Milton Keynes Council
Bidding for Cultural Status
Feasibility Study

Executive Summary
Appendix 1 – European Capital of Culture
Appendix 2 – Action Plan

February 2015
1 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction
In autumn 2014 Milton Keynes Council appointed DHA, a team with significant expertise in both UK City of Culture and European Capital of Culture programmes, to assess the feasibility of a Milton Keynes’ bid for the UK City of Culture/European Capital of Culture competitions.

DHA was tasked with producing an honest assessment of the city’s strengths and weaknesses by using its knowledge of the requirements set by the two competitions and assessing the city’s current position through desk research, a short survey, interviews with key individuals in the city and briefing sessions with leading groups including the Arts and Heritage Alliance, the Business Board, sports sector representatives and the Events Board. This report sets out the key findings from this exercise.

1.2 Conclusions and Recommendations

Where is Milton Keynes now?

- Milton Keynes has some high quality cultural programmes and assets, but needs to work to build the capacity and ambition of the sector
- Partners need to work together to develop cultural leadership and talent in the city, work towards milestones like the 50th Birthday, and develop more ambitious programming through test case projects
- There is work to do to build the knowledge and understanding of the current offer, and how visitors, audiences, participants and others engage with it
- Funding and partnership across sectors need to be developed, to support and underpin a more ambitious programme of activities
- Further work is needed internally to develop an offer, and leadership, which can engage different stakeholders in the city, including business.

Sections 5.1 and 5.2 of this report consider these issues in detail.

- Just over half of respondents to a short survey of stakeholders feel that Milton Keynes’ cultural offer compares well with other cities outside London.
- The city’s parks and open spaces, cultural venues, architecture and urban design are felt to be the most important cultural assets at present.
- The characteristic most associated with the current cultural offer is ‘underdeveloped’.
- Developing city leadership and vision and needing financial support from other sources are felt to be the two most significant challenges in developing Milton Keynes’ cultural offer.
- The 50th Anniversary of the city is viewed as the most important opportunity for Milton Keynes culture over the next five years.
- 84% of respondents think that Milton Keynes should submit an entry for UK City of Culture 2021, or European Capital of Culture 2023.
- The most popular reasons for bidding for a cultural title are to challenge the perceptions of Milton Keynes elsewhere in the UK, and to strengthen the city’s cultural offer through sustainable investment.
- On the whole, there is support for a title bid within the city, both from the arts and culture sector and from other sectors. The city’s Economic, Growth and Regeneration Select Committee agreed in December 2014 that, at an appropriate time, the Council should be recommended to pursue a European Capital of Culture bid as a strategic priority.
**Recommendations**

1. **Milton Keynes progresses a bid for European Capital of Culture 2023 on the basis of the evidence and commitment demonstrated within the city, and the substantial potential benefits of going for a bid.** There are pros and cons of bidding for either UK or European titles. The latter title demands more commitment (and money) but could work better for the city because it more closely matches the profiles of previous winners and because there is more time to prepare a bid. The bidding process for European Capital of Culture lays out six key requirements, and involves an initial bid (with an estimated cost of c. £150k), followed by a final bid if a city is shortlisted. A final bid is more substantial and costly to produce. Emphasis in the selection process is on a credible bid, with realistic plans for fundraising and building capacity to deliver a programme. We anticipate that cities will be bidding with projected budgets of £35million or more.

2. **The city develops a process to generate cross-city support for a bid** and identifies a coalition of champions and agencies willing to help deliver the significant work needed to develop a credible bid, particularly around developing the city’s cultural infrastructure and track record. NB: Bids must be led by arts and cultural programmes and activities, rather than sports or other leisure activities.

3. **The city builds the capacity of the cultural leaders in the city.**

4. **The city builds the funding and resource base for culture and develops an effective knowledge base.**

5. **The city explores a narrative which focuses on Milton Keynes’ status as a continually growing new town and defines/describes the unique challenge of city development in the Milton Keynes context, i.e. the city’s need to bid.**

**Next steps**

- The city develops a partnership group to provide leadership.
- Establishes processes for working with cultural partners to develop capacity and enhance current programming.
- Visits and engages with previous host cities to learn more about being a European Capital of Culture.
- Explores ways in which the resources and knowledge base for cultural activity in Milton Keynes can be developed.
Appendix 1 - European Capital of Culture 2023

1.3 Bidding

- Six key criteria for bidding:
  - Long-term strategy
  - European Dimension
  - Cultural and artistic content
  - Capacity to deliver
  - Outreach
  - Management
- Europe sets out the questions and most of the judging Panel; DCMS determines the process and contributes to the judging Panel.
- Two-stage process: initial bid and shortlisting, then final bid and visit.
- Longer timetable than UK City of Culture.
- Previous European Capitals of Culture vary significantly in size, scale and budget.
- There are some examples of cities which could offer a similar proposition to Milton Keynes (but not from the UK)
- Likely bid process will run from 2016/17 to 2018; but cities will start preparing for this now.

1.3.1 Guidance and requirements

The current guidance and requirements for the European Capital of Culture bidding process are laid out in three key documents:
- The template/draft ‘Call for Submission of Applications’ which includes the ‘application form’ which all competitions must include;
- The guide for cities preparing to bid.

This section offers an overview of the guidance and requirements, and highlights any key issues. In addition, some broad examples from previous ECoCs are referred to. Any specific references for successful bidders are taken from the recent study of ECoCs or from the Impacts 08 study of Liverpool 2008:

The documents referred to here are listed in Appendix A and included in the supporting resources to this report.

Key Criteria

Article 5 of Decision No. 445/2014/EU lays out the six categories which bidding criteria are grouped into. Within these categories, key points are laid out below:
1. ‘Contribution to the long-term strategy’
   - Requires a city to demonstrate a cultural strategy in place at the time of application, and
to include in the application plans to develop relationships between culture and other
areas of the city, for culture to contribute to urban development in the long-term and
committing to evaluation and monitoring processes for being an ECoC.

2. ‘European dimension’
   - Requires a city to demonstrate a planned programme including activities which reflect a
European dimension, including dialogue between European cultures, recognising
historical and current European themes/issues, engaging with artists and other
European city (including other hosting cities in the same year) and reflecting a
European/International profile.

3. ‘Cultural and artistic content’
   - Requires a city to demonstrate a clear vision and strategy for the programme,
involvement from the local cultural sector from the bidding and development stage, and
a programme of significant quality and range.

4. ‘Capacity to deliver’
   - Requires a city to demonstrate strong political support and commitment from relevant
local/national authorities and a viable proposal for infrastructures to deliver the plans (in
some cases, this includes plans for capital developments).

5. ‘Outreach’
   - Requires a city to demonstrate engagement with communities in the bid and proposed
plans, strategy for audience development and supporting different groups to participate
(particularly those who may not normally do so).

