

REPORT TO:	Executive Board
DATE:	17 th September 2020
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director Enterprise, Community and Resources
PORTFOLIO:	Enterprise, Economy and Property
SUBJECT:	Borough of Culture
WARDS:	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the preparations being made to deliver Halton's Borough of Culture year in 2021. The report seeks the approval in principle, of the Executive Board to progress the programme ideas outlined in the appendices to this report.
- 1.2 Whilst the report sets out potentially an exciting programme of activities, the ongoing uncertainty surrounding COVID-19 and its impact on the Visitor and Cultural Economy cannot be understated. This could have a bearing on the Council's ability to deliver the programme in its entirety. Equally, the breadth of the programme will be influenced by the draw down of match-funding, the level of commitment from the borough's partners, as well as the level of human resources that can be made available to support.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS: The Board

- 1) approves, in principle, the draft Programme outlined in this report;**
- 2) acknowledges that the programme may be subject to change;**
- 3) receives a further progress report in due course.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Background to Borough of Culture

The award of Liverpool City Region Borough of Culture was inspired by the UK City of Culture programme, which followed Liverpool's European Capital of Culture in 2008. The new initiative was launched in 2018 as Liverpool celebrated its 10th Anniversary as the UK's only European Capital of Culture.

The Borough of Culture initiative is a non-competitive process, which will rotate around the City Region with the aim of encouraging each Borough to develop collaboratively its local talent and potential, while reflecting the

ambitions and aims of the Regional Culture and Creativity Strategy, which looks to build sustainable capacity across the City Region.

The Borough of Culture years are allocated across the City Region as follows:

- St Helens – 2018
- Wirral – 2019
- Sefton - 2020
- Halton - 2021
- Knowsley – 2022

The overall aim of the programme is to stimulate talent, aspiration and promote creativity and economic growth through cultural engagement and activity across the City Region. Each Borough needs to weave five key elements into their creative programme:

- Children and Young People – accessing, enjoying, learning and thriving through culture, performance and creative engagement with skills and talent pathways
- Positive Outcomes – wellbeing, health, education, cohesion and future of work
- Communities – increased participation, particularly the ageing society
- Distinctiveness of Place – promoting the creative and cultural offer to local people and visitors
- Infrastructure – leaving a legacy through better infrastructure for culture and creativity

The aim of Halton’s Borough of Culture year is to:

increase participation in quality cultural activity across Halton, helping more people to experience the arts and to benefit from the role that culture can play in transforming lives - improving health and wellbeing, reducing social isolation, increasing community cohesion, inspiring creativity, supporting learning and making Halton a great place to live and work.

It is proposed that this will be delivered under the banner of ‘*Celebrate Halton*’ and will look to celebrate Halton’s past, present and future through a programme of activity, ranging from small community-led activities to large-scale events, which bring in national/international artists.

The programme will seek to promote the borough’s visitor economy by ‘showcasing’ the borough’s cultural and heritage offer, thereby demonstrating the benefits of living, working and investing in Halton.

It is to be noted that the timescales for Borough of Culture in the light of Covid19 remain unchanged, but there will need to be flexibility built into the programme to reflect changing circumstances.

3.2 Progress to Date

To date the following actions have been undertaken:

3.2.1 Establishment of an Internal Project Group

In contrast to neighbouring authorities, no additional human resources have been identified to deliver Halton's Borough of Culture 2021. However, an informal Project Group has been established to oversee the development of the programme. The group comprises:

Julie Griffiths (Head of Libraries) – Borough of Culture Lead Officer
Steph Davies (Lead Funding Officer) – leading on match funding, consultation, Culture HQ and heritage strand
Wesley Rourke – Operational Director lead
Chris Patino – Operational Director lead
Tim Booth – events management lead
Michelle Osborne – marketing lead

The Project Group provides briefings to the Member Lead – Cllr Eddie Jones

Members of the HBC Project Group are undertaking their role in addition to their substantive role, and, therefore, the delivery of the programme will need to reflect this.

Appendix 1 identifies the resources required against each strand of the programme.

3.2.2 Appointment of Programme Development Organisation

A condition of the grant paid by the CA was that the Council was expected to secure additional funding and resource. In late 2019 a Programme Development Organisation was appointed through the Council's procurement process and funded by HBC.

ArtReach is a contemporary cultural development agency with a mission to make great art possible and accessible, connecting art with grassroots and diverse communities to forge creative engagement. ArtReach is a National Portfolio Organisation with Arts Council England. The organisation has a twenty-year track record of work across the UK and Europe and has evolved to deliver four areas of activity:

1. Festival development and delivery (both as a Creative Producer and in supporting other delivery organisations)
2. Public art and performing arts commissioning and programming
3. Capital cultural project development support
4. Consultancy to support arts and cultural organisations and artist development

Artreach's responsibilities are:

- To develop a high quality, engaging, and relevant programme that meets the Borough of Culture aims.
- To commission artists to create work.

- To provide advice and guidance on content and programming.

3.2.3 Consultation

Heart of Glass were commissioned to undertake an some initial in autumn 2019. A series of workshops were held with local forums – Halton Heritage Partnership, Halton Local Cultural Education Partnership, Halton Primary Arts Network and residents input sought at events and in libraries, with visitors and staff.

A report was produced and some of the suggestions made incorporated into the programme development. Artreach are now picking up individual conversations with some of those who attended the consultation sessions to explore partnership involvement in the programme.

3.2.4 Programme Development

The current programme overview is as follows:

- **Made in Halton** (small grants commissioning local artists work)
- **Halton MakeFest** (local makers market at Halton Lea library)
- **Harmony Halton** (Music weekender in grassroots venues)
- **Bridge Festival** (Outdoor Event & Parade on SJB)
- **North West Vintage Rally** (with new Steam Punk attraction)
- **Festival 10:15** (young people led festival)
- **Halton Light Event** (to be held at Norton Priory)
- **Explore Festivals** (Libraries Programme)
- **Halton Heritage Hub** (with young person led strand)
- **Culture HQ** (shop space for event and workshops at Halton Lea)
- Small scale **public art commissioning** (murals etc)

This is currently being worked up in more detail; the full programme is subject to securing match funding – see below.

3.2.4 Match Funding

An allocation of £200k is made by the CA with an expectation that match funding is also secured to enhance the programme. The team has been in discussions with funding bodies for some time and the following match funding bids/sources are being pursued:

Arts Council England - £15,000 – towards partner planning (secured)

Arts Council England - £100,000 – large events/commissions (bid to be submitted August 2020)

National Lottery Heritage Fund - £220,000 – heritage hub (bid to be submitted Autumn 2020)

Business Sponsorship – prospectus being developed

3.3 Programme Delivery Options

The aim of the Project Group is to create a programme that intends to meet and exceed resident expectations throughout 2021, engaging more people in cultural activity and raising the profile of the Borough.

However, there a number of emerging issues which will need to be considered if the Council is to achieve this aim. These include:

Resources – as described above the HBC resource allocated to BoC is minimal and non-dedicated to the programme

Capacity – staff involved to date are undertaking BoC duties in addition to their substantive role, supported of course by ArtReach. Artreach's responsibilities are specific and do not include elements such as event management, marketing, funding etc;

Visibility – the programme will require corporate commitment to ensure the programme has a high profile, with a strong PR campaign and positive messages from officers/Members via their networks.

Finance – the full programme has been developed with a view to securing around £300k in match funding; whilst conversations with the funding bodies are well developed and the bids are expected by them, the success of these is not guaranteed. In the case of unsuccessful bids, the programme would need to be scaled back.

Equally, there is no budget for event management, marketing. There is an expectation from the CA that each local authority would allocate some resource in these areas.

Impact – there is an expectation that there will be a positive impact from the delivery of the BoC programme for the cultural sector in each authority and for the public and that, this impact will come from a mix of home-grown (Halton) input and from bringing in artists who operate regionally/nationally. In addition, the impact will be driven by a combination of neighbourhood level activity and 'wow factor' large-scale events.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 If match-funding sources are not secured, a reduced programme will be Implemented.

Possible additional funding to secure events staff/pay for casual staff

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

One of the five core elements of all BoC programmes is aimed at Children and Young People – accessing, enjoying, learning and thriving through culture and creative engagement with skills and talent pathways. A Cultural Youth Voice panel is being developed as part of the stakeholder involvement for the year.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

One of the five core elements of all BoC programmes is Positive Outcomes – including for education and future of work – it is anticipated that a focus on the cultural offer locally, along with the introduction of nationally renowned companies and artists will kick-start skills development and employment opportunities in the creative industries.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

One of the five core elements of all BoC programmes is Positive Outcomes – including for wellbeing and health – it is anticipated that the programme will have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of residents whether through passive or active engagement.

6.4 A Safer Halton

None

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

N/A

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

The ethos of the Borough of Culture programme is that it offers opportunities for the whole community through a range of activities and events, the majority of which are offered free of charge and at a range of venues across the Borough.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

None under the meaning of the Act.

APPENDIX 1

- Outline of resources required against programme strands