



CABINET

Tuesday, 07 September 2021

Subject	East Suffolk & Great Yarmouth City of Culture 2025 Bid
Report by	Cllr Craig Rivett, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development Cllr Letitia Smith, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism
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Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN
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Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is NOT in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	Not applicable
Wards Affected:	All Wards

Purpose and high-level overview

Purpose of Report:

To update Cabinet on ESC's joint bid with Great Yarmouth Borough Council (GYBC) for the City of Culture 2025 and secure a budget to support the bid to full submission should it be successful in being longlisted and shortlisted. The paper sets out the next steps following the submission of the expression of interest (EoI) in July 2021 and the resources required to progress to the next stage should the bid be longlisted in September.

Options:

1. Cabinet approves a request of £100k to support the development of a full City of Culture application submission should the ESC/ GYBC bid be successful in being longlisted in September 2021. This will allow ESC and GYBC, who are making a similar financial request of their Cabinet, to develop a strong and compelling application to be the host area for the 2025 City of Culture.
2. Cabinet approves a smaller amount of funding which will only allow the bid partners to develop a more limited application with less ambition and therefore less likely to succeed in winning the bid.
3. Cabinet does not approve any additional funding which means the application will be very limited with no opportunity to engage external expertise to support the development of the full application/ programme. Partners would have to seriously consider whether there is any point in allocating significant officer time to such an application as the chances of success will be remote.

Recommendations:

1. That Cabinet approve a budget of £100k to support the development of the City of Culture bid should it be longlisted.
2. That Cabinet approve the development of an East Suffolk Cultural Strategy regardless of the outcome of the City of Culture bid and the District seeks to deliver an ambitious cultural programme.

Corporate Impact Assessment

Governance:

The ES/ GY City of Culture Steering Group (Terms of Reference at appendix A) was established to direct the development of the expression of interest and associated engagement and communications strategy. If the bid is successful a board will be established with an independent, high profile chair and strong representation from the cultural/ creative and other key sectors in the two Districts. The purpose of the board will be to co-ordinate the development of the full City of Culture application which will need to be submitted in January 2022. It will be supported by a number of sub-groups reflecting the various sectors in the two districts which will be needed to develop an ambitious and compelling application. This will include the following sectors:

- Cultural and Creative

- Business sector
- Public sector
- Voluntary and Community sector

If the EoI is successful in being longlisted a bid/ delivery company will also be established probably in the form of a Community Interest Company, the board outlined above will guide the work of this company which will be accountable to the board. Any significant decision that has to be made by the two lead local authorities, i.e. ESC and GYBC will still be made by the respective Cabinets.

ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:

East Suffolk Strategic Plan
 East Suffolk Economic Growth Plan
 East Suffolk Enabling Communities Strategy
 Lowestoft Town Investment Plan
 Lowestoft Cultural Strategy

Environmental:

No direct impact identified.

Equalities and Diversity:

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken which has resulted in the bid being positive for the majority of the protected characteristic group and neutral for the remainder.

Financial:

The paper is seeking approval for £100k funding to contribute to a £200k budget to support the development of the next phase of the bid. It is proposed that this funding will come from the New Homes Bonus (NHB) Reserve. ESC/ GYBC will also be making an application for funds from New Anglia LERP and if this is successful the amount of funding required from ESC's NHB reserve will be reduced accordingly. If the EoI is longlisted ESC/GYBC will also receive £40k from DCMS to support the development of the full application. The draft budget is set out at Appendix A.

Human Resources:

Currently ESC is managing the development of the City of Culture bid within existing resources with support from an external consultant who is supporting both Councils. If our bid progresses to the next stage then additional human resources will be required to develop the full application – the additional funding being sought by both ESC and GYBC will support this.

ICT:

No direct impact identified

Legal:

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been agreed between ESC and GYBC and this sets out how the two Councils will work together to develop the City of Culture bid and how joint funding will be used. This also refers to the current governance structure

set out above. If we proceed to the next phase this MoU will be updated accordingly.

Risk:

Within all competitive bids there is a risk of not being successful. We are aware that around 20 EoIs have been submitted to DCMS in respect of the City of Culture bid and six will be longlisted in September – therefore this is a very competitive process. At this stage the two Councils have committed relatively modest amounts of expenditure to the bid, however if successful this will increase substantially and will require significantly more human resource. The risk is that this financial investment and time commitment results in an ultimately unsuccessful bid, however ESC is committed to ensuring that whatever the outcome there is a lasting legacy in the form of a district wide cultural strategy that aligns with the existing Lowestoft Cultural Strategy and an ambitious programme of cultural activities that reflects the importance of culture in supporting the delivery of the Council’s strategic Plan.

There is a further reputational risk as the ESC/ GYBC bid has become high profile within the region and if it ultimately fails there is the potential for criticism around wasted resource. This can again be mitigated by committing to a strong cultural legacy regardless of the outcome of the bid through the development of an ambitious strategy and delivery programme.

External Consultees:	The development of the EoI has involved widespread engagement and support from all sectors within the two districts and the region. This includes key businesses, regional bodies such as the LEP, all the MPs covering the two Districts, a vast array of public bodies and the community/ voluntary sector. It has been heartening to see the high degree of support and goodwill the bid has received and this is demonstrated with 120 letters being received in support of the bid.
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Strategic Plan Priorities

Select the priorities of the Strategic Plan which are supported by this proposal: <i>(Select only one primary and as many secondary as appropriate)</i>		Primary priority	Secondary priorities
T01	Growing our Economy		
P01	Build the right environment for East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P02	Attract and stimulate inward investment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P03	Maximise and grow the unique selling points of East Suffolk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P04	Business partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P05	Support and deliver infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T02	Enabling our Communities		
P06	Community Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P07	Taking positive action on what matters most	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P08	Maximising health, well-being and safety in our District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P09	Community Pride	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
T03	Maintaining Financial Sustainability		

P10	Organisational design and streamlining services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P11	Making best use of and investing in our assets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P12	Being commercially astute	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P13	Optimising our financial investments and grant opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P14	Review service delivery with partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T04	Delivering Digital Transformation		
P15	Digital by default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P16	Lean and efficient streamlined services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P17	Effective use of data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P18	Skills and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P19	District-wide digital infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T05	Caring for our Environment		
P20	Lead by example	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P21	Minimise waste, reuse materials, increase recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P22	Renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P23	Protection, education and influence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
XXX	Governance		
XXX	How ESC governs itself as an authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How does this proposal support the priorities selected?

T01 – Growing our Economy

P01: Build the right environment for East Suffolk – the development of a full application and ultimate success in the UK City of Culture competition will provide a huge boost to the local cultural and creative sector. It will result in millions of pounds of investment that will benefit the whole economy. Even if the bid is unsuccessful ESC are committing to develop an ES Cultural Strategy and ambitious delivery programme which will drive inclusive growth and enhance the already strong cultural sector which exists within the district.

P02: Attract and stimulate inward investment – Securing City of Culture status will provide international profile for the ES/ GY area and result in significant inward investment both directly within the cultural and creative sectors but also within the wider economy because of the exposure the area will receive and the amount of public and private investment that is being made.

P03: Maximise and grow the unique selling points of East Suffolk – East Suffolk’s cultural strengths are already a significant economic driver for the District from the internationally significant events that take place at Snape Maltings and Latitude to the diverse community based cultural activities taking place in Lowestoft. The high quality of our natural and built environment also creates a strong cultural sector. Achieving City of Culture status will massively enhance this on a national and international stage.

P04: Business partnerships – the delivery of City of Culture programme will require a massive partnership effort across the two districts. The business sector will be a key player in the development of these partnerships including the big blue-chip companies on our patch but just as importantly the support from the extensive SME sector. This will involve enhancing existing business partnership and also developing new ones to specifically support and deliver certain elements of the City of Culture programme.

T02 – Enabling our Communities

P06: Community Partnerships – the delivery of the full application and City of Culture programme will rely on developing strong partnership with local community groups. The bid programme will be ‘bottom up’ since this is the only way it will deliver the inclusive growth ambitions which will be of benefit to all ES communities.

P09: Community Pride – achieving City of Culture status will provide a once in a lifetime opportunity to show off what is great about East Suffolk on an international stage. A whole year of cultural activities taking place within our communities and directly involving these communities will engender such pride and provide a positive legacy well beyond the City of Culture year.

Background and Justification for Recommendation

1 Background facts

1.1 In June 2021 ESC and GYBC took the decision to submit a joint Expression of Interest (EoI) in respect of the City of Culture 2025 competition. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS) has for the first time have opened City of Culture to towns, counties, and districts. The UK City of Culture is run in a four year cycle, and the first place to receive the accolade was Derry-Londonderry in 2013, followed by Hull in 2017 and Coventry in 2021. The City of Culture is transformational, and the 2021 competition for 2025 status is an opportunity for places to put culture and creativity at the heart of their COVID 19 recovery and growth plans. The City of Culture can provide a driver for sustainable change, to build stronger communities and to attract investment. In Hull, more than 5.3 million people, 90% of Hull’s residents attended at least one of the 2,800 City of Culture events and was responsible for at least £89.3m investment and an increase to tourism of nearly 10%.

The basis of our bid is the shared opportunities and challenges which exist within the two Council areas and the particular focus both areas have had recently on pursuing ambitious cultural regeneration programmes to drive inclusive growth. The towns of Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft in particular, have a shared heritage inextricably linked to the sea and both areas are now realising huge new opportunities through innovation in offshore energy. The City of Culture bid also represents a natural progression to the successful Making Waves Together project which both Councils invested in and delivered.

Within our wider areas there is a broader and deeper cultural offer linked to the high quality of our natural and built environments, world class performing arts and globally recognised innovation and technology. We have a compelling proposition to deliver an ambitious and unique City of Culture programme that will directly address the levelling up agenda, innovation and inclusivity.

The two partners have established a City of Culture Project Steering Group which is the decision-making forum on all aspects bid development. At each stage of the bidding process (stages outlined below), the Steering Group will consider the role,

structure and membership to ensure the group remains fit for purpose.

Bid stages for the City of Culture 2025

- Expression of Interest deadline: 19 July 2021
- Announcement of longlist: early September 2021
- Announcement of shortlist: early 2022
- Visits to shortlisted places: March/April 2022
- Winner announced: May 2022

2 Current position

2.1 ESC and GYBC are currently awaiting the outcome of the recently submitted EoI with longlisted areas due to be announced in late September. The two Councils are now focussed on a high-profile engagement and communications strategy to raise awareness of the bid to ensure that as much profile as possible is generated ahead of the judging of the EoIs.

An eight week engagement plan has been developed to set out how the profile of the bid will be raised during period up to shortlisting. This plan includes a follow up with the 120 cross sector organisations which provided letters of support for the bid, the creation of a video setting out the five themes of the bid and establishing a website and heavily promoting the bid through various social media channels.

The Steering Group has also produced a draft budget which sets out the resources required to further develop the bid to full submission should we be successful in being shortlisted. The overall budget identified is £200k which is based on the funding required on previously successful City of Culture applications. Both Councils are now seeking approval from their respective Cabinets for funding to establish this budget. A funding bid is also going to be made to New Anglia LEP for up to £80k and if successful this will reduce the financial request of each Council.

3 How to address current situation

3.1 Although the Council will not know the outcome of the EoI at the time of the September Cabinet meeting clearly, we have to prepare for all eventualities. If the bid is longlisted the bidding partners will need to move quickly to develop a full submission to meet January deadline for submission of the full application. This is the rationale for seeking agreement on additional funding at this point to ensure we are well prepared and positioned if the bid is longlisted.

Preparatory work is also taking place on developing a full governance structure (outlined in the Corporate Impact Assessment section above) which will support the development of the full application. This structure, similar to the proposed budget has been based on the experience of other areas that successfully competed for the UK City of Culture.

Clearly there is now a great deal of momentum behind the bid and since this is a highly competitive process there is chance of being unsuccessful. Both Councils

	have already established ambitious cultural regeneration programmes and ESC is proposing that regardless of the outcome of the bid an East Suffolk Cultural Strategy is developed with an ambitious delivery programme that will support the realisation of the Council's Strategic Plan objectives, particularly around inclusive economic growth and enabling communities.
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4 Reason/s for recommendation

4.1	In order to develop an ambitious and compelling full application with a serious chance of success, additional funding is required to develop the application. This funding will cover expenses such as consultancy support, appointment of a temporary Artistic Director, campaign collateral, project admin., development of a funding strategy, grants/ commissions to local community and arts groups to develop ideas and a contingency fund.
4.2	Securing UK City of Culture status would provide a massive boost to the East Suffolk/ Great Yarmouth area. It would result in millions of pounds of additional investment in the area, raise the profile of the area on an international stage and create a long lasting inclusive economic growth and community development legacy. This builds on the already ambitious cultural regeneration programmes both local authorities have previously developed jointly and are currently pursuing.
4.3	Regardless of the success of the EoI, ESC is proposing to develop an East Suffolk wide cultural strategy and associated delivery programme which will build on the work developed as part of the City of Culture bid. This is important since investment in the cultural sector will strongly support the delivery of the ES Strategic Plan objectives.

Appendices

Appendices:

Appendix A	Proposed City of Culture budget
Appendix B	City of Culture Steering Group Terms of Reference
Appendix C	City of Culture vision document
Appendix D	City of Culture Expression of Interest

Background reference papers:

Date	Type	Available From
12/08/21	Equality Impact Assessment EQIA355834260	Paul Wood