

Stirling among places longlisted for UK City of Culture 2025

Stirling has been named among eight areas longlisted for UK City of Culture 2025, unveiled today by Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries.

Following a record 20 bids, the eight longlisted locations are Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon, Bradford, Cornwall, County Durham, Derby, Southampton, Stirling and Wrexham County Borough.

Winning the prestigious title has enormous benefits with previous hosts attracting millions of pounds in additional investment, creating jobs and attracting thousands of visitors to their local area.

The places will now work with a panel of experts and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to finalise their bids before the shortlist is announced early next year.

Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries said:

Winning the UK City of Culture competition has a hugely positive impact on an area, driving investment, creating jobs, and highlighting that culture is for everyone, regardless of their background.

This year's focus is on levelling up access to culture across the country and making sure there is a legacy that continues for generations to come. I look forward to seeing what this brilliant longlist has in store as they continue in the competition.

Sir Phil Redmond, Chair of the City of Culture Expert Advisory Panel, said:

The Expressions of Interest stage was introduced as an opportunity to encourage many more places to experience the benefit of coming together to define and share a cultural vision for their areas, and what the longlist demonstrates is the range and depth of cultural ambition across the whole of the UK.

Also for the first time, each longlisted city will receive financial support to help them develop their vision. Each is different. Each has its own story to tell. All share a common aim: to demonstrate how culture can act as the creative catalyst for change. I am really looking forward to seeing how each story develops.

The competition, delivered by DCMS in collaboration with the Offices for

Scotland and Wales and the Northern Ireland Executive, uses culture as a tool for levelling up towns and cities across the country. The longlist was recommended by an independent advisory panel which brings together a wide range of expertise from across the UK.

All bids were asked to explain how they would use culture to grow and strengthen their local area, as well as how they would use culture to recover from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. For the first time, this year each longlisted place will receive £40,000 to support the development of their promising proposals.

The winner will be announced in spring 2022 and will follow Coventry's tenure as UK City of Culture 2021 to take the lead on culture in the UK in 2025.

Previous winners Hull and Derry-Londonderry have shown how the competition can deliver greater and long-lasting cultural participation, economic regeneration and local pride, whilst Coventry City of Culture 2021 is already providing a blueprint for how culture can be at the heart of social and economic recovery.

Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries will also be hosting a roundtable with all unsuccessful bidders to discuss how best they can be supported.

UK Government Minister for Scotland Iain Stewart said:

I'm particularly pleased that Stirling is in the running for this prestigious award. With its fascinating history and vibrant creative scene, it's a strong contender for the title.

The list of cities announced today is testament to the outstanding creativity and culture across the UK. I look forward to seeing proposals develop as Stirling strives to bring the UK City of Culture to Scotland for the first time.