6. ‘Management’
   - Requires a city to demonstrate a realistic budget and strategy for fund-raising, proposed
governance and delivery structures, processes for appointing senior expertise to support
delivery and a clear marketing and communications plan.

Selection Process

The new Decision (445) outlines arrangements for different stages of the process (shown in the next
section of this report) and for the expert panel who will make a decision. There are a number of
elements of the process laid out in the Decision which are common to all ECoC bidding processes,
namely:

- A 10-person, expert panel is appointed by European bodies. The panel is not country-
specific. The panel receives the bids, supplies feedback and makes recommendations for
both shortlisting and final selection to the hosting Member State in any given year. The
panel can also recommend that no award be made (see Article 6, Decision 445 for more
information on the Panel).¹
- The Decision also lays out the six categories for assessment, with criteria beneath each (as
outlined above; see Article 5, Decision 445).

¹ A recent chair of the Selection Panel blogs here about the UK selection for 2023:
• There is a common application form, based on these categories and criteria, which all candidate cities must use.
• There are some minimum requirements for the timetable which selection should follow (these are included in the next section of this report), and for the different stages of the process.
• There are also some guidelines specifically relating to evaluation and monitoring, which must be reflected in the bid plans (see Guidelines for Cities’ Own Evaluations).

Within a hosting Member State (i.e. the UK for 2023 designation) certain elements of the Selection Process can be determined:
• Two experts may be selected by the Member State to join the expert panel appointed by European bodies, for that Member State’s selection and monitoring process. The way in which they are selected is up to the Member State in question.
• Member States organise both the process of competition and the timetable, providing they incorporate the categories for assessment, common application form and minimum requirements for the timetable all referred to above.

There will be a balance of input from Europe and the hosting Member State. This makes it possible that some of the approach used for the UK City of Culture programme may be considered when DCMS/equivalent sets out of the process of competition for the European Capital of Culture 2023 process. However, there are also clear criteria and questions already laid out which will be included.

Key Considerations

The bidding process for the European Capital of Culture designation is more substantial and onerous than that for the UK City of Culture, and the scale of material required is more demanding. However the timetable is longer and allows a journey, which in itself will build capacity, strengthen relationships and galvanise partners around the rallying call of the bid. As the event only happens in the UK every 15 or so years, the intervention and impact is potentially greater. A key consideration will be testing whether Milton Keynes can tool up and realistically raise the budgets required. It will be worth considering what impact previous UK cities who have held the title may have on the judging panel, which will include both UK-based judges and a substantial proportion who will have engaged with the ECoC process in other parts of Europe. From the perspective of UK judges, there may be a move away from ‘gritty northern cities’ (the model of regenerating post-industrial cities) with significant social and economic challenges, and more of an emphasis in supporting innovation and how modern Britain fits into Europe, and contributes to Europe’s place in the world. As it stands, neither the UK nor the European competitions have designated status to a UK city south of the M62, or in Wales.

The key criteria to meet will be to demonstrate what kind of transformation or step change can be achieved. It may be possible, however, to argue that a step change can be equally impactful in the context of innovation and a contemporary, economically successful city. There are some possible examples of this move from recent ECoCs. Linz 2009, for example, aimed to achieve image change for a city which has a strong, contemporary industrial base but was relatively less well-known in terms of tourism. Linz 2009 made the case in its bid/preparations for the city as a ‘laboratory of the future’ for an exploration of ‘industry, culture and nature’.

The European Capital of Culture application process specifically requires a ‘European Dimension’ to be demonstrated. Whilst there are no set requirements as to how this is achieved, developing activity with partners in Europe is a usual approach. Developing such partnerships takes time
significant time (particularly if a city wishes at the bidding stage to demonstrate these partnerships being in place). There are funds available from British Council and from Europe for such activity (e.g. ERASMUS) and the lead for these partnerships from the bidding city should be with cultural organisations, as they will ultimately be where the partnerships lie. Relatively low-cost capacity building work can be undertaken to support this, working with Creative Europe and training providers such as Euclid.

Across the European Capital of Culture programme, sizes of area and budget vary significantly. The two previous UK designations were lead strongly by cities (rather than wider areas) with medium-sized populations (Glasgow 1990 with just less than 600,000, Liverpool 2008 with c. 470,000). Other ECoCs from the last ten years have included applications with significant larger areas and populations, such as Essen for the Ruhr 2010 (c. 5m) and Luxembourg Greater Region 2007(c. 11m), and Marseille-Provence 2013 (1.8m) where a specific case was made for exploring the relationship between a city and a wider region. Similar, more focused geographical areas have included smaller cities, such as Maribor 2012 and Mons 2015 (both with populations just under 100,000). An interesting comparison for Milton Keynes could be Linz 2009, which had a population size of almost 200,000, and included some of the wider local area in its activity (Greater Linz has a population of a similar size to Milton Keynes).

Similarly, the budgetary size of ECoCs varies significantly. The median operating budget (not including capital expenditure on new venues, infrastructure, etc.) for ECoCs between 2005 and 2013 was €37m. Of recent ECoCs, Liverpool 2008 had a particularly high budget of £129m. It is worth noting that this was the total budget across four years of themed activity (leading up to and including the host year), and that this operating budget included committed revenue funds from the City Council which, at least to some level, would have been spent on cultural activities/grants regardless of the ECoC. By comparison, Cork 2005, Sibiu 2007, Vilnius 2009 and Tallinn 2011 all had operating budgets of less than €20m. Budget levels are not always an indication of city size, however; Linz 2009 had an operating budget of €75m.

On the whole, ECoC selection from the perspective of the standing expert panel is unlikely to be driven by size of authority or budget; instead, a city will need to demonstrate that it is delivering conceptually, artistically and economically for the UK. Within the guidance, there is also a clear emphasis upon the most important beneficiaries of the programme being a designated city’s residents; tourism is considered valuable (and is a common aim for bidding cities), but the guidance requires a primary focus on the benefit to local citizens.

There are likely to be fewer candidates for European Capital of Culture 2023 than for the next UK City of Culture programme, for various reasons:
- Many of the main contenders bid last time went on to do other things, and are therefore unlikely to wish to bid again
- The economic climate makes it challenging for some authorities to consider such a commitment politically
- The uncertainty over EU referenda post 2015 elections may be a factor.

At this stage, early thoughts on relevant previous examples of European Capitals of Culture include:
- Stavanger 2008, a relatively small ECoC, but also an economically successful city.
- Linz 2009, which bid with a strong focus on the idea of the ‘creative city’ and the city as ‘laboratory of the future’ in relation to its industrial base (as a major steel producer), and

2 Data on the population sizes of ECoC areas is available in the 2013 study: ‘European Capitals of Culture. Success strategies and long-term effects’.
which traditionally was not a particularly strong destination for tourism, or a particularly strong cultural profile.

