

UK City of Culture 2025 shortlist revealed

- Bradford, County Durham, Southampton and Wrexham County Borough selected
- Winner will be announced by the Culture Secretary in May

Bradford, County Durham, Southampton and Wrexham County Borough are today unveiled as the four areas shortlisted to be UK City of Culture 2025.

The four locations were approved by Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries based on independent advice made to the government by a panel of experts led by Sir Phil Redmond.

The finalists were whittled down from a record twenty initial bids to eight outstanding longlist applications which also included Cornwall, Derby, Stirling and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon.

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.

The vast benefits of winning the prestigious title include attracting millions of pounds in additional investment to help boost regeneration, a year in the cultural spotlight with hundreds of events encouraging long-lasting participation in the arts, and growth for local tourism.

Arts Minister Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay said:

The UK City of Culture competition shows the important role that culture can play in levelling up our towns, cities and rural communities – bringing investment, great events, thousands of tourists, and opportunity for people of all ages and backgrounds.

We have seen a huge positive impact in this year's host city, Coventry, with millions of pounds in investment and thousands of visitors.

This has been a record year for bids, which is great to see. Congratulations to the four shortlisted places – I wish them all the best of luck.

Coventry UK City of Culture 2021 has seen more than £172 million invested in funding music concerts, public art displays, the UK's first permanent immersive digital art gallery, a new children's play area in the centre of the city, the new Telegraph Hotel and improvements to public transport.

More than a third of event tickets (43 per cent) issued to Coventry residents as part of the City of Culture went to financially stretched people or those facing adversity and a third of the cultural programme was co-created with local communities. A further £500 million has been ploughed into the city's regeneration since it was confirmed as the UK City of Culture.

More than £150 million of public and private sector investment was invested into 2013 winner Derry-Londonderry while the 2017 winner Hull saw a 10 percent increase in visitor numbers during its tenure.

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

Culture can act as a catalyst for community engagement, civic cohesion and a driver for economic and social change as previously seen not just in Derry-Londonderry (2013), Hull (2017) and Coventry (2021), but all those other places who went on a journey to develop their own cultural strategy. Simply taking part has proved a catalyst in itself. We have had a great longlist to select from, which made the shortlisting difficult, but I am now looking forward to visiting each of the shortlisted places with the panel to witness culture's catalytic effect in action.

Martin Sutherland, Chief Executive, Coventry City of Culture Trust, said:

This is such an exciting moment for the shortlisted cities and we wish them all the best for the next stage. Holding the title in Coventry has been a privilege and has made a considerable impact already on the City and its citizens. We can't wait to see what comes next for those who've used the bidding process to truly consider the value of culture – all will have inspired the next generation of artists, organisations, funders and supporters. The expert advisory panel, chaired by Sir Phil Redmond, will now visit the four shortlisted places before making their final recommendation in May. The winner will be announced this year in Coventry.

The competition, delivered by DCMS in collaboration with the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, brings culture into the heart of communities and gives people an opportunity to get involved in everything the arts have to offer.

The eight longlisted bidders received, for the first time, a £40,000 grant to strengthen their applications which were scrutinised by the expert advisory panel against [published criteria](#).

The unsuccessful areas will each receive detailed feedback on their bids. Ministers and officials will also engage with them on how best they can maintain momentum and realise their ambitions in the future.

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Notes to Editors:

- The [expert advisory panel](#) includes representatives from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and brings together a wide range of experience.
- To learn more about each shortlisted bid visit the cities' websites: [Bradford](#), [County Durham](#), [Southampton](#), [Wrexham](#).
- Read more information on [Coventry UK City of Culture 2021](#).
- For the first time this year groups of towns were able to join together and apply for the title to be awarded to their local area – widening the scope of which areas of the country could benefit.

Full list of bids:

- Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon
- The City of Bangor and Northwest Wales
- The Borderlands region, comprising Dumfries and Galloway, Scottish Borders, Northumberland, Cumbria and Carlisle City
- Bradford
- Conwy County
- Cornwall
- Derby
- County Durham
- Lancashire
- Medway
- City of Newport
- Powys
- Southampton
- Stirling
- The Tay Cities region
- Torbay and Exeter
- Wakefield District
- City of Wolverhampton
- Wrexham County Borough
- Great Yarmouth & East Suffolk