

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 29 March 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Health and Community

SUBJECT: Capital of Culture

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To update Members on Halton's involvement in Liverpool's Capital of Culture celebrations.

1.2 To endorse Halton's programme of activities, in particular the proposal to host a major Youth Cultural Festival in 2008, and its budgeting implications.

2.0 Recommended that:

- (1) Executive Board approves Halton's approach to its involvement in Capital of Culture.
- (2) Approval is given to hosting a major Youth Cultural Festival in Halton in 2008, and that the cost of such an event is underwritten by the Council.

3.0 Supporting Information

3.1 The Employment, Learning and Skills PPB, at its meeting of 12 March 2007 endorsed Halton's approach to its involvement in Capital of Culture. The Board recommended to Executive Board that support should be given to a major Youth Cultural Festival being hosted in Halton in 2008, and the cost of such an event be underwritten by the Council.

3.2 A Capital of Culture Working Group has been co-ordinating opportunities for involvement in Liverpool's Capital of Culture celebrations.

3.3 Recent progress has been made in putting together a headline programme of activities that is both achievable and deliverable.

3.4 The following outlines the possible areas of major activity

- 1) All Halton's twin towns to be invited to Liverpool's 800th Birthday Celebrations in August 2007. Our Twin Towns have made a positive response, and Leiria are sending a group of musicians to be part of the pageant.
- 2) Halton to organise a Youth Cultural Festival in 2008 at which all Merseyside Authorities and their twin towns will be invited to participate. The event will focus on performance opportunities for young people, and the idea is supported by the Merseyside Cultural Forum. This would be Halton's major event for 2008.
- 3) Produce a Capital of Culture Enterprise Game for 2008 as endorsed by the Merseyside Cultural Forum.
- 4) Utilise the Brindley as a venue for hosting events, including multi-authority community arts. Possibility of a youth drama festival.

- 5) Develop sports programme in Halton. In January 2007 Halton staged a very successful National Students Rugby League Championship. The European Student Rugby League Games will also be held in Halton in April 2007. Seek to replicate this in future years. It is anticipated that Halton will host events for the World Fire-fighter Games in 2008 (based in Liverpool). There are opportunities for the new tennis centre, the table-tennis centre, athletics track, and the Stadium.
- 6) Develop a programme for Theatre in the Parks.
- 7) Develop youth music opportunities with involvement in Liverpool's 'Streetwave' initiative.
- 8) Lead on development of Arts Mark, sharing Halton's good practise with other authorities.
- 9) Host annual Literature Festival. Programme for May 2007 now complete. Repeat in 2008.
- 10) Promote Shakespeare in Schools Festival. Already staged in February 2007 with huge involvement through schools. Repeat in 2008.
- 11) Participate in Pan-Merseyside arts initiatives;
 - Community singing festival
 - Open Arts Competitions
- 12) Host business meetings with local industry to promote the '08 Business Club. 49 Halton companies have now signed up to the Business Connect scheme.
- 13) Develop volunteering opportunities for residents of Halton.
- 14) Catalyst and Norton Priory involved in 2007 year of heritage. Local groups involved in local history fair.
- 15) Participate in Community Education Programmes (e.g. drug/alcohol awareness initiatives).
- 16) All schools to receive an educational pack.
- 17) Sponsorship of the Widnes Vikings extended for 2007/08.
- 18) Produce brochure for 2008 listing events.

3.5 This programme is not exhaustive; other opportunities will arise as 2008 approaches, for example the launch of a Merseyside 08 Travel Card for culture and leisure activities featuring incentives and premium offers.

3.6 With the exception of the Capital of Culture Enterprise Game and the Youth Cultural Festival all activities listed in paragraph 3.3 above are deliverable within existing budgets. There is a real opportunity for the Enterprise Game to be funded through the Mersey Partnership and an outline bid has been submitted.

3.7 The Youth Festival is more difficult. It is envisaged that this would be Halton's major event for 2008, and that all Merseyside's Authorities would be invited to participate in a two day show which highlights youth performance, but also offers cultural trade opportunities or exchanges of local cultures (e.g. costume, food, etc). All Merseyside's twin towns would be invited to participate in the event.

3.8 The concept has been supported by the Merseyside Boroughs through the Cultural Forum. It is anticipated that the event would be held in June/July 2008, and would allow a real opportunity for the young people of Merseyside to get together to celebrate what they do. For Halton it would be an opportunity to show-case all the ongoing work that happens in schools, The Youth Service, Arts Development Team, the Ranger Service, Sports Development, etc.

3.9 Such an event will require a budget akin to the Halton Show. Capital of Culture have already indicated that £40k is available to Halton to support events. If this were to be utilised for the Youth Cultural Festival there would still be a shortfall of £110k. This sum should be significantly reduced through sponsorship or admittance fees but ultimately this cannot be guaranteed. Such an event needs a one-year lead in and organisers need to be assured that they can commit budgets to allow the event to go ahead. A decision, therefore, is required as to whether Halton would underwrite the shortfall to a maximum of £110k so that the promotion and events team in conjunction with other Directorates, can start its organisation.

4.0 Policy and other Implications

4.1 A decision in principle to support Capital of Culture has already been approved.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 The potential budget issues are identified in 3.8 above. This represents a maximum figure which would be sought to be reduced by contributions from other partners and through sponsorship. It does not, however, include any costs associated with bringing delegates and parties from our twin towns to Halton, which would be covered by existing Town Twinning budgets. Further details, including financial estimates will be presented to the appropriate PPB(s) nearer the time.

6.0 Risk Analysis

6.1 Involvement in Capital of Culture offers Halton the opportunity to raise its profile and provides a number of cultural and business opportunities. By implication, these could be lost by non-involvement.

7.0 Equality and Diversity Issues

7.1 None identified.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972.

8.1 None.