

Summary Report

Culture at the heart of Derby and Derbyshire

Derby City Council and Derbyshire County Council and their core partners have commissioned a programme of initial development work and research to prepare for a potential bid to win UK City of Culture status in 2017. DCMS is expecting to announce the timetable and process for the 2017 Year of Culture programme in summer 2010.

The report, presented by David Powell to the Derby and Derbyshire Year of Culture Steering Group in May 2010, sets out the basis on which Derby and Derbyshire¹ can prepare to make a winning proposal to its own communities and the DCMS.

The two councils and their partners have hosted a number of events in which there has been consistent, high level and enthusiastic support for getting on and making the bid. This report looks at some of the components of that task. It is not an early draft bid document.

This report reviews:

- cultural strengths to build on and opportunities to extend and improve what's on offer
- what a Year of Culture might include
- a step change delivered by a Year of Culture, and what's required for this
- what Derby and Derbyshire needs to put in place to enter the 2017 as a credible runner, and to mount a winning bid.

By participating in the competition to 2017 and in the legacy period afterwards, Derby and Derbyshire will actively seek

- to change the ways in which people view and experience culture,
- to increase their opportunities to do so and the range of ways and places in which they can do this
- to strengthen the confidence and capability of cultural bodies to deliver work of the highest quality.

The City, County and partners want to do this to strengthen and improve the ways in which cultural activity, experience and expertise can:

- bring positive benefits across the city and the county
- contribute to local prosperity
- build world class and locally distinctive skills in the cultural sector
- grow a reputation for offering residents and visitors a warm, welcoming and world class experience with culture at its heart.

¹ In this paper, Derby and Derbyshire refers to the two councils and their core partners, and Year of Culture rather than the formal "UK City of Culture".

1. To start...

People in Derby and Derbyshire have, over the centuries, generated a reputation for their home city and county as a place where great ideas are turned into practical, beautiful things. Many of its villages and market towns still celebrate centuries' old market traditions and folk ceremonies. The early industrial communities set up two of the first football and cricket clubs to help found the modern professional game. The Peak District was the place where the right to roam the national landscape was first established. Nearly eighty years ago, the Peak District was a crucial place in the struggle to win everyone the right to enjoy what is now a national park. 2017, the 85th anniversary of the mass trespass on Kinder Scout, can be an equally strong, persuasive and inspirational moment

This take on culture, creativity, crafts and arts has a focus on making things happen, and making things work. Imagination and practicality are two great strengths which the city and county can carry into the City of Culture competition.

In April 2010 we propose this vision for the Year of Culture: Derby and Derbyshire will celebrate the relationship between the local and distinctive culture at the heart of our communities' lives and the things we can do which are world class.

Three propositions have emerged from the consultations which have helped drive the Year of Culture project to this stage.

Derby and Derbyshire: "local, distinctive and world class"

The Year of Culture will connect big landscapes, world class industrial heritage, international events and ambitious producers, artists and creative companies with the best of the small and local.

Recognising that culture is at the heart of it all.

Everyone living in Derby and Derbyshire has the right to roam, the right to walk into and enjoy the widest range of cultural activities experiences and places which the city and the county can offer.

To take the big step requires many things to happen.

The single step change will be to achieve the widespread acknowledgement that culture sits at the heart of our communities' lives.

2. Local, distinctive and world class

Strengths and gaps: what's to build on and how to strengthen it

The report assesses strengths, opportunities and gaps in Derby and Derbyshire's cultural offer in 2010. Building on things that work and are in place provides a positive way forward: not all of these are widely known or appreciated within the city and county.

Strengths: City and county enjoy great heritage sites and a national park. They host more festivals and year round local cultural activity than many neighbouring counties and the presence of some of the UK's oldest sports clubs, an extensive range of voluntary sports clubs. Recent investment in

innovative cultural and educational organisations, facilities and programmes strengthens the city's leading place in digital arts and innovation and has attracted producers and developers working at the highest levels of skill, critical acclaim and ambition.

