

Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington (ECW)

INVITATION TO QUOTE

FOR

**Cultural Brief for Cheshire and Warrington
Sub-Regional Strategic Direction**

18th December 2024

ECW REF: ECWCULTURE2024

Return Date of ITQ: Sunday 12th January 2025

Cultural Brief for Cheshire and Warrington

Sub-Regional Strategic Direction

Context

Reporting to the Cheshire and Warrington (C&W) local authorities the role of Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington (ECW) is to support Cheshire and Warrington's elected members to make C&W the healthiest, most sustainable inclusive and growing place in the country by

- providing strategic economic planning
- delivery of key government programmes
- ensuring that a strong, independent business voice is reflected in the advice ECW provides to elected members.

ECW was formerly known as the Cheshire & Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (C&W LEP). It is also responsible for promoting C&W as a great place to visit, live, work, invest and study through Marketing Cheshire, which is an integral part of ECW and is designated by Visit England as the sub-region's Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP).

To help place C&W in the best position for support from the Government, particularly in relation to devolution opportunities, council Leaders and Chief Executives have asked ECW and the Growth Directors from each local authority in:

- Cheshire West & Chester Council
- Cheshire East Council
- Warrington Council

to lead and co-ordinate planning work to support the discussions with Government and other key stakeholders for a potential future Mayoral Combined Authority.

Whilst some of that work is linked to the emerging and longer-term C&W 'Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Plan', there is a need to create an aligned set of Cheshire and Warrington sub-regional aims and objectives focused on the Government's priorities, along with a clear sense of how Government can help the region to deliver these.

It will be important to build on the existing C&W vision to be the healthiest, most sustainable, inclusive and growing economy in the UK. Several priority themed areas contribute to this, including the Cultural Economy.

Whilst the Culture Economy in each local authority has well-developed infrastructure, priorities and achievements, working at a sub-regional level is less well-developed than other policy areas, for example transport and tourism.

Sub-regional planning work to date has been themed around existing central government departments. Whilst there is agreement on the direction of travel for Culture and Tourism (refer DCMS draft proforma), there is a need for intelligence gathering, benchmarking, analysis and recommendation of opportunities in relation to sub-regional working. It is envisaged that this will then inform the direction for any future devolution agreement for the sub-regional cultural landscape.

Objectives

We are seeking to engage an organisation or individual to provide:

- a high-level analysis of cultural opportunities in Cheshire and Warrington (C&W) to support the development of our narrative with Government and other key stakeholders, particularly in relation to future devolution opportunities.
- an assessment of the devolution levers that would be most helpful to support cultural growth opportunities in C&W, in particular answering why such levers are important specifically for C&W and how they would be utilised.
- an agreed C&W outline plan for next steps to develop the C&W cultural offer.

The aim is to be able to answer the following questions in relation to Culture across the sub-region:

1. What are the priority opportunities and issues?
2. What are the reasons these are priorities for C&W?
3. What would make a difference to C&W's ability to deliver these priorities and ambitions at scale?
4. What things will make the most difference and what will add most added value?
5. What would be able to be achieved if a Mayoral Combined Authority was delivered? (needs to include measurable metrics)
6. What evidence is there that C&W could deliver, strategically and operationally, through a Mayoral Combined Authority?

The above work should involve consideration of relevant stakeholders across the sub-region as well as other partners e.g. Arts Council England, Educational Institutions and the Third Sector. This should help to facilitate reflection and understanding of the barriers to achieving the identified priorities and the necessary support required. This includes looking at innovative approaches rather than relying on existing 'menus'.

It is important that the work recognises ambitions, place priorities and funding availability of the relevant cultural arm's length bodies (ALB's) relevant to C&W. The aim is to work as a collaborative partner with the relevant ALB's to share expertise and insight to maximise the impact of funding and policy decisions and highlight potential opportunities for alignment.

The work should also consider the government's commitment to supporting the creative industries as part of the Industrial Strategy, recognising the key role it can play in economic growth.

