



Media Release

Stirling to represent Scotland in UK City of Culture 2025 bid

Stirling has today (8 Oct) been announced as the sole Scottish bid to make the longlist for UK City of Culture 2025, boosting a bold aim to put culture at the heart of the area's regeneration and growth ambitions.

Following a record 20 expressions of interest, the Stirling area will now compete with seven other cities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in the next stage of the process.

The bid is being led by Stirling's key cultural partners alongside Stirling Council.

Cllr Chris Kane, Convener of Stirling Council's Community Planning and Regeneration Committee, said: "This is absolutely fantastic news and a huge boost in our plans to enhance Stirling's inspiring cultural programme across all our communities.

"There was fierce competition to reach this stage and making the longlist of candidates shows the incredible diversity and dynamism of Stirling's current cultural offering and our exciting vision to build on this for future generations.

"Stirling is already famed for its world-class heritage offering but this bid is about widening participation through celebrating the rich local culture and creative spirit in our communities.

"We are proud to represent Scotland in the next round and we are excited to press forward with our partners to show that Stirling can be a beacon for breaking down barriers to participation in culture and the arts."

Stirling's ambition for City of Culture stems from the groundswell of support and passion for culture that flows from its grassroots communities, artists and residents. For nearly a decade, local people and creative organisations have worked with Stirling Council to reimagine our cultural offer.

A formal expression of interest in becoming UK City of Culture 2025 was declared by [Scene Stirling](#), which is a partnership involving all Stirling's arts, education, heritage and cultural organisations (Artlink Central, MacRobert, The Engine Shed, Creative Stirling, Stirling University, Big Noise, Stirling Smith, Forth Valley College Creative Industries, Go Forth – Business Improvement District and Stirling Council).

Vice Convener, Cllr Scott Farmer said: "Culture is a key priority for Stirling and can act as a catalyst for the regeneration of the area, attracting investment and tourism, bringing people together and reaffirming a sense of place and pride.

"Cultural activity and creativity can also deliver a wider range of social benefits, enhancing learning, health and wellbeing. This bid is at the heart of Stirling's regeneration and growth plans that will improve the lives of people in our communities.

"It's also an opportunity to better promote and showcase Stirling as an attractive place to visit, learn, live and create."

Director of Artlink Central, which manages the Place Partnership, Kevin Harrison said: "The ambition of all the cultural partners behind this bid is to collaborate, connect and celebrate what we do to make the arts, culture and heritage central to Stirling's already impressive identity.

"This is a city and a region where the arts feel like home and our goal now is to increase participation and grow Stirling's thriving creative scene."

UK Government Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries said: "Culture is for everyone, regardless of their background and I'm delighted that the bids from our eight longlisted places will help areas across the UK level up by increasing access to culture.

"I wish all our successful bids luck in the next phase of the competition. Stirling's bid showed huge promise and I look forward to seeing what they have in store.

UK Government Minister for Scotland Iain Stewart said: "I'm particularly pleased that Stirling is in the running for this prestigious award. With its fascinating history and vibrant creative scene, it's a strong contender for the title.

"The list of cities announced today is testament to the outstanding creativity and culture across the UK. I look forward to seeing proposals develop as Stirling strives to bring the UK City of Culture to Scotland for the first time."

The competition, delivered by DCMS in collaboration with the Offices for Scotland and Wales and the Northern Ireland Executive, uses culture as a tool for levelling up towns and cities across the country. The longlist was recommended by an independent advisory panel which brings together a wide range of expertise from across the UK.

All bids were asked to explain how they would use culture to grow and strengthen their local area, as well as how they would use culture to recover from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. For the first time, this year each longlisted place will receive £40,000 to support the development of their promising proposals.

The winner will be announced in spring 2022 and will follow Coventry's tenure as UK City of Culture 2021 to take the lead on culture in the UK in 2025.