**TALKING POINTS**

**KEY MESSAGES**

* **BRADFORD SHORTLIST:** On Saturday 19 March 2022, Bradford was officially named by the DCMS as one of four places shortlisted to be the next UK City of Culture 2025
* **IT’S OUR TIME:** Without a doubt we are in this to win it. Bradford is so up for being the next UK City of Culture!
* **YOUNGEST:** As the UK’s youngest city (29% of its population under 20 and nearly a quarter under 16), young people have been instrumental in shaping Bradford’s bid
* **MOST DIVERSE:** As the most diverse place in the competition, the city of culture designation is an opportunity to tell the district’s story in its own voice, offering a platform for the experiences of our many communities and cultures.
* **LEVELLING UP**: Bradford district was recently named by an independent report as the city with the most to gain from the Levelling Up agenda. Everyone is seeing its ambition and potential.
* **CULTURE DRIVING INVESTMENT:** Public and private sector businesses are backing the bid. There’s a huge appetite amongst stakeholders here to support Bradford if we win because culture is a proven catalyst for attracting inward investment and driving inclusive growth.

**Bradford district has made the shortlist for UK City of Culture 2025, how does it feel?**

- Energised, and we’d like to thank the thousands of people, community organisations, businesses and the creative community across Bradford district who have thrown their support behind the campaign and helped us shape what we believe is a winning bid

- We’re starting to find our confidence again as one of the great cities of the north, and being shortlisted puts us within reaching distance of clinching the title and one step closer to sharing our stories on an international stage.

**Can you tell us anything more about the bid?**

- We can’t say too much at this stage, but we will use our storytellers, our innovators and our diverse young population to deliver a year of culture that is both recognisably Bradford and a new story written on our own terms.

- Bradford’s history of fierce independence, of ‘doing things differently’, of progressive social reform and its spectacular cultural heritage all offer a powerful launchpad for a UK City of Culture celebration in 2025 that could only happen in Bradford.

- If you look at all the incredible projects Bradford 2025 has supported over the last two years, from Summer Unlocked – a fantastic programme of free cultural events including theatre, music, film and more; Bradford is LIT festival and the spectacular Borealis light show which saw more than 20,000 people come into our main city square last year, through to spectacular Mills are Alive in Manningham project show earlier this month at Lister Mills - it gives you perhaps a flavour of what’s to come.

**Why do you think Bradford deserves to win?**

- There’s no place like Bradford. We have a rich cultural history and one of the youngest and most diverse populations in Europe, but one not without its challenges too.

- Becoming the UK City of Culture will accelerate our intention to put Bradford on the international map for culture.

- In many ways, it feels like we’re already getting ready to become the UK City of Culture for 2025. We have a new 4000 capacity live music and entertainment venue under construction within an old 1930s super cinema, a new public market and food destination breathing life into the high street, vast swathes of our city centre is being pedestrianised, and a cultural revolution at grass roots level is happening in places like Keighley and Manningham.

**The city has certainly had its challenges…When people think of Bradford, they see a poor post-industrial town… how do you get over that?**

- We don’t shy away from our challenges, and the fact that we have already engaged thousands of individuals and groups shows that we are determined to make this bid for Bradford and of Bradford.

- PwC moved to the city in 2019 and named Bradford ‘most improved city’ in its Growth for Cities Index, driven by jobs, skills and work life balance. In 2020, The Sunday Times named Bradford district in the 20 best places for business in the UK. Channel 4 said they chose the region for their new HQ specifically because of the unique opportunities presented by Bradford and earlier this week it backed the launch of ‘The Unit’ in the city - a new resource for filmmakers. In January 2022 – Bradford was named by an independent report as the city offering the most potential from the levelling up agenda.

- One really interesting aspect of our bid is the pioneering work we are doing in partnership with the Bradford Institute for Health Research. We’re determined to capitalise on/embed an undeniable link between culture and its positive impact on health, wellbeing, and even life-chances.

- Being UK City of Culture is as much about creating job opportunities as it is about creating artistic experiences.

**What do you hope the legacy of the City of Culture designation will be?**

- It will put Bradford on the map – bringing in more visitors, new jobs in tourism, and help revitalise the city centre evening economy after some challenging years.

- This bid is already part of a long-term vision - the district has put culture at the heart of its social and economic recovery from the pandemic and this bid forms part of the Council’s 10-year cultural strategy.

- Most of all – we hope it will change the narrative of the district, offering a platform for the voices and experiences of our many communities and cultures. This is Bradford’s moment to showcase to the world what modern British culture looks like. This is Bradford’s time.

**What happens now?**

- Judges will then visit the shortlisted locations in May – and we’ll be ready for them, dressing the whole district to fly the flag for Bradford 2025 and showcasing the very best of the district’s arts and culture scene.

- The winning location will be announced at the end of May 2022.