

REPORT FOR DECISION

Agenda Item	
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DECISION OF:	CABINET
DATE:	13 JANUARY 2020
SUBJECT:	BURY – GM TOWN OF CULTURE 2020: PLANS & PROPOSALS
REPORT FROM:	THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
CONTACT OFFICER:	DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPROATE CORE)
TYPE OF DECISION:	NON KEY
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/STATUS:	This paper is within the public domain
SUMMARY:	Bury was successful in its bid to become the first GM Town of Culture 2020. This report summarises the basis of the bid; activity proposals and governance for the initiative over the year ahead.
RECOMMENDATION	The Cabinet is asked to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. welcome the choice of Bury as GM Town of Culture 2020; 2. approve the Council contribution of £40k 3. approve the arrangements for implementation as set out in the report.
IMPLICATIONS:	
Corporate Aims/Policy Framework:	Do the proposals accord with the Policy Framework? Yes
Statement by the S151 Officer: Financial Implications and Risk Considerations:	The bid requires Council funding of £40,000 which has been identified from underspend in non-service specific areas. In addition a further match funds of £110,000 will be secured, for which investment proposals are set out.
Equality/Diversity implications:	No (see paragraph below)
Considered by Monitoring Officer:	

	(There are no legal or governance issues at this stage).
Wards Affected:	All
Scrutiny Interest:	Overview and Scrutiny Panel

1.0 Background

1.1 In December 2020 Bury was successful in its bid to become GM Town of Culture 2020. Bury's bid was praised for having a clear vision, being of the moment and a "powerful concept that was uplifting and life affirming". The year ahead gives Bury an important opportunity to celebrate the wealth of existing community arts and culture activity within the Borough. This papers sets out the strategic intent behind an annual Town Of Culture within Greater Manchester and our proposals for the prestigious year ahead.

2.0 The Greater Manchester Town of Culture Initiative

2.1 The Mayor of Greater Manchester has established an annual award for GM Town of Culture, designed to highlight the distinctive creativity and diversity of one of Greater Manchester's many towns. The intention is to put a spotlight on the remarkable art, culture and heritage that exists across Greater Manchester

2.2 The award is based on the UK City of Culture concept, which was introduced in 2009 by Greater Manchester Mayor, Andy Burnham, when he was Culture Secretary, built on the success of Liverpool's year as European Capital of Culture in 2008

2.3 The award includes the allocation of £50,000 of funding to develop and programme exciting events and activities that celebrate the identity of our Borough. In addition the Victoria Wood Foundation have donated a contribution of £60 000 and a further allocation of £40 000 has been committed by Bury Council.

3.0 Bury's successful bid to become GM Town of Culture 2020

3.1 Bury has been a leader in visual and performing arts for some time. The culture offer was framed within a theme of "Happy" for the GM bid. The concept is the culmination of many years of cultural development in Bury, wrapped around how the work and legacy of Victoria Wood, one of Bury's favourite daughters, made her audiences feel. The "Happy" cultural proposition has a quantitative and theoretical framing that happiness, secured from the strength of community and cultural offer, has a positive effect on well-being, quality of life, life satisfaction and social cohesion of happiness. The declared objectives are to:

- raise the regional, national and international profile of the Borough as a cultural destination
- embed Culture as a key deliverer of Bury's Strategy 2030, to raise optimism and improve life chances for our residents
- promote civic pride, strengthen community cohesion and contribute to health and wellbeing.

3.2 The *Happy* bid was produced in conjunction with the Victoria Wood Foundation, who are also making a significant funding contribution. The Council is working in partnership with the Foundation and Wood's Literary Estate in order that *Happy* feels like it has been curated in partnership with Victoria.

3.3 At the heart of the Bury proposal is a six month cultural programme exploring 'happiness' with a *Happy* festival, currently planned over Victoria's birthday weekend from Friday 15th – Sunday 17th May 2020 to showcase this. The bid proposes that a *Happy* programme will be delivered to showcase Bury's:

- visual and performing arts – both showcasing the existing offer and a focus on talent development including opportunities for trainees at *Happy* events to learn the skills involved in running events, technical skills and creative skills such as writing and performing
- great cultural venues, heritage sites and attractions and vibrant programme of activity on offer throughout the year. As well as celebrating the annual events plan, spaces will also be used to curate performances during the year and bring together local youth groups and schools with older audiences to learn to dance, to sing a song, to play an instrument, to join in with tea dances, en-masse music jams, a 'scratch' choir and social interactions that encourage conversation and learning from each other
- 'green' borough with many parks awarded Green Flag status
- stakeholders in the community who have the networks and expertise to reach people who may be socially isolated, marginalised or are from areas of deprivation, such as Age UK, Bury Library Service, Six Town Housing, the U3A and Storybox, who support residents with dementia. We intend to build on the Culture Champions model that already exists and extend it with the aim for Bury to be the most inclusive Town of Culture with support to access for those with hidden disabilities and those most at risk of social isolation/loneliness.

The bid also committed to a series of new events and opportunities including:

- a talent development programme in writing, comedy, performance, music, direction and production, offering a platform to perform, and opportunities to learn and be mentored by high quality professionals such as Victoria's Musical Directors, Hallé musicians, high profile comedians, Directors and Producers
- a series of innovative, bespoke events including:
 - a "Symposium and sharing" event based on selected items from the Victoria Wood archive;
 - the *Happy* festival itself and
 - a finale of performances at the *Happy Proms* event at Burrs Country Park, an amalgamation of all the work developed for the festival.