- Essen for the Ruhr 2010, which sought to emphasise engagement with a young and diverse population, and to develop its creative industries. Also a major economic/industrial base for the country.
- Turku 2011, which had a particular focus on well-being and is a strong hi-tech economic base.
- Tallinn 2011, which sought to emphasise its relationship to hi-tech Nordic countries, and discard its post-communist profile.
- Mons 2015, which has the slogan ‘where technology meets culture’ and is looking to partner with several hi-tech employers in the city.

There are many other cities who may have useful learning and lessons for Milton Keynes, but this brief selection indicates some of the cities who may have tested (to some extent) the kind of proposition which a city like Milton Keynes would probably need to make. Milton Keynes, if successful, would join a network of over 50 European cities and positioning itself alongside the likes of Berlin, Brussels, Stockholm and Istanbul.

### 1.3.2 Timescales

The following table shows a possible timetable for the ECoC 2023 application process. EU guidelines set minimum/maximum time periods; beyond this, Member States can set their own timetables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When</th>
<th>What</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Now</td>
<td>Informal preparations by cities: consulting, gaining support from stakeholders, communities and through the media. Learning from across previous ECoCs indicates that cities who start preparing early, both in terms of city strategy and in engaging with different groups, bid better.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Late 2016 (min. 6 yrs prior)        | UK publishes call and competition process for cities to bid to be ECoC 2023[
| August 2017 (min. 10 mths from published call) | Deadline for initial bids                                                    |
| 2017 (min. 5 yrs prior)             | Expert panel convened. Panel reviews bids, shortlists, produces a ‘Pre-Selection’ report which includes recommendations for shortlisted cities to work on. |
| End of 2017                          | Shortlisted cities revise and complete bids, responding to any specific recommendations from ‘Pre-Selection’ report. |
| Mid 2018 (max. 9 mths from Pre-Selection process) | Expert panel meets with/visits all shortlisted cities. |
| 2018                                | Expert panel convenes to select a city, issues report including recommendations for the selected city in delivery. |
| 2018 (min. 4 yrs prior)             | Member State designates a city ECoC 2023, based on recommendations from expert panel. |

---

3 Tallinn had some very particular challenges in terms of political support and reduced budgets, and is sometimes used as an example of why cross-party political support is so important. However, the main themes and approach of the bid could be a useful reference point.

4 The timescales indicated here for the European Capital of Culture bidding process are taken from the indicative timescales given in the DCM consultation on UK City of Culture and European Capital of Culture bidding schedules; documentation is available here: [https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/uk-city-of-culture-consultation](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/uk-city-of-culture-consultation)
The guidance supplied by the EU for cities preparing an ECoC bid recommends that most successful ECoCs begin their preparations between 2 and 3 years prior to the formal call for bids. Within the UK, for example, Leeds has already publicly engaged in discussions about whether the city should bid for the title in 2023, whilst Birmingham has publicly ruled itself out of bidding.

1.4 Bidding Activities and Costs

- Similar bidding process to UK City of Culture, but longer and more ambitious.
- Engaging a wide range of stakeholders is key: demonstrating that support is a major part of a credible bid.
- Bidding has three elements:
  - Developing capacity, trying programmes out and making connections
  - Delivering an initial bid
  - Delivering a final bid
- Cities develop their bidding budgets as the bidding process progresses. Local authorities are important funders, but usually cities will bring in support from other agencies, partners, the cultural sector, through funded projects which test and build capacity and by developing data and knowledge which can contribute a city’s development plans beyond the bidding process.
- Cities across Europe are now bidding with overall budgets of €1million, including cash and in-kind support from a range of different places. However, we estimate that initial bid cash costs may be closer to £150k.
- Bidding activities/resources should include: visits and learning from other cities; technical assessments, research and mapping; a dedicated bid team; consultations and events for stakeholders; producing a bid and supporting materials; communications; and general capacity building.

The process of creating a viable bid for cultural status is about connecting information, ideas, ambitions and people (in a way which doesn’t usually happen in most cities) to create a cohesive and compelling case. The key difference in bidding for European Capital of Culture (rather than for UK City of Culture) is the scale and duration of engagement, and the ambition which resulting plans should show.

1.4.1 Stakeholder Engagement

Engagement of key stakeholders – from the cultural sector to business, the media and the public at large - is critical to this process in terms of developing a bid. It must go beyond mere awareness-raising, to ensuring that demonstrable and active support can be evidenced in the bid. Ownership from each key sector is crucial, for: the year itself; the vision/narrative which the bidding authority has created around it; and the legacy which it promises to leave. Activities discussed here are laid out by stakeholder group.

Public/community

The Panel will need to know that the whole city is behind the bid, that it believes, needs and wants the vision the bid sets out – and that members of the general public feel at least some ownership of the whole thing. Public engagement must work on a city-wide level, demonstrating this general groundswell of support. Cities bidding for cultural titles have used creative methods, such as cultural events, school projects and other ways to engage the public in not only demonstrating their support, but in developing ideas. It is worth noting in the case of the Liverpool bid that Liverpool seconded members of existing cultural organisations who had particularly responsibilities for community
engagement into the bid team, to work with communities to develop the section on community programming.\(^5\)

Public engagement must also target specific sectors of the population as part of proving that the bid can genuinely widen participation and reach different groups to deliver these changes. This is likely to require significant engagement with community groups and organisations, and with cultural sector organisations who have existing programmes and credentials in this area. For a European Capital of Culture bid, this could be a significant opportunity to develop the quality of knowledge and information in the city about who engages in what, and why.

This kind of focused engagement is essential. Hull’s experience in the panel interview (discussed later in the section on UK City of Culture) is a good example of why the real voices of local residents can bring something to a bid which other champions can’t.

One of Milton Keynes strengths is the range of nationalities and languages spoken in the city. It will be important to reflect these communities in any public engagement.

**Cultural sector**

The bid programme must have ‘terroir’ and feel like could come only come from the bidding city. Engaging local cultural organisations – from NPOs to independent creatives/artists - through workshops and surveys at the earliest possible stage is critical in helping achieve this both at a strategic level (themes for the year and bid narrative) and in terms of potential specific programming opportunities, and building the overall resource base for a bid. Existing partnerships should be built upon, and major cultural agencies in the wider region engaged with; in addition, towards the later stages, relationships with national cultural partners might also play a part.

Bidders for European Capital of Culture are specifically required to develop a European Dimension to their programme. Liverpool ran a programme called ‘Cities on the Edge’ with a range of other port cities, including shared programming and projects; whilst this was successful, potentially Liverpool could have sought significantly more funding from Europe had the relevant project development been clearer and more specific to European funding requirements. Any future UK European Capital of Culture has a real opportunity to do this well.

