



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

**19<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>BOROUGH OF CULTURE 2024</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR: 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 report also requests approval from the Committee as to the delivery plan for Borough of Culture which has been developed following the previous report to the Committee in October 2022.

The activities outlined in this 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

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 approve the programme plan for Borough of Culture set out at Appendix 1

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

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

To seek approval from Committee as to the programme plan for Borough of Culture 2024. This plan has been developed in collaboration with internal stakeholders and partners taking into account the funding available for culture and heritage activities from the Liverpool City Region (“LCR”) Combined Authority Metro Mayor’s budget, UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Town Deal.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

2.1 Other options are:

- (a) not to deliver a programme; and
- (b) to deliver a minimal programme within existing resources.

2.2 Neither alternative option is 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 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 objectives:

- Children and young people.
- Positive outcomes.
- Communities.
- Distinctiveness of place.
- Infrastructure and legacy.

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 As outlined in the report to Committee of October 2022, a partnership Steering Group has been established to support planning and delivery of a successful Borough of Culture programme in 2024 which delivers LCR Combined Authority objectives alongside local priorities. The Steering Group is chaired by Future Yard as Wirral's first Arts Council England funded National Portfolio Organisation and has representatives from a range of culture, heritage and community organisations. The Council's culture and heritage assets, for example the Floral Pavilion, are playing a key role in the work of the Steering Group and the development of the programme and partnership working.
- 3.6 The Steering Group has agreed a vision for 2024 which is that Borough of Culture should be a celebration of Wirral people and places and a showcase for its creative communities and the power of culture and heritage in regeneration.
- 3.7 To underpin the work of the Steering Group, four subgroups have also been established to provide additional focus on delivering outcomes relating to Inclusion, Environmental Sustainability, Heritage and Volunteering. These sub-groups provide an opportunity to extend networks in support of Borough of Culture.
- 3.8 The Chief Executive has also requested that an internal oversight group is established to ensure the Borough of Culture programme is delivered within the resources available and maximises outcomes.
- 3.9 Members of the Committee are asked to note that since the previous report in October 2022, additional resources have become available for culture and heritage activities through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund ("UKSPF") Investment Plan and associated delegated approval (ERH Committee, 7th December 2022, Minute 37). This has had a significant impact on planning activities for Borough of Culture which have focused on the following strands of activity:
- Developing and commissioning a core programme of family-friendly events.
  - Generating additional ideas and project proposals through the Steering Group in response to the opportunity presented by the additional UKSPF resources.
  - Developing ideas for heritage projects which reflect on Wirral's history and world influence and highlights the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the constitution of the borough. Close working is in place with the Mayor's Office to align Borough of Culture with the civic programme where appropriate.
  - Establishing subgroups for inclusion and environmental sustainability linked to the core programme and additional projects.
  - Developing a volunteering programme as part of a wider UKSPF funded project.
  - Developing partnerships focused on targeted work with children and young people.
  - Developing legacy infrastructure projects to deploy the capital resources available via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Town Deal.
- 3.10 Further to the development work set out in 3.9 and the extensive consultation undertaken through the Steering Group and other stakeholders, a programme plan is set out for approval by Elected Members at Appendix 1. Careful consideration has been given to utilising the resources available to deliver targets and outcomes in relation to:

- Culture and Heritage Strategy themes and priorities (set out in the strategy approved by Elected Members in March 2022)
- LCR Combined Authority Borough of Culture grant objectives.
- UKSPF Investment Plan interventions and outputs relating to culture and heritage.

3.11 Over and above this, the events, projects and activities set out in the expenditure plan will:

- Ensure borough-wide activity in relation to Borough of Culture as well as maximising the opportunities for the regeneration programme and embedding the Left Bank narrative.
- Generate outcomes in respect of environmental sustainability and inclusion as key themes for the programme.
- Provide significant opportunities to promote Wirral as a visitor destination and contribute to Destination Marketing targets.
- Showcase Wirral's culture and heritage assets and enable the development of new ways of engaging audiences with experiences.
- Provide significant opportunities to enrich the lives and improve the health and wellbeing of participants and volunteers.

3.12 Elected Members are asked to note that the programme plan includes a number of direct grant awards to local organisations which will be fully or in part supported by UKSPF contribution which will be managed by the Culture and Visitor Economy Team working closely with the Economic Strategy Team and in line with associated monitoring requirements. Similarly, grant awards which are fully or in part supported the LCRCA Borough of Culture allocation will be robustly managed.

3.13 A more detailed programme plan has also been produced to capture event and project information, key risks and milestones. This will be regularly reviewed by the oversight group initiated by the Chief Executive to support delivery and deploy resources as needed.

3.14 As referenced in 3.10, the potential impact of Borough of Culture on tourism in Wirral is fully recognised and the Liverpool City Region Strategic Investment Fund Destination Marketing project in which the Council is a key partner will provide a mechanism and resources to promote the programme to visitors. The work being undertaken to deliver the Destination Marketing project and to engage in the establishment of a Local Visitor Economy Partnership for the region is subject to a separate agenda item.