References

- Cheshire & Warrington Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Plan
- National Industrial Strategy
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport draft proforma
- Cheshire East Council Cultural Economy Framework 2023 - 2028
- Crewe and Macclesfield Cultural Strategies
- Cheshire East Council Town Centre Vitality Plans

- A Great and Curious Future, Warrington's vision for Cultural Growth 2020-2025.
- Cheshire West and Chester Cultural Strategy, 2015
- Chester Heritage and Visual Arts Strategy
- Cheshire West & Chester Inclusive Economy Strategy
- Chester One City Plan

Required Outputs

The appointed party will:

- Engage with key stakeholders, organisations and individuals
- Review & report on existing cultural strategies, data, research, infrastructure (Place Partnerships, Creative People and Places, National Portfolio Organisation's etc) assets and resources across the three councils within the sub-region.
- Analyse all information in terms of strengths, weaknesses and opportunities in relation to a future devolution agreement.
- Define where C&W is now to benchmark/measure growth potential to help define priority areas.
- Identify any areas of synergy e.g. creative clusters and opportunities for development and knowledge transfer.
- Identify the areas of deprivation along with evidence of the poverty gap, mental and physical health challenges specific to the sub-region
- Identify C&W points of differentiation in the cultural offer e.g. differences in rural versus market town and urban areas, and opportunities for growth.
- Identify the ambitions, place priorities and funding availability of the relevant cultural ALB's relevant to C&W.
- Identify opportunities for C&W creative industries in relation to the Industrial Strategy.
- Identify current and future audiences.
- Consider opportunities of working more effectively with neighbouring regions e.g. Greater Manchester and Liverpool City Region.
- Review the devolution experience and cultural priorities in other relevant geographic regions e.g. Tees Valley.

Recommendations

- Recommendations should be provided in the form of an outline plan for next steps to grow and develop the C&W cultural sector.
- The recommendations should highlight where additional skills, capacity & resilience can be created aligned with partners and community's cultural ambitions.

- The recommendations should address opportunities for accessibility, inclusivity and diversity.
- The recommendations should recognise environmental responsibilities.
- The recommendations should highlight where additional skills, capacity & resilience can be created aligned with partners and communities' cultural ambitions.
- The recommendations should enable strategic leadership over meaningful geographies to eliminate competitive elements and provide a joined-up approach to maximise sustainable economic return and wider cultural health and well-being benefits.
- The recommendations should enable the delivery of more across a wider area to avoid a competing range of programmes with the same outcomes but for different aims.
- The recommendations should enable more effective, better targeted, greater growth and stronger public/private community partnerships

Management and support

The decision of appointment of the successful provider will be made by the sub-regional Cultural team across the three local authorities led by:

- Carole Hyde, Head of Rural and Cultural Economy, Cheshire East Council
- Rachel Foster, Head of Communities, Culture and Libraries, Cheshire West and Chester Council
- Eleanor Blackburn, Head of Inclusive Economy, Leisure and Culture, Warrington Council

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend an interview to discuss their proposed approach to delivering the brief.

The project scope and budget will be managed by the sub-regional Cultural team, with Carole Hyde the consultants' main point of contact. **If you have any queries about this brief, please contact Carole on carole.hyde@cheshireeast.gov.uk**

Indicative timetable

12th January 2025 - deadline for responses to the brief

15th January 2025 – short-list interviews with sub-regional Cultural team

17th January 2025 - confirm appointment / briefing meeting

28th February 2025 - sharing of initial findings

7th March 2025 – draft report

14th March 2025 - final report including plan for next steps

There may be some flexibility with above indicative dates, so please highlight any differences required in your response.

Budget

A total budget of up to £20,000 + VAT is available to deliver this brief.

The budget fee needs to cover all costs including:

- Fees
- Insurances and travel
- All taxes (exclusive of VAT)
- All meetings and engagement

Application process

To apply for this opportunity please provide:

- An outline of how you will deliver the brief (maximum two sides of A4) including a budget breakdown and timeline
- A copy of your CV(s) or organisation credentials

Please send completed application to tenders@cheshireandwarrington.com with 'Cheshire and Warrington Cultural Sector Review' in the subject heading. The deadline for applications is Sunday 12th January 2025.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited for interview on Wednesday 15th January 2025.