**Business**

Bids must demonstrate that business has had a role in developing the bid/vision, (through workshops involving all sizes of local businesses, civic receptions for major local companies and other consultation mechanisms); that a range of businesses (of all sizes) have been involved and that a sufficient number of them could be persuaded to provide additional funding for the year, as corporate investment will be a considered a key element of the feasibility of bid plans, and may be particularly important for Milton Keynes in terms of the overall balance of funding. For example, Hull developed the 2017 Angels business pledge. There may also be some interesting learning from the Cultural Olympiad, and the role which LOCOG played in brokering relationships between businesses and individual projects, particularly those which were part of the London 2012 Festival. The Grande Depart and Commonwealth Games have also heightened business interest in large scale cultural events.

---

\(^5\) This became the Creative Communities programme, which at the time was the largest, dedicated programmes for community participation in a European Capital of Culture programme.
Business also needs to be directly involved in championing and leading the bid, with suitable representatives included on relevant bid steering groups and committees and acting as bid ambassadors, using their contacts to recruit more businesses (for example, Hull recruited an energetic and high profile young 24 year old entrepreneur to its bid team). Key businesses also need to be willing to provide letters of support, which can be included as evidence in the final bid submission. There will need to be some thought about the ways in which different businesses can demonstrate their support – Liverpool included a ‘window sticker’ in its marketing materials at the bid stage which local businesses could use to demonstrate their support. When the judges visit, the city has to be clearly seen to be supporting the bid. Ways need to be found to get retailers, transport operators and other public facing businesses to sign up to the bid.

**Tourism Businesses and Agencies**

A particularly important set of stakeholders in a European Capital of Culture bid is likely to be the tourism infrastructure. Whilst the bidding guidance for European Capitals of Culture is clear that the primary beneficiaries of the title should be a city’s citizens, the majority of hosting cities seek to develop their tourism through the title. Liverpool 2008 is a particularly successful example of this, and was supported by changes taking place in the city (e.g. new hotels, city centre redevelopment); importantly, the city sought to plan these various developments with reference to each other.

Conversations are needed with businesses in each field to understand the area’s relevant current strengths and weaknesses and map out potential opportunities and synergies for each. There are useful examples from other cities, which could be explored through city visits, such as the relationship with Virgin for Liverpool.

**Media**

Getting the media involved at the right time is fundamental. Local media have to be won over, persuaded that they are part of the bid ‘partnership’, and given a clear role in the process as bid champions – or they will revert to cynical knocking stories which change the whole mood of the public support.

**Political Support**

Strong, cross-party political support is considered a fundamental element of feasibility for European Capital of Culture bids. On the whole, European Capital of Culture bids can tend to be less concerned with engaging celebrities/national influencers on their behalf, though there can be a place for such involvement. More generally, the weight of serious partnerships (e.g. with business, cultural institutions, high-profile artists) is likely to be more significant for a judging panel. The support of significant agencies such as the LEP, HEIs and other education institutions, and other infrastructure partners will be valuable.

**City Development**

Fundamentally, the panel for European Capital of Culture are looking to see that a city wishes to build culture into/enable culture to lead city development. In terms of demonstrating this in a bid, this usually needs to go beyond broad aims in official city strategies, to actually showing tangible ways in which culture can enhance, change and innovate in different areas of the city. Milton Keynes is potentially an exciting prospect for a European Capital of Culture if it is prepared to really provide space for cultural intervention in the development of this fast-growing city.
1.4.2 Budgets and Resources for Bidding

The cost of bidding for either an UK or European designation needs to be seen as a positive investment in a city, and the cost benefit analysis will almost certainly show that the city has built capacity, awareness in its offer and strengthened the support for culture with new partners. For example, in the process of bidding, NewcastleGateshead also transformed perceptions of the area, raised significant funds (over £50m) for a five-year programme of events and left a legacy of much stronger partnerships in the city. Norwich went on to bid (and be shortlisted) for UK City of Culture 2013, significantly developed the scope and scale of the Norfolk and Norwich Festival (and its investment from key partners) and have subsequently become a UNESCO City of Literature.

Cities develop their bidding budgets throughout the bidding process, and as partners come forward with support they might offer or opportunities emerge. The following commentary, therefore, gives some useful indications of bidding activities which will need funding, types of resources and the overall envelope of costs. It is difficult, at this stage, to be more specific (particularly as the process for bidding will not yet be published by DCMS for some time).

Bidding for the initial stage is likely to be significantly less expensive than a full bid. There are three broad elements of bidding in terms of cost:

1. **General preparations and developing track record/capacity to bid**, including development of work with international partners. Potentially, this kind of activity can be supported by fundraising for pilot/developmental work. For example, international partners could be built through a European funding bid for a project, supporting a city to develop the partnerships as well as undertake meaningful cultural activity and develop capacity and track record.

2. **Submission of an initial or outline bid**, prior to shortlisting – this requires bid writing, often some technical assessment/estimates, research, secondments, some basic fundraising work.

3. **Development and submission of a full bid**, which is likely to be significantly more expensive than an initial submission. At the full bid stage, the broader benefits of bidding (profile particularly) are likely to also be felt by cities. In addition, some items (e.g. technical assessments, creative processes, building audience and visitor information) are not ‘sunken costs’, but (if well designed) can be useful regardless of the outcome of a bid.

Local authorities are under great scrutiny for bidding costs and investment in consultants, but inevitably any bidding city will require external expertise and there are few cities that have in-house teams with direct experience of bidding for these kinds of programmes. We understand from a senior individual who has worked on a number of European Capital of Culture bids that it is not uncommon for bid budgets to exceed €1m, but that this cost is often spread over several years and elements. The process for UK cities to bid to be European Capital of Culture is also not yet published, but we estimate that an initial bid might cost in the region of £150k in terms of key dedicated staff and/or external consultancy. This may change depending on the degree to which particular requirements are set against this initial bid stage; however, assuming a broadly similar approach (proportionally) is taken as is used with the UK City of Culture process, this would seem reasonable.

For UK cities bidding in 2002/2003, investment came from local authorities, Regional Development Agencies, ERDF funds (in the case of Liverpool, which had Objective One status), the private sector, tourism budgets and other partners (such as higher education institutions). Both NewcastleGateshead (spending £500,000) and Liverpool (where a total value of £2million for the bid and associated activities is cited in the final bid) were involved in an extended process for about two years. Liverpool engaged Sir Bob Scott (who had lead Manchester’s successful Commonwealth Games bid) to lead a team, including secondments from institutions/organisations within the city to form a bid team. NewcastleGateshead appointed a lead bid director for two years (with a cost of a
senior CEOs salary) with a team of four, working almost full time on the bid for the two years. The bid costs were offset in both cases by a mix of public private sector support with the local authorities playing the key role of cashflowing the bid process.

