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Report to: LEP Board
Date: 29 November 2017
Subject: Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund

1 Purpose

1.1 To seek the LEP Board's agreement on the Leeds City Region's submission to the Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund (NCRF).

2 Information

2.1 The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) launched the £15m NCRF as a competition for three or four investments of up to £4m across the eleven LEP areas. It delivers a government commitment so "as many people as possible benefit from the 2018 Great Exhibition of the North¹, and the fund will boost the Northern Powerhouse and help build a lasting legacy across the whole region".

2.2 Each LEP has been invited to put forward one proposal for a single, capital cultural regeneration project. Officials have indicated ministerial decision-making is likely to focus on historic underinvestment in cultural and creative infrastructure, and deliverability. For successful projects, the relevant LEP will receive the money and be responsible to monitor delivery (with light-touch DCMS oversight).

2.3 The NCRF was incorporated as a strand of the city region's August/September Open Call for Projects. Eight NCRF proposals were received – Wakefield (2), Bradford (2) and one each in Kirklees, Leeds, Craven and Barnsley. Three schemes were promoted by local authorities; private and community groups led the remaining five. Two proposals were in 'overlapping' LEP areas so there has been liaison with neighbouring LEPs.

2.4 There has since been a period of discussion with promoters and district partners on proposals, including its deliverability and the strategic case for intervention. This has led to most promoters choosing to withdraw, leaving only the most impactful and deliverable projects to proceed to develop full business cases, as required by DCMS. The LEP has also engaged with Arts Council England for specific views on the two projects, as well as taking account of the consensus coming from the linked piece of work on the city region's ambition for culture, arts and sport (see agenda item 10). The process has been overseen by LEP Board Member Rashik Parmar.

¹ To be hosted in Newcastle/Gateshead in summer 2018 to showcase the best of Northern art, design and innovation.

2.5 The outcome of this process is to highlight two strong but very different projects that would each have a transformational impact on the cultural and creative economy in the Leeds City Region:

- **Transformation of the Bradford Odeon:** Completes the regeneration of City Park, where the former Odeon cinema has been closed since 2000 and has fallen into disrepair. With other options unviable, this capital fund is a rare opportunity to trigger a major physical regeneration with a 4,000-capacity mid-size live entertainment venue projected to host 225 events annually by 2023 attracting 270,000 people to the centre of Bradford with an economic impact of £10m. A petition of 2,705 signatories called for Bradford Odeon to be the LCR LEP’s nomination for the NCRF.
- **Backstage Academy @ Production Park:** Delivers a permanent and expanded home to the Backstage Academy university centre and support its progression to full university status. This accelerates development of the wider Production Park facility into a European centre of excellence for the design, development and rehearsal of concert touring productions along with leading facilities degree and Masters level education for the live events industry. It also provides a major boost to private sector-led regeneration in some of the most disadvantaged communities in the city region.

2.6 It is important for inclusive growth in the city region that both schemes are delivered, but the LEP can submit only one for the pan-Northern competition.

2.7 The table below summarises the degree to which the projects meet the Fund Criteria set by DCMS, based on the information provided by project promoters. **Appendix 1** provides further detail about why the categories have been rated as below the different elements of a ‘five cases’ business case.

	Transformation of the Bradford Odeon	Backstage Academy, Production Park, Wakefield
Fit with primary funding goals	Strong Fit	Medium Fit
Delivery of desired outcomes	Strong Fit	Strong Fit
Ambition and rationale for intervention in the local area	Strong Fit	Strong Fit
Value for money	Strong Fit	Strong Fit
Delivery and risk	Strong Fit	Strong Fit

2.8 Accordingly, it is recommended that, on balance, the transformation of the Bradford Odeon is selected as the LCR’s submission to the pan-Northern competition. The city region should, however, continue to examine opportunities to support the potential

of a live events cluster around Backstage Academy / Production Park as a means of driving growth in creative industries and private sector jobs in relatively disadvantaged areas.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 That the LEP Board determines its submission to the Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund. Based on the specific criteria of the DCMS fund and the views received from partners, it is recommended that on balance, the LEP's submission is the transformation of the Bradford Odeon.