

**Agenda Item 18
Recommendation from Cabinet
28th November 2017**

Coventry City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 28 November 2017

Present:

Members: Councillor G Duggins (Chair)
Councillor F Abbott
Councillor L Bigham
Councillor K Caan
Councillor J Innes
Councillor K Maton
Councillor J Mutton
Councillor J O'Boyle
Councillor E Ruane

Deputy Cabinet Members Councillor R Ali
Councillor R Lakha
Councillor C Thomas

Non-Voting Opposition Members: Councillor A Andrews
Councillor G Ridley

Other Members: Councillor R Bailey
Councillor J Lepoidevin
Councillor G Williams

Employees (by Directorate):

Chief Executive's People M Reeves (Chief Executive),
G Quinton (Deputy Chief Executive (People)), P Barnett, L
Gaulton, N Hart, M McGinty

Place M Yardley (Deputy Chief Executive (Place)), M Andrews,
O Aremu, D Cockroft, C Knight, L Knight, R Palmer, R Moon,
D Nuttall, T Miller, J Murphy, A Walster

Apologies: Councillor B Kaur, A Khan

RECOMMENDATIONS

84. Coventry's Bid for UK City of Culture 2021 - Council Commitments

The Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place), which set out proposals for the Council's financial commitments for the UK City of Culture

programme if the Bid is successful and for a reduced contribution towards bid legacy if the City is not selected as the UK City of Culture 2021.

A corresponding private report detailing confidential aspects of the proposals was also submitted to the meeting for consideration.

On 14th July 2015, the Council unanimously approved that the Coventry City of Culture Steering Group lead on the development of a whole-city bid for the title of UK City of Culture 2021, in doing so putting together a realistic and credible bid budget and creating a special delivery vehicle to manage the bid process. As a consequence of these decisions, the Coventry City of Culture Trust was established to lead the bid and was formally incorporated and received charitable status.

In January 2017, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) formally launched the competition for the title of UK City of Culture 2021. In July 2017, Coventry was selected as one of five destinations shortlisted for the title and in September 2017, the Trust submitted the City's final bid document. Members of the Independent Advisory Panel and DCMS have since visited the City.

It was acknowledged that the award of UK City of Culture represented more than a title. As the bidding process had demonstrated, it was an opportunity to create new partnerships, to bring communities together and to celebrate the rich heritage and unique qualities of a city. It was also an opportunity, through culture, to raise the profile of a city, to attract new investors and to enable significant regeneration in and of the place. The city effectively would have the benefit of the title for seven years from announcement, through delivery year to three years legacy.

The Council had already demonstrated significant commitment to the process of bidding, but it was considered advantageous to provide certainty of that ongoing commitment, and the security of all the title stands for, should UK City of Culture 2021 be awarded to Coventry.

Coventry had developed a partnership Cultural Strategy 2017-2027 which would endure and remain vibrant, whether or not the City was successful in its bid for UK City of Culture. The Council had, over the past three years, directly invested in the city's independent cultural sector and through Great Place and Cultural Destinations awards, to work that has commenced to reposition the city as a destination for tourism and events will progress. However, by demonstrating a clear financial commitment to (i) the City of Culture build-up programme (ii) the comprehensive programme for 2021, and (iii) the legacy period to 2024, the Council signalled its commitment for the next seven years, until a new city would deliver UK City of Culture 2025. Through phasing such investment, the Council secured sustainability in such arrangements and provided for a stable period of planning and delivery.

It was noted that, should Coventry's bid for City of Culture not be successful, the commitment of the City to its Cultural Strategy remained. Coventry would not realise the significant benefits outlined in the bid documentation, nor would it achieve the profile and recognition so many consider it should. However, by committing to a £1m investment in legacy, the Council would continue to demonstrate its commitment to the transformative power of culture and the

strength of new partnerships formed through the bidding process. The scale of emerging work could not compete with that which would be realised by a successful bid, but the Council's commitment would be likely to lever additional investment and the foundations for cultural growth, investment and impact in the city would be strengthened.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet recommend that Council:-

- 1. Commit £4.75m of Corporate Reserves for the UK City of Culture 2021 build-up programme, title year and legacy programme (across the period 2018-2024), to be drawn down if the City is awarded the title.**
- 2. Commit £0.75m of Corporate Reserves for cultural capacity funding as a legacy from the bidding process and commitment to the Coventry Cultural Strategy 2017-2027, should the City not be awarded the UK City of Culture 2021 title, to provide leverage to secure other partner commitments through the City of Culture Trust.**
- 3. Approve the Council acting as guarantor for the UK City of Culture 2021 programme, should Coventry be awarded the title for 2021.**
- 4. Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) and the Director of Finance and Corporate Services to finalise the terms and condition of the Guarantee.**