Bidding activities which is relevant to a European Capital of Culture bidding process, and an explanation of different budget areas and resource approaches which would need to be considered by Milton Keynes in assessing the potential cost of engaging in a bidding process.
In determining possible costs for bidding to be an ECoC, the activities listed in the table below would require some level of budgeting and provide a framework for working up some costings, based upon available investment and resources internal to a city. In addition to cash, stakeholders should be encouraged to contribute a range of in-kind support, including: staff expertise and guidance; taking a lead, where appropriate, on individual elements of the bid; data, knowledge sources, contacts lists; and venues and events which could usefully ‘double’ as routes for consultation and development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Resources Required</th>
<th>Where the funding/support might come from</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning from others – visits and expert advice</td>
<td>- Contacts in relevant cities&lt;br&gt;- Budgets for travelling for bid team&lt;br&gt;- Budgets for expert advice&lt;br&gt;- Time of bid team/key city stakeholders</td>
<td>- Council&lt;br&gt;- Contributions from other city development stakeholders (e.g. Destination MK, LEP), if visits include stakeholders from these groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical assessment, research and mapping</td>
<td>- Contribution of data from key stakeholders, where appropriate&lt;br&gt;- Best practice models, where appropriate (e.g. Arts Council’s segmentation model)&lt;br&gt;- Specialist expertise, if not available in Council or other stakeholder (e.g. Destination MK) – in some cases, it is preferable to commission work from an external agency in order to ensure work which is seen as robust and brings the benefit of an external view&lt;br&gt;- Time of bid team/Council to act as the client</td>
<td>- Council&lt;br&gt;- Contributions from other city development stakeholders (e.g. Destination MK, LEP), where knowledge assets are useful beyond bidding&lt;br&gt;- Arts Council England, where strategic funds coincide (e.g. Creative People and Places, Cultural Destinations, etc)&lt;br&gt;- Cultural organisations, where knowledge assets are useful beyond bidding&lt;br&gt;- European-funded projects, if bid for early enough, can sometimes include developing data/knowledge for use in a project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A bid team</td>
<td>- A dedicated team to lead a bid; this is likely to require 2/3 full time members of staff, including one senior appointee&lt;br&gt;- Potential secondments for specific elements/projects from the Council/cultural organisations/other stakeholders&lt;br&gt;- Most cities are also likely to bring in some external expertise here (rather than just second within a city), including some expertise from individuals/agencies who have bid before&lt;br&gt;- Input/leading from other partners (e.g. LEP could be a client for economic modelling, Destination MK for any work on tourism)&lt;br&gt;- Steering Group, to involve a range of key stakeholders</td>
<td>- Council&lt;br&gt;- Contributions from other city development stakeholders (e.g. Destination MK, LEP), where particular expertise/secondment/client responsibilities can be offered&lt;br&gt;- Cultural organisations, where commitments can be managed within existing resources or contributions can be supported through project budgets (e.g. a European-funded network or project)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Resources Required</td>
<td>Where the funding/support might come from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Consultation and events | • Formal consultation routes (e.g. Council systems)  
  • Informal consultation opportunities, e.g. cultural/community events  
  • Time of bid team and key stakeholders to contribute to/lead sessions  
  • External expertise to support/provide critical friend role | • Council  
  • Contributions from other city development stakeholders (e.g. Destination MK, LEP)  
  • Contributions from other public agencies (e.g. health and education partners)  
  • Contributions from community organisations  
  • Contributions from cultural organisations |
| Producing a bid      | • Time of the bid team, including those seconded  
  • Specific expertise to draft, meet technical requirements and bring together a robust response to the application requirements  
  • Design and other production expertise (could be sourced within the city, either from Council or other partners, e.g. an early sponsor), depending on existing options | • Council  
  • Contributions from other city development stakeholders (e.g. Destination MK, LEP), where particular expertise/secondment/client responsibilities can be offered  
  • Cultural organisations, where commitments can be managed within existing resources |
| Communications       | • Ongoing media engagement and management  
  • Could be undertaken by the Council, though sometimes external expertise can be valuable | • Council  
  • Contributions from other city development stakeholders (e.g. Destination MK, LEP) |
| Building Capacity    | • Time of the bid team, including those seconded  
  • Involvement from the cultural sector, bringing their programmes and ideas to the table  
  • Involvement from the community sector, and from other agencies where possible  
  • Potentially useful to bring in some external expertise here, to support participants in developing ideas | • Council  
  • Cultural organisations  
  • Community sector, other agencies where appropriate |

Below are more detailed commentary on what these different activities might involve.
Learning from others

Cities who have bid to be European Capital of Culture will often keep substantial bidding archives and be happy to share those archives and the experience. It is not within the scope of this study to interrogate all of the detail of these, but learning and facilitated study visits to other cities both in the UK and in Europe is strongly recommended.

Should Milton Keynes decide to pursue a potential European Capital of Culture bid, there are experts such as Bob Palmer (with substantial experience of ECoCs, and panel member for EU and UK bids) that would be worth inviting to provide some advice on the most successful models of bids.

Technical Assessment, Research and Mapping

In the case of Liverpool, a range of activities was undertaken to consider the feasibility of potential related infrastructure developments, and to assess the potential economic impacts of the title. In some cases, grants were given to cultural organisations/bodies, who then appointed expert teams to undertake feasibility (for example, a feasibility study on the development of the Philharmonic Hall was undertaken). In other cases, such as the economic impact assessment, the council acted as the client and appointed an agency to undertake the work.

Other activities which might be included and require specific external expertise, depending on the strength of existing data and evidence in the city, could include:
- Audience data and mapping, to underpin any audience development/marketing plans
- Public and business perceptions surveys
- Visitor data and mapping
- Mapping the cultural offer in detail, producing events listings

These activities can all support the robustness and relevance of a bid, help to bring the ambitions of different potential partners to bear on the bid and build stakeholder confidence in the value of bidding and in the proposed plans. They can also, in many cases, be useful for building the knowledge base and planning tools for the city and its cultural offer beyond the confines of bidding requirements. As such, support from different partners to undertake this work could be sought on the basis that these knowledge assets/systems are investments outside the bidding process.

A bid team

A bid team will be required to undertake and drive a range of processes, including gathering data, supporting consultations and developing the bid propositions and the programme for the year itself. Most cities may require at least some external expertise to:
- Lead a process and engage key stakeholders
- Develop the programme, providing the necessary curatorial/programming and producing expertise
- Write, edit and proof the bid
- Bring together technical information to support the bid

In some cases, cities also second staff from within cultural or other relevant organisations, or from local authority structures, to support the bid process. This can be particularly useful in terms of demonstrating that the bid is genuinely owned by the city, as well as building the capacity of those involved. In the case of a European Capital of Culture bid, secondments may be substantial and require the costs of back-filling posts to be included.

