

City earns Cultural Compact champion funding

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City of Wolverhampton Council has secured funding from Arts Council England to put in place a Cultural Compact champion to support the further development of the city's strong cultural offer.

After submitting a bid, the council have been awarded £20,000 for an employee to develop a relationship with wider partners to embed culture into the vision for the city, wider regeneration and economic growth activity.

Cultural Compact focuses on building a strategic cross sector partnership driven by a common ambition for culture and its contribution to social and economic development, bringing together the local authority, university, college, businesses, leisure sector, city developers, cultural and creative organisations, health sector, community representatives, and voluntary sector to co-design and deliver a vision for culture in the city.

The champion will work with key internal and external stakeholders and partners who can influence the vision supporting the transformation of the city.

There is currently £4.4 billion of investment on site or planned in Wolverhampton and the cultural sector can have a huge potential impact, not just as a direct employer, but in supporting jobs in other industries - making the city a more attractive place to live, work and visit.

Wolverhampton already has a strong cultural offer with 6 venues classified as national/regional cultural assets, plus nationally significant clusters in music, performing and visual arts.

Creative and digital sectors are important to the city, contributing £209 million GVA and 4,394 jobs.

The council is also investing heavily in its cultural offer through a £38.1 million transformation of the historic Civic Halls and support of the Grand Theatre's growth ambitions.

Councillor Harman Banger, Cabinet Member for City Economy, said: "This is fantastic news. This Arts Council England funding will help us develop this important aspect in the city.

"The city is undergoing dynamic change and we know how important arts and culture is to our residents and visitors."

Peter Knott, Area Director for Arts Council England, added: "Culture has a powerful effect in improving lives and wellbeing, developing communities and unlocking the economic potential for towns and cities.

"Wolverhampton is a city of opportunity with a great history of creativity and industry and we look forward to seeing the impact the Cultural Compact will bring to Wolverhampton as it builds effective networks across a broad range of partners."

The bid submission highlighted how culture has the potential to play a greater role in transforming the city centre into a vibrant and attractive place to live work and visit.

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