Opportunities and Gaps: Outdoor, historic, industrial venues offer a myriad of opportunities for inventive programming in unusual places. This can help broaden and diversify audiences. There is demand for a wider range and spread of contemporary performance (dance, theatre, music) and visual arts spaces throughout the city and the county. Programmes are already piloting how best to build a network of stronger festival producers and presenting organisations across county and city, recognising that there is room for sharing experience across boundaries.

As well as world class velodrome, arena and water sports facilities, new city museum and exhibition facilities are proposed, and, with the county, significant investment in libraries. County, city and other partners are working hard to secure investment in the Derwent Valley Mills project.

Projects which connect the local and the world

The report highlights projects which represent a range of local and world class cultural activity across the county and the city. It sets out how projects with genuinely international reach and reputation, alongside those with national status, the regionally distinctive and the locally distinctive, can represent Derby and Derbyshire as a place where great things happen in small and large packets.

3. Substantial change and legacy

Step change, legacy and the bidding process

The overall aim of the UK City of Culture programme is to encourage the use of culture as a catalyst of change. Derby and Derbyshire will be alert to the implications of getting the balance right between spending in the year itself and the longer term investment underpinning cultural quality and increased levels of engagement.

Step changes: delivery mechanisms for theme and vision

Consultation and visioning events generated a long list of suggestions for Derby and Derbyshire's step change, and alongside these, many ideas about the kinds of projects and programmes which might help deliver change.

The four priorities each contribute to the overall single step change which places culture at the heart of community life, and which enables and supports everyone's cultural right to roam. They also contribute to the delivery of DCMS' triple benefit line – social regeneration, economic impact and legacy:

- Encouraging new and more diverse audiences, participants, visitors and cultural tourists to enjoy a wider range of experiences in new and unexpected places
- Growing and strengthening existing festivals and celebrations as the backbone for the 2017 programme

- Delivering a number of new and heritage cultural infrastructure projects
- Binding together a chorus of voices and interests to speak collectively and authoritatively for culture at the heart of community.

Each step change needs to be doable, understandable, measurable and beneficial. Delivery targets and measures for evaluation will be tested and developed in the University of Derby's cultural research project.

4. The Year of Culture and the years before

Any bid in a competitive competition has to strike a balance between revealing the scale of its programming ambition - to set sights high and generate confidence that the extraordinary can happen - and releasing only summary details into the public domain. No programme is yet in place: this work would be advanced in the preparation for a formal bid.

2017: an explosion of ideas, a revolution in thinking.

Derby and Derbyshire's programme for the Year of Culture will celebrate all of the arts and sport, built and natural heritage, and the contributions made to local cultural experience and the life of the city and county's communities by festivals, events, and a wide range of local institutions and organisations from the university to faith groups.

Building on the existing festival framework

Derby and Derbyshire host a range of great festivals ranging in size and quality, offering a breadth of programme and experience to the public. These festivals can act as the backbone for the 2017 programme. The cultural events landscape is only one part of the annual calendar of fairs, country and village shows, sporting and other events. These provide opportunities for brave programming in unlikely places.

A fusion of heritage and culture

The county's landscape, heritage and folk culture offer great venues for extraordinary projects. The challenge will be to bring established artists and companies alongside future stars and young talent and ask them to make unexpected work in unfamiliar places, for unusual audiences.

The legacy of this approach will be to open up a much wider range of places for large scale cultural experience than are available at the moment. Custodians of property and landscapes, cultural producers, artists and companies can develop practical and effective protocols for presenting work to the public in what may be regarded as difficult sites.

Digital presence, digital future

2017 will be stronger for a serious digital dimension, engaging with the public across age, geographical and interest boundaries. The Year of Culture programme, the bid and the preceding years activities can build on the presence of locally based games development companies, digital talent and the research and teaching dynamic of the University of Derby, the Format festival and curators, artists and creative businesses.