Consultations and events
As outlined in Section 3.4 on bidding activities, engaging a wide range of stakeholders is a key part of bidding. Events could include formal consultations, town hall meetings, creative events engaging different groups, pilot cultural activities. Partners may be able to contribute significantly to activities like these, particularly in kind.

Producing a bid

There are some basic costs involved in producing a bid, from design and print to producing separate, publicly-facing summaries.

Communications

PR events, press and media activity, dressing the city, and hosting VIP visits are all important activities at different stages of the bidding process, particularly in the case of Panel visits in the European Capital of Culture bidding process. A range of materials will be required to support these activities, including print and audio-visual materials, good quality photographs of the city, activities and people, etc. Hull maximised the use of social media but this needed dedicated staffing and support to get a whole city behind the bid.

Building Capacity

In gaining involvement from the local cultural sector and community in the bid, it is important to consider what kinds of training, networking and capacity building activities may need to be supported, to enable individuals and organisations to properly contribute, particularly where the sector may be being encouraged to think about new activities or engage with different kinds of funding.

More generally, particularly in the context of a European Capital of Culture bid process (which is longer than that of a UK City of Culture), undertaking some of the research and development activities required to establish European and international partnerships and programmes could be supported through European funding, by ensuring that pilot activities are included.

1.5 Delivering the title

- The EU Decision prescribes:
  - A requirement for co-operating between cities designated for the same year.
  - A monitoring process between the city and the Expert Panel, including potential Panel visits to the city, and timetables.
  - A process for awarding the Melina Mercouri Prize (€1.5m), EU funding dedicated to the programme
  - How the European Union should be acknowledged
  - Evaluation requirements and timetables.
1.5.1 Formal Requirements

This section briefly outlines the main activities proscribed in the EU Decision 445 and through the formal guidance, as follows:

- **Co-operation between designated cities**
  - Requires that cities designated to host the title in the same year should look for opportunities to develop links between their programmes. Potentially, this is part of the formal monitoring process which is applied by the European Commission.

- **Monitoring progress**
  - Requires that the city engage with a monitoring process involving the Expert Panel, who should provide guidance and support through the process. In practice, three monitoring meetings between the city and the Panel are convened at key stages, for the city to report its progress, with the potential for the Member State to appoint observers if required. Cities provide reports to the Panel six weeks prior to each meeting, and the Panel provides a Monitoring Report in response to these. If any particular recommendations were made the Selection Report for the city in question, these are likely to be an area of focus for this process.

- **Potential Panel Visits**
  - Requires a city to be prepared to host a Panel visit, if and when required by the Panel.

- **Award of Funds**
  - The Melina Mercouri Prize (€1.5m) is the only funding from the EU which is specifically and only for title holders of the European Capital of Culture. The funding is dealt with (in administrative terms) within the framework of EU programmes which support culture, but the awarding of the prize itself depends upon whether the city is felt to have honoured the commitments of its application, responded to recommendations at the Selection stage, and to any ongoing recommendations from the Panel. (There is more information about what constitutes ‘honouring the commitments’ in the EU Decision 445, Article 14).

- **Acknowledgement**
  - Requires that marketing and communications materials and approaches reflect the fact that the title is an action of the European Union.

- **Evaluation**
  - Requires that cities produce an evaluation themselves (or make an appointment of an external agency/partner to undertake one), using the common guidelines issued by the European Commission (the ‘Guidelines for the cities own evaluations of the results of each ECoC’ is listed in Appendix A). The final report has to be logged with the European Commission, and is published. In addition, the Commission also ensures that an ‘external and independent’ evaluation takes place. There are several examples of these evaluations available from past ECoCs.

Section 3.4 below describes in more detail activities which would need to be undertaken.
1.5.2  Timescales

The timetable below indicates specific dates for formal requirements only. In Section 3.4 there is some discussion of timescales for general planning activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When</th>
<th>What</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018-2022 (at any time)</td>
<td>Possible visits from Panel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>Title year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2023</td>
<td>Payment of the Merlina Mercouri Prize, if awarded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2024</td>
<td>Likely period for contribution to EC commissioned evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31\textsuperscript{st} December 2024</td>
<td>Deliver city evaluation to European Commission</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.6  Key Planning Activities and Processes

- Once a city wins, it is important that it does not lose momentum on establishing governance and management structures, fundraising, beginning programme development and broader communications and public engagement.
- Key things to determine early on are timetables and processes for:
  - The delivery vehicle, including the governance structure
  - Processes for managing and leading programming and funding of programmes
  - Raising funds from different sources
  - Marketing and communications
- Most European Capitals of Culture bring together budgets from local authorities, other public sources and sponsorship and earned income.
- Overall budgets vary significantly. It seems likely that a UK European Capital of Culture will bid with not less than £35m (maybe more) and deliver at not less than £50m. (This may depend on other factors).
- Broadly speaking, between 60-70% of the budget is for programme; between 10-20% for marketing; and the remainder for overheads and administration.
- Infrastructure developments are frequently included in European Capital of Culture plans, but often the planning and funding of them is taking place separately through other agencies/authorities in a city.

As with activities for bidding, broadly speaking the kinds of activities involved in planning to be a European Capital of Culture are similar to those involved in planning to be a UK City of Culture, though both the scale and duration of activities may be different.
1.6.1 Timescales

Generally, final bids for both processes will also ask cities to indicate broad timescales/key milestones for delivery, including timelines for:

- Governance and management
- Fundraising and budgets
- Programming
- Communications and public engagement.

It is critical that cities don’t pause after winning. Both Liverpool and Derry lost momentum by taking too long to appoint boards and the right team; in Liverpool’s case, the process of appointing and then losing significant members of the senior team was a major challenge to both the planning process and the engagement of stakeholders and the media. Whilst Hull also slipped on governance and recruitment by five months, it had put in place an interim team that drove forward the other timelines for programme, fundraising and partnerships and communications.

In the discussion of activities below, some key timescales for individual areas of planning are indicated.

1.6.2 Key Post-Bid Challenges

When considering timescales and how particular activities are framed, there are some key challenges for all cities in the immediate phase post-bid. The most significant of these is that stakeholders (everyone) will want to get involved and talk to you. To manage this, it is important that:

- Systems are to be in place to capture expressions of interest/manage proposals
- A planned timetable is developed, and that the message about doing things in stages is shared widely
- Consideration is given, both in appointing the board and more generally in the management and communications structures, to avoid political interference.\(^6\)
- That the vision which was outlined in the bid and developed at that stage is maintained.
- Fundraising begins immediately (and ideally before a decision)
- Capacity is in place to deal with press and media requests and requirements.

