

MEDIA INFORMATION

18 March 2022

Bradford on shortlist for UK City of Culture 2025

Bradford is through to the final stage of the competition to host UK City of Culture in 2025.

The Secretary of State for the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), Nadine Dorries, has approved four shortlisted places, of which Bradford district is one, selected from eight long-listed locations from across the UK.

Arts Minister Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay said: *"I'm delighted that Bradford is on the shortlist for UK City of Culture 2025. This has been a tough competition with a record 20 initial applications and eight outstanding longlist candidates, so this accolade is a real tribute to the quality of creativity on display in the city. I look forward to seeing what Bradford's bid has in store next!"*

This marks a major milestone for the Bradford district which has committed to embedding culture in the district's inclusive growth as part of a 10-year cultural strategy, 'Culture is Our Plan'.

Responding to the shortlist announcement, **Shanaz Gulzar TV presenter, artist and Chair of Bradford 2025** said: *"This is fantastic news! We'd like to thank the thousands of people, community organisations, businesses and the creative community across the whole of the Bradford district who have thrown their support behind the campaign and helped us shape what we believe is a winning bid. We're keeping the details of our entry tightly under wraps for now, as the competition heats up, but I can say that our bid is rooted in the heritage and character of the Bradford district, and will reveal the magic of its people, its ambition, its uniqueness and above all its potential."*

"We're representing Yorkshire, as the only bidding city from the region left in the contest – and we can be proof of the major role culture can play in levelling up. The title is within touching distance, and we look forward to welcoming the judges when they visit the shortlisted places in May. We're ready to write a new chapter in the story of this young, diverse district. This really is our time."

West Yorkshire Mayor, Tracy Brabin, said: *“Being shortlisted for UK City of Culture 2025 is a powerful recognition of Bradford’s vibrant, diverse cultural and creative sector. Supporting cultural activities, creativity and the creative sector across West Yorkshire is one of my key priorities as Mayor. I hope being shortlisted will encourage more people to get involved and be an opportunity to show the best of the Bradford district to the rest of the UK and beyond.”*

Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe – Leader of Bradford Council added: *“I am delighted that the bid for the Bradford district has made the shortlist. This is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the team. We have always been a creative and innovative district, full of interesting and inspiring people drawn here from across the globe and Bradford 2025 bid has really highlighted this. It’s an exciting time, with lots of cultural and creative events and activities for people to get involved in as we emerge from a tough two years.”*

Winning the UK City of Culture title will be a game-changer for the Bradford district, putting it firmly on the national and international stage. A City of Culture designation brings considerable long-term benefits including increased employment, new investment, enhanced skills, renewed pride, greater cultural capacity and more opportunities to participate in arts and cultural activities. Earlier this year, the Bradford district was named by an independent report as the area with the most to benefit from the levelling up agenda, and winning the City of Culture title would offer an opportunity to demonstrate how culture can be as a driver for inward investment.

Professor Udy Archibong MBE, Director of Centre for Inclusion and Diversity (CfID) at the University of Bradford, a Strategic Partner of the bid said: *“The Bradford district is ready for this. Progressive social reform has been a consistent theme for the district’s development for many decades. Culturally we couldn’t be richer and it’s time for us to show the rest of the world what makes this young, diverse place so special.”*

Throughout the bid campaign, Bradford 2025 has backed a series of ground-breaking projects which offer a glimpse into what its City of Culture year could look like. This includes a new public artwork programme; a season of free cultural events as part of Summer Unlocked; Bradford is LIT - a light festival visited by more than 20,000 people last November; The Mills Are Alive in Manningham, a large-scale projection show which illuminated the iconic chimney of Lister Mills, as well as Filmmakers 2025 and more. Bradford Council’s Youth Service, in partnership with Bradford 2025, organised for 100 people aged 15-20 from across the district to visit Coventry to experience the current UK City of Culture as part of its commitment to put young people at the heart of its bid.

