

Joint Report of the Leader of City of York Council and the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Culture & Tourism

Bid to join the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation Creative Cities Network as a City of Media Arts

Summary

1. Cabinet is asked to endorse the bid to join the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Creative Cities Network as a City of Media Arts and to raise public awareness of the opportunities for the city. Designation as a City of Media Arts would bring worldwide attention to the fastest growing sector of our city economy.

Background

2. In 2010, it was reported to Council that York would be applying to be a UNESCO Creative City for the Media Arts. This noted the aims of the programme to 'help unlock the creative, social and economic potential of cultural industries and to bring together public and private partners to assist the development of creative industries and generate new forms of international cooperation'.
3. Throughout 2010 and 2011, the creative sector within the city worked to develop links with other Creative Cities and to shape a proposal. This culminated in a presentation to the Creative Cities Network Conference in Seoul in November 2011.
4. However, in November 2011, the US and Israel temporarily withdrew funding for UNESCO, and the admission of further cities to the Creative Cities Network was put on hold. Since then, the Media Arts sector within the city has continued to grow and the desire for York to be recognised as a City of Media Arts has not diminished.

5. York was recently encouraged by UNESCO to resume its bid application, and the creative sector within the city has again worked collectively to produce a revised bid, with the support of the council.

Development of the bid

6. The bid is being made on behalf of the city by a partnership of organisations across the media sector and is being steered by York@Large, the city-wide strategic group responsible for the development of culture and media arts in the city.
7. The bid document at Annex 1 describes the range of organisations involved in bringing the bid together. A significant element of the bid is to draw together an information base about York's Media Arts assets, from partners and supporters of the bid. In this sense, the sector as a whole has been instrumental in developing the case and setting out the benefits for York from a successful bid.
8. There is a website dedicated to support of the bid and it can be found here –

<http://mediacityyork.com/>

UNESCO Bid

9. The full City of York bid can be found at Annex 1. It is a strong case and one which deserves the endorsement of the council. It recognises the driving contribution of media arts to the city's quality of life, the competitiveness of the local economy, high levels of public participation, and investment in the human capital in our academic institutions. York's creative community is increasingly making its mark abroad through best-selling computer games, new music technology, immersive digital playgrounds, cutting-edge museum interpretation, and by making its cultural and creative output available across boundaries.

Supporting City Priorities

10. The designation as a City of Media Arts would act as a catalyst for new investment, connections, ideas, and exchanges. As a hub at the forefront of Media Arts, York would be prominent as a key destination for creative firms to locate, working alongside our existing companies and organisations. Through the international attention the designation would bring, there is clear opportunity to

showcase other aspects of the city, to the benefit of a range of sectors.

11. Designation would also allow the city to mobilise a campaign to encourage further community involvement and participation in media arts. We would work with communities, schools, colleges and universities through our city wide events programme to inspire others to participate in media arts and to take advantage of the opportunities afforded in the city. Additionally we will work hard through our business partners in the York Economic Partnership to further engage and support the creative arts sector in York.
12. The aims of the Creative Cities programme are summarised as follows:
 1. Strengthen the creation, production, distribution, and enjoyment of cultural goods and services at the local level;
 2. Promote creativity and creative expressions especially among vulnerable groups, including women and youth;
 3. Enhance access to and participation in cultural life as well as enjoyment of cultural goods;
 4. Integrate cultural and creative industries into local development plans;
13. The realisation of these aims will work in full support of both the growth ambitions of the city, as well as our drive to enhance the cultural infrastructure for the benefit of our communities.

Implications

14.
 - **Financial** – The council has already identified work that it intends to undertake over the next two years that will contribute directly to the media and digital sectors in the city such as the Guildhall redevelopment. Naturally this work will be coordinated with partners under the Unesco Media City brand if York is successful in its bid. The council will also allocate one of its annual apprenticeship roles to support the Media City work.
 - **Human Resources (HR)** - None
 - **Equalities** – Accessible to all

- **Legal** - None
- **Crime and Disorder** - None
- **Information Technology (IT)** – Although there are no direct implications for the council, the prominence of York as a City of Media Arts is likely to increase the interest in the connectivity of the city and the technology companies based here.
- **Property** - None

Risk Management

15. There are no specific risks associated with the bid itself. The specific risks associated with each action will be considered as the plan is developed.

Recommendations

16. Cabinet is asked to endorse the bid and to raise public awareness of the opportunity presented.

Reason: To demonstrate the ongoing support of the council for York's bid.

Contact details:

Author:	Cabinet Members and Chief Officer responsible for the report:		
Stewart Halliday Head of Strategy, Partnerships & Communications Office of the Chief Executive	Cllr James Alexander, Leader of City of York Council and Cllr Sonja Crisp, Cabinet Member for Leisure, Culture & Tourism Kersten England Chief Executive		
	Report Approved	√	Date 24 th March 2014
Specialist Implications Officer(s) None			
Wards Affected: All			√
<i>For further information please contact the authors of the report</i>			

Background Papers:

None

Annexes

Annex 1 - Bid to join the UNESCO Creative Cities Network as a City of Media Arts

Annex 2 – Endorsements, received from:

- The Chief Executive, Leader and Lord Mayor
- UK National Commission for UNESCO
- The UNESCO Cities of Media Arts: Enghien-les-Bains, Lyon and Sapporo.
- Arts Council England
- Creative and Cultural Skills
- Nesta
- Hull City Council
- Leeds City Council

(Annex 2 is available online only, although copies can be printed on request)