1.6.3 Key Activities

The Delivery Vehicle

From the outset, it will be important to have a clear timetable and process for appointing a Board (including a Chair), senior officers (including Chief Executive and/or Artistic Director), programme team and other key staff. This process can take significant time in terms of finding the right personnel, and that time should be allowed within the initial timetable. Having a chair appointed before decision and clear agreement to governance model will accelerate the process. In some cases, there may be ways in which continuity is supported between bidding and having a full team in place; some cities involve interim teams, second individuals for periods of time and have ongoing relationships with external expertise.

There are also often key questions about how any existing cultural development resource interacts with the new vehicle; in the case of Liverpool Culture Company, several officers from Liverpool City Council were seconded into the vehicle for the duration of planning and delivery. This also brought into the Culture Company processes such as normal revenue and grant funding and event management which the City

\(^6\) There are a few examples of ECoC where political interference was a significant problem. The European Parliament published study from 2013 is a useful reference for some of these examples.
Council had previously undertaken. There were advantages and disadvantages of this approach (which could be explored further through a study visit). It remains a significant issue in terms of determining the best model for delivery vehicles for bidding and hosting cities.

**Programming and Funding**

Having a clear process in place for both direct programming and for funding programming ideas which come from the sector is crucial. With many cities, there is some existing ‘in-house’ expertise in major event delivery; in the case of Milton Keynes, this is usually undertaken in a slightly different way, and the infrastructure for event delivery could be managed quite differently to the way in which some cities have done so before.

Programming and funding processes have been a key challenge for European Capitals of Culture to get right. Tensions between funding ‘local’ activity vs ‘international’ or centrally-commissioned activity can be significant. A major learning point from several cities has been the need for clear timetables and clarity around access to funding and the process for gaining access.

**Fundraising**

The bid will require you to have a clear plan for fundraising from public and private sources. The strongest bids will have done work in advance on securing potential pledges. Fundraising is a crucial activity to begin immediately following a designation, as already noted. Fundraising takes time, particularly with public funding partners, and the terms under which funds can be raised and spent can often be quite complex and take significant time to work through. Liverpool’s experience included several complex issues concerning matching and drawing down funding from a range of sources, as well as some interesting examples of unusual funding arrangements including the regional development agency acting as a sponsor.

In the case of a European Capital of Culture, the phasing of funding may depend significantly on the degree of activity which is planned for prior to the hosting year. However, underpinning for major events/activities (e.g. international commissions, exhibitions) may be required up to two years prior to activity taking place, and so some certainty around major budget elements is likely to be required by this stage.

**Marketing and Communications**

Bidding cities must demonstrate a comprehensive and fully integrated approach to communications and marketing for the year, and the years leading up to it, and identify a clear and substantial additional marketing budget to cover everything from advertising to promotional events. Selection Panels need to know how the winning city will, having built up public support and expectations beforehand, be able to sustain this level of interest and enthusiasm over the long build up period – particularly amongst local audiences - without running out of steam or losing momentum.

Comprehensive communication and marketing plans which create a framework for the year itself and the build-up period need to be created as soon possible, the right messages identified and key marketing and communications collateral/mechanisms (branding and website) ready to launch.

Messaging must be co-ordinated (Hull set up a central communications and marketing team dedicated purely to UK City of Culture promotion and communications in the immediate aftermath of its success) but must make maximum use of partner agencies through clear protocols – both to keep them engaged and to get them playing their part in communicating with their stakeholders.
A central ‘figurehead’ or charismatic spokesman should be identified as early as possible – Liverpool benefitted significantly from the role played by Phil Redmond because he was willing and able to speak to media at all times.

Successful bidders need to have identified potential media partnerships at bidding stage and must negotiate and realise these strategic relationships as a further priority. The marketing effort needs to move quickly on other strategic priorities: building and testing a central listings platform and ticketing outlet; developing a comprehensive advertising campaign and identifying and booking advertising opportunities with the longest lead in times. It must also start realising the audience development required for the year, showing how it will work with traditional and non-traditional arts audiences to do this. Hull used an extremely detailed audience segmentation model as the basis for showing how and who it would target. Liverpool ran a ticketing lottery which including specific allocations for local residents.

1.6.4 Operational Funding and Areas of Spending

At the bidding stage, the Panel is likely to favour a credible and realistic budget rather than an over ambitious one. However, the budget for the bid will inevitably need to be reviewed post a decision and experience in most cases has shown that original estimates for income are low.

In the last UK bidding round, NewcastleGateshead bid with a larger budget than Liverpool and managed to secure much of this for an on-going programme when they didn’t win. Liverpool bid with an initial budget of £3.5-4m per year of additional revenue funding between the winning year and the title year (a total of £22.5m) and £22.6m set aside for 2007 and 2008 specifically, a total additional budget of £45.1m. It was originally anticipated that, of the £22.6m the City Council would contribute £7.8m, £10m would come from public sources (government/Arts Council England, ERDF and the regional development agency) and £4.6m would come from sponsorship and private sources.

The following table, taking from the final report of the Impacts 08 study into Liverpool (Garcia, Melville and Cox, 2010) shows the proportions of income from key areas for a number of European Capitals of Culture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sponsors and earned income</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Council</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Public Sectors</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income (million)</strong></td>
<td><strong>£62.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>£30.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>£129.9</strong></td>
<td><strong>£21.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>£41.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>£51.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>£68.1</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In total, Liverpool’s final total operational budget of £129.9m was spread across a six-year period. It included (as has already been noted) existing event, revenue and project funding budgets from Liverpool City Council. A broad indication of additional funding over and above these commitments is about £74m; however, it is worth noting that the City Council increased its revenue and project funding of arts and cultural organisations in the city, both in the bidding period and (less steeply) following the successful bid. Arts Council England revenue funding for arts and cultural organisations also increased over the same period.

In addition to sponsorship of £22.3m (cash of £14.7m and in-kind of £7.5m) Liverpool also earned just over £4m of income, mostly through ticket sales on major events; Liverpool gained more sponsorship that it originally anticipated and raised the highest sponsorship and earned income of any European Capital of Culture to date. Key sponsorship arrangements included relationship with transport providers (e.g. Virgin Trains) and a legal firm in the city (one of the significant in-kind sponsors). The City Council’s commitment
was the largest of all public funders, but Liverpool also benefited from its status as an Objective One city (which expired at the end of 2008, by chance), which enabled it to bring in £14.2m between 2003 and 2009. Arts Council England and DCMS put in £10.5m. The Regional Development Agency committed funds both as a sponsor and as a public funder.

Liverpool’s experience is perhaps unlikely to be repeated, given that its funding came pre-global crash/economic austerity, and it benefited particularly from regeneration funding through Objective One status and the role of the Regional Development Agency. However, its work with sponsors and public agencies (e.g. the sponsorship with NWDA, led by the tourism team) potentially offers some useful models for the future.