Zahabia Mukhtar, part of the Engagement & Inclusion Reference Group for Bradford 2025 said: *“I am so excited that Bradford has made it to the final stage. Lots of young people of all backgrounds from across Bradford district have been involved in the UK City of culture bid. We have a very young population, and if we win, it will create amazing opportunities for the youth of Bradford.”*

Preparations for Bradford 2025 to date already have generated a new confidence in the area’s creative sector which has secured £2 million for The Leap, the city’s Creative People and Places programme, and £1.5 million for Bradford Producing Hub – one of only two pilot projects in the UK receiving funds to develop local talent. Earlier this week saw the launch of ‘The Unit’ in the city, a new resource for filmmakers, backed by Channel 4 as part of its ongoing partnership and investment in the district. The opening of the new facility is the first major milestone in the delivery of an ambitious 10-year vision for the further development of the screen sector in the Bradford district, as set out in Bradford Council’s ‘As Seen on Screen Strategy’.

More than 35 partners from every sector of the business community have come on board as official supporters of the bid including Bradford Bulls, Emerald Group Publishing, Group Alfa, Jinnah Group, Morrisons, Rushbond PLC, The Broadway and Yorkshire Building Society. The campaign also has seen new levels of collaboration between University of Bradford and Bradford Council.

John Heaps, Chairman of Yorkshire Building Society, said: *“Yorkshire Building Society, one of the oldest organisations in Bradford, is a proud partner of the district’s bid to be the UK City of Culture 2025 and it is fantastic news that it has been named as one of the shortlisted places through to the next round of the competition.*

“The impact that winning the UK City of Culture bid could have on the whole district cannot be overstated, particularly with regard to driving inward investment, supporting the levelling up of the local economy and creating a myriad of incredible opportunities for our young people to enhance their skills. Our diverse district can act as a real economic driver for the region and this is one of the reasons why we are proud to support what we hope will be a successful bid come May.”

In May, the UK City of Culture judges will visit each of the shortlisted places before announcing the winner at the end of the month.

- Ends -

Images: Download images which represent Bradford's cultural landscape here:
<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/cre38f10lfey68m/AAA5rzuvQbfLLqrkcMjOYSDa?dl=0>

For press and media enquiries contact Anys Williams at Anita Morris Associates on
Anys@anitmorrisassociates.co.uk / 01943 603311 / 07909151441

Notes to Editors

Twitter: @Bradford2025

Facebook: [/bradford2025](https://www.facebook.com/bradford2025)

Website: www.bradford2025.co.uk

Bradford 2025 is the district's bid to be UK City of Culture 2025. 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 district's bid is backed by [Bradford Metropolitan District Council](#) with the [University of Bradford](#) as a strategic partner.

Bradford 2025 is driven by the Cultural Place Partnership which includes Bradford Council, University of Bradford and other representatives of the cultural sector and national funders. The bid forms part of [Culture is Our Plan](#) – Bradford Council's cultural strategy until 2031.

In July 2021, Bradford district was officially named as one of 20 UK locations bidding for the title, the highest number of entries in the competition's history and a resounding show of confidence in the transformational impact the designation can afford.

Eight longlisted locations were announced by the DCMS in October 2021 and include Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon, Bradford, Cornwall, County Durham, Derby, Southampton, Stirling and Wrexham County Borough.

Four shortlisted places were announced on Saturday 19th March including Bradford, County Durham, Southampton and Wrexham County Borough ahead of the winning location being announced in spring 2022.

Corporate partners for Bradford UK City of Culture 2025 bid include:

FOUNDING PARTNERS

- Emerald Group Publishing
- Telegraph & Argus (LOCALiQ)
- Rushbond PLC
- Morrisons
- The Broadway, Bradford
- Bradford Bulls
- Jinnah Group
- Group Alfa

BID CHAMPIONS

- ITC
- Platinum Partnership Solicitors
- Bombay Stores
- Regency Hall

BID PARTNERS

- CityFibre
- Exa Networks
- Schofield Sweeney

- Bradford City Football Club
- My Lahore
- Muse Developments
- Arup
- Bradford BID
- Welcome to Yorkshire
- Naylor Wintersgill
- Expect Distribution
- Great Victoria Hotel
- Yorkshire Building Society
- Balfour Beatty
- Faithful+Gould
- Sovereign Health Care
- West and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce