

Dear Clerk

As you may be aware, there is a great deal of commercial activity, creativity and innovation happening across East Suffolk, from Freeport East in the south through to East Suffolk Council's Smart Towns initiative and on to the major Town Investment Plan projects in Lowestoft.

We also want to showcase another hugely important part of the East Suffolk community; the Cultural and Creative sector.

Earlier this evening, I announced that together with our neighbours at Great Yarmouth Borough Council, East Suffolk Council has decided to enter a joint bid for UK City of Culture 2025.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has recently announced that the UK City of Culture 2025 award is to be a catalyst for levelling up areas outside London and other UK cities, putting culture at the heart of plans to recover from the impact of the pandemic.

This means, for the first time, groups of towns can join together and apply for the title to be awarded to their local area.

UK City of Culture is a fantastic showcase for the huge impact which culture has in towns and cities across the country. The East Suffolk and Great Yarmouth bid has the potential to be transformational for our area, strengthening communities, building a sense of pride, celebrating and boosting our local arts and culture sector, and attracting new investment and tourism with all the benefits this economic uplift will bring.

Working with our cultural and creative sector, we will create a groundswell of support and engagement which will in turn play a key role in our efforts to overcome the challenges in our combined communities, helping them to recover from the pandemic and opening yet more opportunities, especially for young people.

We will be publicly announcing our intention to bid this evening and our expression of interest will be filed by July 19. The decision on whether we have made it onto the long list will be announced in September 2021, with the winner announced in May 2022.

This bid will enable us to showcase the diverse and multi-layered culture we treasure, our people and their creativity, experiences, buildings and landscapes, opening them up to be enjoyed and engaged with by everyone and creating a cultural legacy for future generations.

We look forward to sharing more details with you in due course and hope you will join us on this exciting journey.

Councillor Steve Gallant
Leader, East Suffolk Council