Residencies and invitations

The Year of Culture can invite artists, scientists and technologists, makers, sportspeople, historians and archaeologists, ecologists and experts in the built and natural heritage to work in residence in the city and county during the year. The legacy would both be the works produced and projects devised and delivered, and also the confidence which local practitioners will get by working with world class names.

A scale of ambition: gems, gold and glitter

The Year of Culture will allow a number of 2017 branded events to sit with existing festival, seasonal, or venue delivered programmes. This process would allow festival and venue programmers to bring into world class quality of the Year of Culture into their 2017 programmes.

Hosted Events

DCMS has identified a number of national cultural and media events which the City of Culture might host. These include the Turner Prize award event and exhibition, the Visit Britain annual management and PR conference, and one or more national BBC programmes. The Year of Culture would allow Derbyshire Sport and its partners to bid to host one or more international, high profile sports events in cycling, and swimming.

National and international links

City, county, towns and villages, the University and a wide range of commercial businesses all have formal and informal links with community and civic partners internationally. The very diverse communities celebrate individual, family, cultural and linguistic links across the world. The UK City of Culture programme for 2017 can link with the European Capital of Culture 2017 in Denmark and Cyprus.

Programme pre 2017

The Olympic Torch visit to the county in April 2012 is a significant target date. The city and county can benefit from this as a pilot exercise for Year of Culture: 2012 programming will test the strengths of producers, events managers and venues and funders. 2017 offers all of this activity, already in the calendar, to find a natural legacy moment five years later.

Research and evaluation

The two councils and the University of Derby are working towards a long term research and evaluation project to provide baseline data and measure changes on key changes stimulated by the Year of Culture and related programmes such as Cultural Landscape. The research programme would play a major role in enabling funders, producers and others to learn from achievement between now and 2017 and beyond.

5. What needs to be in place to mount a winning bid?

Resources and budget

Derby and Derbyshire will want to visit a budget of any scale rigorously so that it both represents real value for culture and community, it palpably helps deliver step changes, and it also reflect the mood of the cultural and

wider community about the true costs and the real value of quality of life, self regard and external reputation in straitened times.

Leadership and governance

The two councils have started the process of confirming their support to continue preparations for bidding. Options to consider include developing the bid through a formal multiparty agreement, identifying one or more of the partners as lead development agent for the bid, or setting up an independent not for profit agency to devise, coordinate and deliver. A successful bid will require high level support from the councils' leadership.

Development of support

It will be important to continue to develop and consolidate support for the bid, the vision and aspiration for change it represents, its programme and the benefits this can bring to communities and a wide range of stakeholders across the city and county.

Identity, profile and communications

The Derby and Derbyshire City of Culture project requires a clear and consistent identity to be developed and promoted. This should enable a wide range of supporters and audiences to recognise its value to city and county. Early media coverage of the Derby and Derbyshire City of Culture bid project has been positive. The two councils' communications departments and others will play an important role in keeping local and regional media briefed on the benefits from the transformative effect of Derby and Derbyshire's participation in this long term cultural project.

Research and intelligence

The two councils and the University of Derby are looking at the basis in which a long term, longitudinal approach to research and evaluation can be put in place to support the City of Culture project. In addition this could be used to evaluate other major cultural programmes such as Derby City Council's Cultural Landscapes festival development programme. Research and cultural funding mechanisms are being considered for this.

Development of programme capacity

The development of programming ideas, projects and collaborative arrangements between cultural producers, promoters and venues, and with national and international artists and cultural bodies is already in hand. This process is vigorous but needs support and consolidation. Stronger links are needed between producers and venues based in the city and those elsewhere in the county. Early consideration needs to be given to promoting one or more Derby and Derbyshire wide projects.

Action Plan

An action plan for the next six months identifies work to be done to:

- Develop the basis for a 2017 bid and its supporting information
- Develop governance and management arrangements for the Year of Culture bid
- Build partner engagement; develop community and public support for the bid.