

[Press release: Swansea shortlisted for UK City of Culture 2021](#)

Coventry, Paisley, Stoke-on-Trent, Sunderland and Swansea have been shortlisted to host UK City of Culture 2021, the UK Government announced today.

The announcement comes following a meeting of the independent advisory panel chaired by Phil Redmond. Of the eleven towns and cities that registered bids for UK City of Culture 2021, five have been shortlisted for the prestigious award.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

Boasting the UK's first area of outstanding natural beauty, and the region that brought the first passenger railway to the world, Swansea's amazing achievements, past and present make it a true contender to be crowned UK City of Culture 2021. I know that they will put forward the strongest case possible in the race for the title and I hope that local people take every opportunity to get behind the bid.

Whilst there will be a some disappointment in St Davids today, it is important to remember that the bidding process has done so much to harness and highlight this beautiful area's traits to a wider audience. I hope this will provide a platform to fly the flag for Wales in a future UK City of Culture award.

In December 2017, either Coventry, Paisley, Stoke, Sunderland or Swansea will be named the third UK City of Culture, following in the footsteps of Derry-Londonderry and Hull.

Hull is the current City of Culture and its programme includes 365 days of cultural events. It is estimated that City of Culture has brought a boost of £60 million to the local economy in 2017. Nine out of 10 residents have attended, or taken part in, an event as part of Hull 2017 and the city has seen over £1 billion of investment since winning the title in 2013. The winner of UK City of Culture 2021 will also have access to a £3 million Heritage Lottery Fund grant.

John Glen, Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism said:

We have received strong bids from across the UK and now have a fantastic shortlist of five that reflect the diversity and cultural ambition of our towns and cities.

I want to congratulate all eleven bids which offered brilliant

examples of how to celebrate their own unique culture and heritage, and showed just how prestigious and coveted the UK City of Culture is.

The strength of the competition showed us how valuable our cultural assets are to our towns, boosting tourism and jobs in local communities. I have seen first hand how Hull has embraced its status as City of Culture 2017, and how beneficial it has been for the area. I am looking forward to seeing what will come in 2021.

Phil Redmond, Chair of the UK City of Culture panel said:

The quality, commitment and enthusiasm that came across from the eleven bidders made deciding a shortlist to recommend to Ministers as difficult as it was for the two previous UK City of Culture competitions. The appetite for using culture to bring about regeneration and to strengthen communities is clearly stronger than ever. Overall the panel thought that five cities' bids showed the potential to deliver a UK City of Culture 2021 programme. I want to thank all eleven bidders for all their work and look forward to final bids from Coventry, Paisley, Stoke-on-Trent, Sunderland and Swansea later this year.

The shortlisted areas will now be invited to submit a final bid by the end of September. The panel will assess the final bids from the shortlisted cities before a winner is announced in December.

The unsuccessful areas will each receive detailed feedback on their bids. Ministers and officials will also engage with them on how best they could realise their ambitions for widespread recognition for their cultural offer.

Notes to editors

- The eleven initial bids were made by Coventry, Hereford, Paisley, Perth, Portsmouth, St David's and the Hundred of Dewisland, Stoke-on-Trent, Sunderland, Swansea, Warrington and Wells.
- To unlock the funds of the HLF Grant, the successful bidder will need to demonstrate that their programme is underpinned by heritage and builds on existing investment by the Heritage Lottery Fund