

Hull City of Culture 2017

Short description of the project

In November 2013, Hull won its bid to be UK City of Culture 2017. The bid concentrated on Hull's heritage, the untold role in the UK as a gateway to Europe and the creativity of its home-grown talent as well as those who have studied in Hull. The bid team demonstrated exceptional support through a very successful Twitter campaign (#HullYes) that had already trended UK-wide six times by the time it won. The reach of the social media campaign illustrated the passion of the people both living in the city and with connections to Hull.

One of the strong elements of the bid was that the city showed that it could deliver a world-class UK City of Culture programme that was so firmly rooted in Hull it could not come from anywhere else. The programme is grouped around four themes.

- 'Routes and Roots' explores people's roots in the city and the history and heritage of a city at the heart of migration and transition. Developing the bid for City of Culture helped to refocus attention on the city's maritime heritage and maritime future.
- 'Made in Hull' is a theme recognises the production of culture from theatre, music but also great architecture. It celebrates Hull's poets, writers and musicians and will look at Hull's innovations and contributions to the world, from Liquid Crystal – which can be found in every smart phone – to the humble Yorkshire pudding. Hull exports 20 million of these a year!
- 'Freedom' recognizes the unique contribution of Hull in the freedom movement but also the freedom of space and freedom of thought, and freedom of artists. Hull continues to champion the freedom movement by tackling difficult issues such as sex trafficking and other forms of modern day slavery.
- And finally, 'Quirky' celebrates 'Hullness'. Whether it's painted toads, white phone boxes or galleries in shipping containers, Hull dares to be different and likes a surprise.

Plans include programming activity to stretch across 365 days with an estimated 1,500 special events including 15 national and international commissions, 12 artists' residencies, 25 festivals, eight major community participation projects and a programme of conferences and major broadcasting events. The activity has already beginning and the growing sense of pride in this new status for the city is evident.

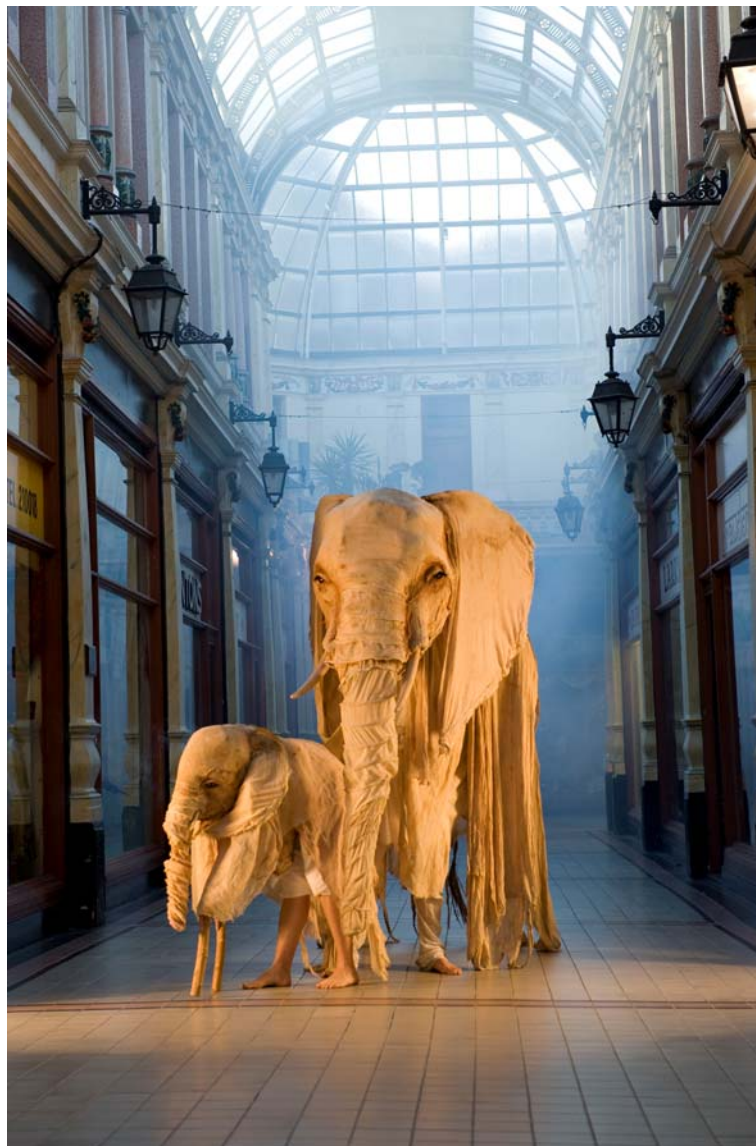
What would have happened without this project?

Kingston-upon-Hull is one of only a handful of English cities that have experienced an unbroken position as a leading centre of population and economic activity from the Middle Ages to the present day. This continuity, which derives, in the main, from the fact that Hull has been one of England's principal ports for some seven hundred

years, is reflected in the wealth of historic buildings and places through which the City's proud history can be explored.

However, for many years, the wealth which this great City has to offer has been overshadowed by Hull's economic and social problems and a very poor public image. Hull's reputation has had a tough ride over the last few decades and back in the 90s had the number one spot in a 'Crap Towns' survey of the worst places to live in Britain. The City is currently ranked as the 10th most deprived authority area in the country.

Hull is seeing some turn around in fortunes with the announcement of huge investment from Siemens and a strong City Leadership Plan. Without City of Culture 2017, there would be positive progress but the title will definitely accelerate improvement and change out-dated negative perceptions of the city.



Elephants in Hull's historic old town arcades. The elephants played a big role in the bid and were symbolic of the fact that elephants used to be seen walking the streets of Hull © Hull News and Pictures

What has the project achieved, or difference has it made?

Winning the City of Culture 2017 title has shone a huge spotlight on the city and it is already reaping the benefits. Since the announcement that Hull had won the bid, the city has had over £9 million worth of positive coverage in regional, national and international media. There have been over 114,000 views covering 150 countries of the inspiring City of Culture bid film “This city belongs to everyone” helping to promote the best of Hull. Hull has been named by the Sunday Times as one of Britain’s best places to live and 30% of UK travellers say they are more likely to visit Hull as a result of the title and there has already been increased investment in the city – with new public realm infrastructure on the way.

It is estimated that being the UK City of Culture will deliver a £60m boost to the local economy in 2017 alone. There are already very tangible early economic benefits with the city experiencing a 29% increase in Trip Advisor visits, 15% increase in hotel occupancy, a reported 33% increase in business in local bars and a 54% increase in museum visits during holiday periods.

What is the future of the project?

Hull is determined that the City of Culture 2017 will leave a lasting legacy. This will be felt in physical terms through the accelerated capital investment opportunities, accelerated development of ‘visitor priority areas’ like the Old Town, Fruit Market and its waterfront connectivity. But it should also be felt in strategic partnerships, collaborations, an independent cultural sector, increased access to tourism and cultural sector jobs and certainly in stronger civic pride in the City.

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