In terms of how money is spent in European Capitals of Culture, the following table taken from the final report of the Impacts 08 study into Liverpool (Garcia, Melville and Cox, 2010) shows the proportions of expenditure in key areas for a number of European Capitals of Culture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programming</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion and Marketing</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overheads/administration</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In total, Liverpool spend just under £78m on programming, though this included events funding, and revenue and project funding which would have been committed (at least to some level) by Liverpool City Council if the city had not been European Capital of Culture. The significant commitments to promotion and marketing by European Capitals of Culture reflect a range of potential cost areas, particularly in respect of tourism marketing.

It seems likely that a UK European Capital of Culture is unlikely to bid with a budget of less than £35m, and potentially may be seeking to deliver with a minimum budget closer to £50m.

1.6.5 Infrastructure Developments

Not included in the figures offered above are the substantial amounts of infrastructural spend which some European Capitals of Culture involve. The actual relationship between the title and hosting activity and infrastructural spend is often quite complex. Sometimes cost figures are reported for Liverpool 2008 which include significant capital spend, in excess of £1billion (by far the highest infrastructure spend associated with any European Capital of Culture). Actually, the capital developments often associated with Liverpool 2008 are incidental to the European Capital of Culture title, though those which relate to cultural venues were probably helped in their fundraising by the political ‘leverage’ which a bidding process and win can supply. The significant new arena and convention centre, shopping complex, Bluecoat Arts Centre refurbishment and new build, new hotels, and several other infrastructural developments were the result of ERDF and other regeneration and private investment, and driven by the city’s economic development company.

Other European Capitals of Culture do attach capital funding and development specifically to the title process, with approximately two thirds of European Capitals of Culture involving new/refurbished venues opening for or during the hosting year (though there are also examples of capital projects being abandoned or delayed in the run up to the title year). More generally, what is the case is a clear combination of city development being supported by and supporting the plans for a European Capital of Culture programme. In Liverpool, the awarding of the title focused timescales (the new arena opened with the opening event for Liverpool 2008), and helped to give a sense of positive things happening. NewcastleGateshead were well
advanced with a major capital strategy and in some ways this worked against them as their plans to open the Baltic, Sage Gateshead and theatres were happening anyway.

Typically, infrastructure projects which may be attached to, or associated with, European Capitals of Culture include:

- New/refurbished cultural venues
- Pop-up/temporary cultural venues
- Public realm works (beyond temporary ‘dressing’ and branding)
- Tourism infrastructure development (hotels, other accommodation, transport)

There is also the opportunity for bidding cities to consider other kinds of capital development as connecting to a European Capital of Culture programme, for example:

- New hospitals/health infrastructure, schools and other buildings could include % for art, or a more developed and significant programme of integrated development/supporting activity (Hull’s first UK City of Culture bid, for example, anticipated strong connections with its Building Schools for the Future programme)
- Major housing developments/regeneration schemes also provide a potential opportunity for pioneering artistic and cultural input into design processes, artists supporting communities to work with developers, as well as considering the role of public art in such developments. There are good examples in the UK of cultural programmes and integrated design processes attached to Housing Market Renewal Programmes and (going back a bit further) New Deal for Communities areas, for example.
- City and transport development is an area which, more broadly, could be considered part of the ‘landscape’ for a European Capital of Culture. On the whole, previous European Capitals of Culture have touched on these areas, but usually through tourism, cultural venues and public realm. It could be interesting to consider what a design process really involving artists in major developments might look like.
Appendix 2 - Action Plan

Should Milton Keynes chose to progress with a bid, learning from previous European Capitals of Culture indicates that cities who begin the significantly before the bidding commences are better placed to be successful. Based on this, the following outline action plan is recommended:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015–2016</td>
<td>Make in principle decisions to bid&lt;br&gt;Build bidding capacity and proposition</td>
<td>• Establish ‘coalition of the willing’ to lead bidding process; may involve a Steering Group, or other mechanisms of engagement  &lt;br&gt;• Develop group(s) to support cultural sector in engaging in shared, enhanced programming, and supporting a bid &lt;br&gt;• Consider and develop processes for other stakeholder involvement &lt;br&gt;• Develop programme for public engagement, focusing initially around key milestones in developing the cultural offer (so that it is embedded in committed activity, rather than just the bidding process)  &lt;br&gt;• Explore learning from previous ECoCs, including planning visits and accessing bid libraries/evidence of impact  &lt;br&gt;• Begin building the knowledge base, undertaking some technical assessment, research and mapping, looking at audiences, participants, business data, existing programmes and expertise.  &lt;br&gt;• Testing programmes and partnerships with live projects, building on existing assets, programmes and strategies  &lt;br&gt;• Develop the resource base for arts and culture in Milton Keynes, including exploring Council funding, European funding and other kinds of lottery/project funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late 2016 – August 2017 (min. 6 yrs prior)</td>
<td>Prepare initial bid</td>
<td>• Continue to develop capacity and resources, as above  &lt;br&gt;• Set up a dedicated bid team, probably including both staff, potential secondments from cultural organisations and some external consultancy in key areas of expertise  &lt;br&gt;• Develop cultural programme, propositions and partnerships for the bid  &lt;br&gt;• Secure commitments from key partners, and begin fundraising from different sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2017</td>
<td>Deadline for initial bid</td>
<td>• Submit initial bid; cost estimated at c. £150k.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017 (min. 5 yrs prior)</td>
<td>Shortlisted cities announced</td>
<td>• Receive response from Expert Panel, including recommendations for full bid development for shortlisted cities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of 2017</td>
<td>Review and complete bid</td>
<td>• Respond to feedback from Expert Panel  &lt;br&gt;• Develop detail of programme, propositions and partnerships  &lt;br&gt;• Deliver focused public engagement campaign prior to selection process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018 (min. 4 yrs prior)</td>
<td>Selection Process</td>
<td>• Host Expert Panel visit to the city  &lt;br&gt;• Expert Panel convenes to select city, and make recommendations for selected city  &lt;br&gt;• DCMS (or equivalent) announces city selected to be European Capital of Culture 2023, based on Expert Panel recommendations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

The timescales indicated here for the European Capital of Culture 2023 bidding process are indicative, and come from the recent DCMS consultation on scheduling for the UK City of Culture 2021 bidding process.
Report written by
Tamsin Cox, Jon Flinn and Andrew Dixon

Contact us
Tamsin Cox, Head of Policy and Research

Birmingham
Unit 313, Custard Factory
Gibb Street, Birmingham, B9 4AA
t.+44 (0)7850 329 808
e. tamsin@dhacommunications.co.uk
www.dhacommunications.co.uk
@TamsinECox
@DHAComms