

Cultural Commissions: Allocating Leeds City Region Business Rate Pool Funding to York Cultural Projects

Introduction

1. This report provides an update on recent successful funding bids to the Leeds City Region Business Rates Pool to create two, related programmes of cultural activity that will:
 - Create cultural experiences that engage residents in creating a new shared vision for the city.
 - Contribute to the development of the Castle Gateway regeneration project by facilitating the use of Castle Car Park as an events space from 2019 onwards.

Recommendations

2. The Executive Member is asked to approve the approach set out in paragraphs 9 to 11 of the report to developing these programmes.
Reason: To ensure that maximum benefit is gained for the city from these successful funding bids.

Background

3. York has recently been successful in submitting two bids to the Leeds City Region (LCR) Business Rates Pool:
4. The first project concerns attracting increased investment by promoting York's strengths and assets through the development of a shared vision for the city. The approach and governance arrangements for this were approved by the Executive Member for Economic Development and Community Engagement on 4 December 2018 following discussion with key stakeholders across the city. It recognises that York is evolving, with unprecedented regeneration providing huge commercial and economic opportunity for York. It sets out to:

- a. **Engage residents:** Connect residents to the whole city, building their confidence, harnessing their energy, curating their stories to show how they are the story of York. Ensure that resident pride in the city is conveyed and harnessed.
 - b. **Evolve perception:** Build on city strengths to enhance the regional, national and international perception of York for all its key audiences.
 - c. **Attract investment:** Draw on the shared perception to build an understanding amongst inward investors and property developers of future opportunities.
 - d. **Attract visitors:** Increase spend in the tourism sector by continuing to attract a higher value and longer staying visitor.
5. Target audiences for the project are residents, employees who work but don't live in the city, higher value current and potential visitors, potential and recent property developers, inward investors and business owners.
 6. The second project concerns the master-plan to transform the Castle and Eye of York area into new public realm and year round spaces for theatre, markets and cultural events. The proposals are closely linked to the York Museums Trust's ambitious proposals to refurbish the Castle Museum and to strengthen the connection between the Museum and the Castle Gateway area.
 7. This bid has two strands that deliver vital elements of the Castle Gateway project. The first is to allow development of the detailed design of the master-plan proposals and YMT's project to happen in tandem, and the second, which is relevant to this report, is to support the continued hosting of events in the Castle Gateway in 2019, further changing public perception of the space from car park to thriving cultural hub.

The Funding

8. The bids provide for the following specific elements:

£100k	Programming in respect of the city vision
£90k	Core costs to retain the Mediale Team to develop and run the programmes
£20k	Further development of the Festival of the Rivers
£100k	To mitigate potential loss of car park income

The Proposed Approach

9. The bids specifically fund the Mediale Team to deliver these programmes in order to ensure that Mediale becomes not just a biennial festival but plays a wider role in maximising York's designation as a UNESCO City of Media Arts. This status represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to raise the social, cultural and economic standing of York for the benefit of all residents, telling the story of York as a place that is culturally-rich and creatively-pioneering, a place where cutting-edge technology and art is used to breath new life into its heritage. There is an opportunity through this programme for the Mediale team to harness the city's media arts capabilities to engage residents and to tell York's story to the world. The team will:

- Deliver four resident consultation events: Between Spring and Autumn this year the team will deliver events, convening, designing and delivering the events with interested parties and groups of residents, as defined by the appointed lead agency for the vision project. These will take place in key areas across the city, with one likely to be on Castle Car Park, attracting and appealing to residents who do not traditionally engage in cultural or consultative events, and drawing on the narrative themes to curate residents' stories. The agency will define target resident groups (such as young people) with Mediale designing content specifically to evoke target audience response that can then evolve the narrative (or demonstrate support of it), finding innovative ways to bring together and capture different views through this consultative process such that it can add to the evidence base.
- Curate a programme of community and other events on Castle Car Park. This programme will engage residents in experiencing the site and thinking about the future use of its public realm through participating in an innovative and inclusive programme of activities. This will be with the support of the ongoing My Castle Gateway project to engage the public in shaping the future of the area. These events will supplement and complement the activity already secured by the Council in the Rose Theatre, and which use other parts of the car park and other parts of the Castle Gateway area in different ways.

The Mediale Team will pull together a working group of stakeholders, largely drawn from the Castle Gateway Advisory

Group, to develop the programme. This will ensure that the programme links into the earlier My Castle Gateway consultation phase in order to draw out relevant issues for further testing through public engagement in the programme. It will also ensure that the programme helps to influence thinking about the future physical shaping of the public realm.

Some of the funding will be used to establish a small grants budget in order to stimulate and facilitate this approach.

- Design and deliver a headline piece to form part of Mediale 2020. Between Autumn 2019 and Autumn 2020 the team will commission and develop a major participatory commission for the Castle Gateway site, with a globally renowned artist / studio, and numerous artistic collaborators, locally, nationally and internationally. This will be delivered as the showpiece / headline project of the 2020 Mediale festival. This will allow a unique and locally rooted project to take place on the Castle Gateway site, while also a very different use of the space from the currently planned activities throughout 2019, whilst remaining rooted in the narrative themes developed through the city vision project.
10. To deliver these programmes the team proposes to raise an additional £55k from sponsorship, co-commissioners and a small amount from ticket sales.
11. **Festival of the Rivers:** The £20k funding will build on the current festival. It will be used for infrastructure, programming, staffing and publicity and will deliver:
- A 5-day, vibrant, inclusive, community-enhancing arts-based experience, accessible to all
 - Ensuring that the main festival is kept free of charge and extending participation
 - Enlivening the river bank and promoting positive use of the riverside in York in line with the city's new cultural strategy
 - Engaging wider collaboration with various organisations to develop the festival

Options and Analysis

12. The Executive Member may approve the approach set out above or may suggest any additional delivery elements that are consistent with the terms of the funding approval from the Leeds City Region Business Rates Pool.

13. An offer has also been made to the city by the municipality of Changsha, China (another UNESCO City of Media Arts) to deliver a major firework display on the Castle Gateway site. This display, which would involve spectacular, leading-edge, digital fireworks, would be subsidised by Changsha at a level of around £200k. It would require the Council to make a £100k contribution towards the cost of the fireworks as well as funding the staging costs. The Council will work with the Mediale team to carry out a baseline feasibility study on the proposal.

Implications

14. **Finance:** The £310k expenditure detailed in paragraph 8 is all externally funded. It has been approved within two successful bids to the Leeds City Region Business Rates Pool. The first £100k is sourced from the bid to Support Attracting Increased Investment through promotion of our Historic Assets and developing a shared vision for the City. The remaining £210k is sourced from the Castle Gateway Masterplan and Events Programme bid.
15. There are no additional Equalities, Legal, HR, IT, Crime and Disorder or other implications arising directly from this report.

Council Plan

16. The proposals in this paper support the Council Plan aim of A Prosperous City for All and A Council that Listens to Residents where:
 - We engage with our communities, listening to their views and taking them into account
 - Local businesses can thrive
 - Everyone who lives in the city can enjoy its unique heritage and range of activities
 - Visitors, businesses and residents are impressed with the quality of our city

Risk Management

17. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy the main risks that have been identified in this report are those which could lead to the inability to meet business objectives and failure to meet stakeholders' expectations, which could in turn damage the Council's image and reputation. Measured in terms of impact and likelihood, the risk score has been assessed at "Medium". This means that the risk level is acceptable but that regular, active

monitoring of progress against the programmes of activity will be required.

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	Report Approved	✓	Date 15.1.19.
Specialist Implications Officers:			
Wards Affected:			All ✓
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Background documents: LCR bid documents – available to view on the agenda supplement.