<i>Project will deliver improved access to music facilities for young people from across Wirral</i>	-	£11,509.39	£16,499.60
<b>New Brighton Coastal Community Team</b>	<b>Beatles Tower Public Art Project</b>	New Brighton	<i>Project will have high visibility and is likely to increase visitor footfall and showcase local heritage</i>	£3,800.00	£5,000.00	£10,000.00
<b>StartYard</b>	<b>StartYard Venue Access Improvements</b>	Birkenhead	<i>Project will make a significant improvement to venue which is enabling inclusive and free to access exhibitions and events</i>	-	£8,000.00	£8,000.00
<b>The Caravan Gallery CIC</b>	<b>Pride of Place Project Caravan Tour</b>	Borough-wide	<i>Project will enable access to art in a unique way close to where people live</i>	£5,000.00	-	£5,000.00
<b>Voices of Wirral</b>	<b>Mind on Music</b>	Wallasey / Liscard	<i>Although relatively low cost, the project will</i>	£3,670.00	-	£3,670.00

APPLICANT	PROJECT	LOCATION	LEGACY IMPACT	REVENUE AWARD	CAPITAL AWARD	TOTAL AWARD
			<i>have a significant impact on target groups</i>			
<b>Wirral Archaeology CIC</b>	<b>Sharing Knowledge About Wirral's Past</b>	Borough-wide	<i>Project will facilitate engagement with schools and a range of groups about Wirral's heritage</i>	-	£10,045.87	£10,045.87
<b>Rebecca Ball Bryson</b>	<b>Flotsam Poppets</b>	Birkenhead, New Brighton, Thurstaston	<i>Project will engage young people and communities on the theme of sustainability whilst developing and showcasing the work of a significant local artist</i>	£5,000.00	-	£5,000.00
<b>Friends of Warwick Park</b>	<b>90 Year Anniversary Activities</b>	Upton	<i>Project will deliver a permanent legacy for a local park in its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary year and the community which uses it</i>	-	£4,882.87	£4,882.87
<b>Tam O'Shanter Urban Farm</b>	<b>Accessibility Improvements</b>	Bidston	<i>Project will deliver much improved facilities at this heritage and visitor asset and open up for a wider range of visitors</i>	-	£17,280.00	£17,820.00
<b>TOTALS</b>				<b>£37,123.00</b>	<b>£111,016.91</b>	<b>£148,139.91</b>