3.15 Before the end of 2023, there are a number of activities planned to build awareness and excitement among residents and visitors for the coming year of activities. These include a handover event from St Helen's, the current Borough of Culture, and announcements about what to expect from next year's programme.

3.16 A launch campaign has been built around these opportunities reflecting the collaborative approach being undertaken with Steering Group partners to delivering the Borough of Culture programme. Within the Council, this will be supplemented by Elected Member and staff briefings.

3.17 Following the launch campaign, more concentrated marketing and communications activity will commence at the start of 2024 and a full strategy has been developed to support this. As well as promoting the funded activities set out in the expenditure plan, the marketing and communications strategy will also provide a framework for all key organisations, e.g. Eureka! Science + Discovery, to tie in their planned programmes. The Borough of Culture communications strategy will also amplify the culture-led regeneration happening along the Left Bank and how this reaches out to all parts of the borough.

## **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. This has already been spent in the current financial year but will be used in 2024-25 towards Borough of Culture heritage projects. £25,000 has been allocated from the Council's climate change budget in 2023-24 to deliver outcomes relating to creative approaches to engaging with local people about environmental sustainability.
- 4.3 A total of £665,500 of external grant funding is available for delivering the 2024 programme and its legacy via the LCR Combined Authority, UK Shared Prosperity Fund (as referred to in section 3.9 of this report) and Town Deal funding for public art as follows:
- LCR Combined Authority revenue contribution for Borough of Culture in 2024-25 - £200,000.
  - UK Shared Prosperity Fund - a total of c. £317,000 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).
  - Town Deal monies for public art - £148,500 capital to be spent in line with Town Deal programme.

The total budget available to deliver the programme set out in Appendix 1 amounts to £805,500.

- 4.4 Given the reduced capacity within the Culture and Visitor Economy Team following the savings taken in 20/21, the outsourcing of event management and production costs for Borough of Culture has been built into the programme plan and suppliers will be procured as necessary. Organisations in receipt of UK Shared Prosperity grant awards will be similarly expected to build in any costs pertaining to project

delivery. Project leads and grant recipients will also be encouraged to seek additional funding via grant bodies and other sources to enhance delivery and outcomes.

- 4.5 The Destination Marketing programme (as referred to in a separate agenda item) which is being delivered through Strategic Investment Fund monies from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority provides some resources for tourism campaigns within the parameters of the associated grant agreement. The Culture and Visitor Economy Team will work with partners to maximise these, including ensuring that any programming delivered by key Council cultural assets, e.g. the Williamson and Priory and Floral Pavilion is widely promoted. A marketing budget for events delivered as part of the Council programme has been identified as referenced in Appendix 1. Additional pressures in relation to communications and marketing will be managed via existing budgets and alignment with Council plans.
- 4.6 £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 has not therefore been included in the total budget in 4.3 above or Appendix 1.
- 4.7 Any expenditure relating to the proposals in this report will be undertaken in line with Council procedures. Any contracts awarded in relation to the activities described in this report will comply with Wirral Council Contract Procedure Rules.

## **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) will be subject to Legal advice.

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

- 6.1 To deliver the 2024 programme and legacy outcomes, staffing resources will be deployed within Regeneration and Place on a temporary basis to support the Culture and Visitor Economy Team. Dedicated support will also be put in place through the oversight group initiated by the Chief Executive.

## **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 7.1 A key risk is the failure to progress the decisions requested which would impact substantively 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 and sub-groups. Further scrutiny, particularly in respect of financial management and contingency planning, will be provided via the corporate oversight group initiated by the Chief Executive.

- 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 The proposed approach set out in this report in respect of Borough of Culture delivery is predicated on the need to engage communities as widely as possible to ensure the programme's success. The marketing and communications strategy referenced in section 3.14 of this report sets out robust actions to engage with residents and audiences through existing channels.

## **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 An inclusion sub-group has been set up to support and scrutinise the development of the Borough of Culture programme from an equality perspective and will make associated recommendations to the Steering Group and delivery partners. These recommendations will be monitored and reviewed throughout the year.

## **10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 An environmental sustainability sub-group has been set up to support and scrutinise the development of the Borough of Culture programme from an environmental sustainability perspective and will make associated recommendations to the Steering Group and delivery partners. These recommendations will be monitored and reviewed.

## **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

### Appendix 1 – Borough of Culture 2024 Expenditure Plan

#### BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

#### TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee is charged by full Council to undertake responsibility for the Council's role and functions: -(f) concerning tourism, the arts, culture and heritage, including provision of theatre, entertainments, conferences and events

#### SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Tourism, Communities, Leisure and Culture Committee</b>  <a href="#"><u>Birkenhead Culture and Heritage Strategy</u></a>	<b>21<sup>st</sup> January 2021</b>
<b>Tourism, Communities, Leisure and Culture Committee</b>  <a href="#"><u>Birkenhead Culture and Heritage Strategy and Museums Service Strategy</u></a>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> March 2022</b>
<b>Tourism, Communities, Leisure and Culture Committee</b>  <a href="#"><u>Culture and Heritage Strategy and Borough of Culture Planning</u></a>	<b>25<sup>th</sup> October 2022</b>