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New Bradford 2025 team calls on communities to play their part in making UK city of culture bid a winner

A new voluntary engagement and inclusion team behind Bradford's bid to be UK city of culture 2025 is calling to people of every age, ability, faith, race and sexual orientation in all corners of the Bradford district to share their ideas for the city's bid and play a pivotal role in the competition to host the cultural festival.

Led by Richard Dunbar, local Councillor and Bradford Metropolitan District Council's LGBTQ+ Champion, who has a professional background in youth and community development, the Bradford 2025 engagement and inclusion team is made up of 24 local people from all over the Bradford district. Also part of the group are Cllr Imran Khan, Bradford Council's Executive Member for Education, Employment and Skills; Cain Lewis, trustee at Healthy Life Cycles and part of BMDC's Stronger Communities Together Strategy collective and Penny Wangari-Jones, anti-racist activist, organiser and Director at the Racial Justice Network. The youngest member is fifteen-year-old student Zahabia Naveed, who is involved in the local Youth Service as an ambassador within Bradford East.

The team will be taking on the important job of rallying the whole city behind the bid, ensuring that local people are at the heart of the process and that the inspired ideas of those living in Bradford are the driving force behind what they hope will be a successful bid.

Throughout the autumn, the team will lead a series of consultations with communities across the Bradford district to develop themes and ideas for the bid. The team wants to involve as many people as possible at grassroots level and learn from local people and different cultures about how they would like to shape the bid and what must be included in Bradford's bid for it to be authentic and truly reflective of the district. The new team has already held two introductory meetings, with a third planned for the end of October before the consultations get underway.

Councillor Richard Dunbar, said: "Initially we thought the Engagement & Inclusion team would be 10 to 15 people, but when these 24 passionate, dedicated Bradfordians with a wealth of knowledge and

an adoration for the city that they call home came forward, we couldn't possibly turn any of them away. We've already had some really exciting ideas from our initial meetings but the team is eager to get out there and hear from different generations across the district about what is important to them and how we should showcase the best of Bradford to the world. We believe that Bradford's people are what makes this city such a distinctive and exciting place to be, and the support and input of local people is what will make this bid a serious and strong contender for the title."

Cain Lewis, trustee at Healthy Life Cycles and part of BMDC's Stronger Communities Together Strategy collective, who also joins the team, adds, "Bradford has really come into its own in recent years and the city is brimming with potential. We're a young, diverse city and this is an important and unmissable opportunity for us to learn from young people and ensure every voice shines through, ultimately paving the way for the next generation to make Bradford the city that they want it to be."

Zahabia Naveed, who at age 15 is one of the youngest members of the Engagement & Inclusion Reference Group for Bradford2025, comments, "Bradford is the youngest city in Europe, so I think it's really important that young people like myself are represented in the bid for UK city of culture. I think that together, the different ages and communities across Bradford can bring something to the bid that no other city will be able to offer. It's really exciting!"

Also on the team is Penny Wangari-Jones, anti-racist activist, organiser and Director at the Racial Justice Network with a background in grassroots activism and working with marginalised communities. She said,

"I have worked in different areas of the country but, more than anywhere, I love the diversity of Bradford. Although I grew up in Kenya, I feel a huge connection to the people here thanks to its cultural vibrancy. This is an important opportunity for us to shine a light on the marginalised and seldom heard voices from across the city and ensure that they are fully represented in the bid. There will still be many people around the city for whom culture is not at the top of the agenda and who don't know this competition is happening, and their voices and opinions are equally as valuable as those in top leadership positions."

The engagement and inclusion team is keen to hear from local people across the Bradford district who would like to share their ideas and become involved in the bidding process. Community

consultations will be taking place online and in person over the next few months and anyone who is interested in participating can contact the Bradford 2025 team on 01274 800551 or email info@bradford2025.co.uk.

ENDS

For more information, images or interviews please contact Anys Williams or Olivia Rhodes at Anita Morris Associates on Anys@anitamorrisassociates.co.uk / olivia@anitamorrisassociates.co.uk / 01943 603311

NOTES TO EDITORS

Bradford 2025 is the city's bid to be UK City of Culture 2025, the bid will be submitted in 2021. Awarded every four years by Government the UK City of Culture title has had a transformational impact on previous host cities, securing millions of pounds of investment and acting as a catalyst for creative place-making and culture-led regeneration. Bradford joins a number of cities and areas competing for the title, with Lancashire, Medway, Gloucester and Southampton also having announced their intentions to bid. <https://bradford2025.co.uk/>

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<https://www.bradford.gov.uk/media/3712/children-young-people-and-families-plan-2017-140317.pdf>

Bradford 2025 Engagement and Inclusion Reference Group - Membership

Cllr Richard Dunbar, Bradford Council LGBT+ Champion (Convenor)

Bana Gora - Muslim Women's Council

Cain Lewis - Stronger Communities

Charles Dacres - Bradford Hate Crime Alliance

Chris Wiley - Carers Resource

Deepak Sharma - Hindu Cultural Society of Bradford

France-Leigh Hadrysiak - The LEAP

Georgina Webster - Keighley Creative

Hannah Ward - University of Bradford Engagement and Partnerships

Ian Day - BMDC AD Neighbourhoods & Customer Services

Cllr Imran Khan - Portfolio Education

Javed Khan - CNet

Julie Lintern - Community Action Bradford and District - Keighley

Liz Barry - Public Health

Mark Nicholson - Equality Together

Mary Dowson - BCB

Mick Chandsoor - BMDC Education Partnerships Officer

Mike Auger, City of Sanctuary (currently on furlough)

Penny Wangari-Jones - Racial Justice Network

Sarah Manning - Young person

Soo Nevison - Community Action Bradford and District

Bishop Toby Howarth - Bradford Cathedral

Wafaa Nawaz - Inspired Neighbourhoods

Yasmin Khan - Staying Put
Zahabia Naveed - Young person