

News story: Eleven bids for £15m Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund

Eleven towns and cities from across Northern England have bid for a share of a new £15 million fund to help build a lasting regional legacy from the Great Exhibition of the North.

The Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund will make grants of up to £4 million available to support major culture and tech capital projects.

The bids include the redevelopment of a former cinema into a live music venue, building four giant brick towers and creating the world's biggest digital artwork.

Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Karen Bradley said:

"These hugely exciting bids demonstrate the scale of cultural ambition across the region, and reflect the great diversity of Northern towns and cities. This £15 million fund will mean that as many people as possible benefit from the Great Exhibition of the North and it is fantastic that so many communities have recognised the transformative potential of culture, design and innovation."

The first round of bids have been coordinated by Local Enterprise Partnerships in Cheshire and Warrington, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Humber, Lancashire, Leeds City Region, Liverpool City Region, North East, Sheffield City Region, Tees Valley, York and North Yorkshire and East Riding.

The bids are:

- Cheshire and Warrington: A bid to create a world class cultural centre for children, young people and their families in Ellesmere Port, home of the critically acclaimed Action Transport Theatre.
- Cumbria: A bid to recognise and celebrate the contribution the World Heritage Lake District makes to the North of England through capital investment in Windermere Jetty, Dove Cottage and the Wordsworth Museum, and Abbot Hall Art Gallery and Museum.
- Greater Manchester: A bid to create a landmark young people's creative venue in Rochdale, providing performing and digital arts participation, performance, production and training.
- Humber: A bid to create the world's biggest digital artwork, using the Humber Bridge as a canvas on which to install over 70,000 individually controllable LED lights.

- Lancashire: A bid to create The Amuseum – Britain’s first museum telling the story of British popular entertainment and Blackpool’s role in one of UK’s greatest creative industries.
- Leeds City Region: A bid to transform the former Bradford Odeon cinema into a 4,000 capacity live music, entertainment and events venue.
- Liverpool City Region: A bid to build on the success of Eureka! The National Children’s Museum in Halifax by creating Eureka! Merseyside, a new cultural attraction on the Wirral waterfront to inspire young people to explore science, technology, engineering, arts and maths.
- North East: A bid to establish a new cultural attraction in Sunderland – ‘National Centre for Imagination’ – focusing on young people’s creativity and imagination, including an institute of performing arts.
- Sheffield City Region: A bid for a major public art project in Sheffield, entitled Onwards and Upwards, that will comprise of a mile-long trail of four sculptural red chimneys to replace the demolished Tinsley cooling towers.
- Tees Valley: A bid to develop a major railway heritage visitor attraction in Tees Valley as part of a wider programme to create a ‘Railway Heritage Quarter’ and protect and conserve the Stockton & Darlington Railway.
- York and North Yorkshire and East Riding: A bid for a project, entitled Constellations: Illuminating Yorkshire’s Coast, to create landmark light installations in six key locations on the North Yorkshire coast.

The fund will boost the Northern Powerhouse and build on the impact of next year’s Great Exhibition of the North. Held in Newcastle and Gateshead next summer, the free family-friendly exhibition will showcase the best of Northern art, design and innovation and is set to be the biggest event in 2018.

The immersive exhibition – supported by £5 million of government funding – will engage communities and businesses from across the region, and promote the bustling and thriving area to the world.

Successful bids to the Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund will encourage sustainable cultural and creative regeneration in the North of England and benefit areas that have historically had low levels of cultural and creative investment. The successful projects will be announced in March 2018.