



UK City of Culture 2025 Vision



Our key messages for our bid campaign centre around the unique and varied nature of our spectacular coastline with its ancient waterways and beautiful inland landscapes, our ecologically rich and diverse wildlife and the wide range of English seaside offerings from the beach huts and wild areas of the Suffolk and Norfolk coasts to the seafront splendours of our resorts.

The bid focuses on Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft and their hinterlands which have a long heritage of connections with the sea and the world beyond, and proud identities as thriving seaside destinations which are renewing themselves and their place in the world – in the renewable energy industry and as places of fertile creativity and cultural distinctiveness.

As we develop our programme, we will work with five themes to showcase our unique offering:



The irresistible pull... The sea made us, connected us, carried our influence around the world. It brought, and brings, people, cultures, ideas and energies to this most innovative, bold and welcoming place, and it is the focus of our next reinvention as the UK's leader in clean energy.



The silver darlings... So many of our stories are of migration: silver herring, people, birds. Great Yarmouth & Lowestoft were built on migrations of herring, and of people such as the Scottish herring girls, the first humans crossing Doggerland, communities welcomed from all over the world, links with partners across the North Sea and beyond.



The blue space... We will explore the healing power of water and the capacity of our landscapes for quiet, reflection and recovery with our health partners, from celebrations on water, at sea, in historic ports and tributaries that carried our forebears inland to places like Sutton Hoo; to waterways longer than Venice or Amsterdam, flotillas, regattas, community/artist boatbuilding, festivals of fire and light; and we welcome the sunrise before anywhere else in England.



The landscape that ate my heart... Our beaches and inspirational landscapes will be the great glories of 2025 – our sweeping coastline, land and water, our wildlife, and new opportunities to experience nature and culture as one. With Broads National Park, Suffolk Wildlife Trust and others, we will explore this in a physically present and digitally resonant way, as the galleries and halls for the work of contemporary artists, writers, composers, musicians, performers.



Listen to your heart and celebrate... Our towns are some of the great places of entertainment of the UK and our beaches the great playgrounds. Great Yarmouth is the home of circus and Lowestoft the spectacular celebration of First Light. Our programme will celebrate music, street performance, comedy, theatre – and our beaches will see events like no other in the country for scale and brilliance, befitting for the coast generating the UK's future energy!

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It is central to our thinking that UK City of Culture should be about both the year itself but also be profoundly transformational for our culture, our economy, our communities and our environment – and for our region generally – for many years thereafter. Hence, we are committed to an engaged and co-designed process with our communities as we develop our bid.



The Legacy...

Our cultural organisations want to be better recognised and celebrated locally, nationally and internationally, to have better resources to make great work, with resilience and the ability to plan long-term. There should be new opportunities for our own talented creatives to stay and work here successfully, particularly our young people, but also to welcome new creative businesses to the area.

Our venues and event promoters want to see a legacy of raised profile, improved infrastructure, market intelligence and position, combatting seasonality and increasing production capacity and audiences.

Our communities and residents demand sustained improvements in their lives and there is excitement about a legacy of 2025 that touches the challenges we face:

improving prosperity, creating new quality jobs, building confidence, resilience and health through engagement and improving our people's wellbeing.

We see a legacy for our environment – investment in and celebration of our journey to decarbonisation and sustainability, closer partnerships with our renewable energy sector to drive benefits to local organisations and people, increased sustainable tourism including to support the economic resilience of our environmental management organisations, and profound potential to change behaviours among both residents and visitors.

We plan a legacy in which our towns are reimagined, better known, better understood and appreciated at home and beyond – preconceptions addressed and with a new pride and confidence in our future and that of our people.

Both our Councils are already currently committed to unprecedented investment in our infrastructure and cultural sectors - with Government investment of more than £63m across the two areas by Towns Fund, Heritage Action Zones and Future High Streets funding alone – and we start from our strength in staging large scale cultural events, and welcoming visitors. Our major events and festivals, organised by our award-winning cultural organisations, include the First Light Festival and Out There Arts, while our visitor economy welcomes more than 20 million visits a year with more than 7 million staying nights.

With our Bid area less than 90 minutes from London, our renewed train network (with its operator supporting our Bid) and with good access to a range of airports and sea routes, we are ready to attract millions of new people to explore and appreciate our culture in 2025.



