

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**UK CITY OF CULTURE BID 2021– PROGRESS REPORT**

**1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To consider the background and current position in relation to the city's bid to be UK City Culture 2021.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 In September 2015, it was announced that Sunderland was to bid to be UK City of Culture for 2021.
- 2.2 The title of UK Capital of Culture is awarded every 4 years. The first winner of the award was Derry-Londonderry in 2013 and Hull has been chosen as UK City of Culture for 2018. The concept of a UK City of Culture is to a large part based upon the impact that the award of European Capital of Culture has had on other cities such as Liverpool and Glasgow.
- 2.2 Other cities that have expressed an interest in bidding for UK City of Culture 2021 include Coventry, Paisley, Stoke, Perth, Hereford and Warrington.

**3. Current Position**

- 3.1 The UK City of Culture bid is an opportunity for Sunderland to establish itself as a national centre for arts, heritage and culture. A successful UK City of Culture bid would put the city firmly into the cultural spotlight, attracting millions of pounds into the local economy through investment in the arts and an increase in visitors and jobs. It would kick-start a four year period of growth, innovation and creativity and culminates in a year of exciting cultural and artistic events.
- 3.2 Past experience has shown that winning cities can become hubs for major national and international cultural events and draw significant investment to deliver a year packed with a huge variety of different art and culture. The effect of entering the competition can be seen even when the city's bid has proved unsuccessful, with Durham's Lumiere festival a product of the city's failed bid to become UK City of Culture in 2013. In terms of economy, it is estimated that Hull's 2018 title could be worth more than £80m to the city in terms of improvements in infrastructure and new investment.
- 3.3 The process is divided into two stages, with the winner announced in Hull at the end of 2017. The first stage sees initial bids from all candidate cities, submitted to the judging panel in the spring of 2017. These bids are assessed

by the panel and a shortlist of four are chosen, with those four cities invited to submit second round bids. The second round bids will be submitted in the autumn of 2017, and the final decision made.

- 3.4 Sunderland's City of Culture bid is being written by a team from the University of Sunderland, the MAC Trust and the City Council.
- 3.5 The bid aims to build on an array of existing and new developments across the city, from the National Gallery for Contemporary Art, Sunderland Museum and Winter Gardens, the National Glass Centre, Washington Arts Centre, the Sunderland Empire, St Peters Church at Monkwearmouth, the renovation of the old Fire Station and the regeneration of the new Music, Arts and Culture Quarter, to the restoration of significant heritage sites like Hylton Castle and Roker Pier.
- 3.6 Rebecca Ball (Bid Director) will provide a presentation on the bid. The slides for the presentation are attached as an appendix.

#### **4 Conclusion**

- 4.1 The report and presentation will provide members with background and the current position in relation to the city's bid to be UK City Culture 2021 as well as the opportunities and challenges faced in moving forward with the bid.

#### **5. Recommendations**

- 5.1 The Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider and comment on the contents of the report.

#### **6. Glossary**

None

#### **7 Background Papers**

Sunderland City of Culture Bid