3.4 In addition to the programme of arts committed to within the bid, it is also proposed that the *Happy* programme includes activity across:

- each of the six town centres, as places where communities gather and culture thrives and
- a parallel workstream to develop the Sports offer as part of the physical activity strategy.

3.5 Planned outcomes and outputs from the year of celebration are:

- Arts and culture based at centre of launching Bury's 10 year strategy
- A programme of performance and participation
- the Borough's sense of identity further strengthened through community culture activity within its six Towns
- A new network of cultural organisations working together 2020 – 2022
- An increase in visitors/audiences to BAM and the Met by 20% during the project period - this matches the ambition of the Greater Manchester Cultural Strategy to increase participation in culture by 20% by 2024.
- A cohort of newly developed talent - target of 500 local residents participating in the programme and 1000 young people through schools, colleges and Bolton University.
- A 'culture' channel on the Bury Directory to showcase local opportunities, activities, events, groups and 'cultural assets' on people's doorsteps whilst promoting self-help agenda.
- A wide demographic of communities inspired to participate in activities, perhaps for the first time. Target participants to include; Jewish communities, BAME and LGBTQ participants, as diverse underrepresented groups for culture in Bury. The talent development programme, and general marketing for participation and audiences will identify routes to market specifically to these groups. Targets to be set at:
 - 10% participation/audiences - Jewish (10.2% of the population)
 - 11% participation/audiences - BAME (10.8% of the population)
 - 10% participation/audiences - LGBTQ (2.4% GM estimate of the LGBTQ+ population for 2013-2015 by ONS)
- A model for an annual festival with a sustainable programme and proven success for future funders, sponsors and audiences
- A newly launched Community Leadership Group
- Raised aspirations for the borough - the baseline of participants/audiences will be established at start of the project in January 2020 and assessed again at the end of the programme.
- New links and relationships with GM Culture Fund recipients
- A better understanding of what makes our communities happy and how culture can have an impact on happiness.

4.0 Delivery Plans and Governance

4.1 The *Happy* programme will be developed into a detailed delivery plan with clear leads and governance which will be organised across the following themes:

- Visual and performing arts
- Heritage, including an events plan for the whole of 2020 which includes the work of all partners in the borough, described above
- Social culture including all communities of interest and each of our townships
- Talent development, also led by BAM
- Town centres
- Sport

4.2 *Happy* will be led by the Council and delivered by a community governance group, at the heart of a new, community-led approach to delivery as part of Bury 2030. The constitution of this group is being developed but will include representation from:

- Bury Arts museum
 - the Met
 - the Victoria Wood Foundation, as key sponsors
 - local businesses
 - leaders of local attractions including the Fusiliers museum and East Lancs Railway
- 4.3 The Leader will provide political leadership to the programme for Bury Council and take the portfolio lead. The Leader will be supported by all Cabinet Members who will be involved as appropriate through their portfolios including:
- Corporate Affairs
 - Communities
 - Children’s services
 - Environment
 - Finance and
 - Health and care.
- 4.4 In addition to local partners there is an ambition to engage more widely across GM and nationally to deliver our year as Town of Culture, including:
- our close working relationship with core funders the Victoria Wood Foundation, her Literary Estate and colleagues will continue, in order that *Happy* feels like it has been curated in partnership with Victoria
 - The Hallé will be invited to support our talent development programmes working with new composers, new music for brass, young musicians and as part of our *Social* programme bring music to gatherings and events and to communities, both at the Museum and in care homes in the borough.
 - A network of national artists who have indicated their intent to get involved, including Jasper Rees (author and journalist - VW autobiography), Nigel Lilley, Dr Pete Deakin (Lecturer in Film Studies - University of Salford), Maxine Peake, Ted Robbins and Head of BBC Comedy.
 - Bury Arts Museum are also setting up affiliate partnerships with cultural organisations and local networks to support the outreach programme and access to the communities of Bury, including Head for the Hills, East Lancs Railway (ELR), Fusilier Museum, Bury Collective, Gang of Five, ALFA (music provision & resources for schools and the community), Bury Libraries, Local Cultural Education Partnership, local brass bands such as Besses o’ th’ Barn, local schools , Bury Hospice, Bury College, Health Innovation Manchester, MOSI, Bolton University and Salford University
 - Grass roots organisations such as Glaston-Bury, Bury Pride, Collabor8 and Prestwich Arts Festival will also be given the opportunity to align with *Happy* and access high quality arts programming through our partnerships. We will work with local, culturally important partners (such as Bury Market) to support delivery of the programme as both venues and sources of inspiration and celebration that are uniquely ‘Bury’ and provide the programme with a cultural richness
- 4.5 Discussions are taking place with Bury’s local colleges with regards to designing a logo/brand for the year as a whole, with the intention to celebrate local creative talent, and this will also be at the heart of an updated visitbury.com website to showcase the year. Similarly, a specific email address townofculture@bury.gov.uk to support co-ordination of related activity.

5.0 Funding

5.1 Total one-off resources of £150 000 are available to deliver the proposals in this paper. This is comprised of:

- £60,000 from the Victoria Wood Foundation
- £50 000 from GMCA funds
- A one-off funding commitment of £40 000 was also made by the Council as part of the bid

Allocation proposals will be made once the overall programme is developed.

6.0 Next Steps

6.1 There will be a local launch of Bury's year as Town of Culture during January, to which all delivery and associate partners referenced in this report will be invited. The purpose of this event will be to show case our success in securing the accolade and co-design the delivery plan and ideas for the year ahead.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 The Cabinet is asked to:

- i. welcome the choice of Bury as GM Town of Culture 2020;
- ii. approve the Council contribution of £40k
- iii. approve the arrangements for implementation as set out in the report.