

# Bidding for UK City of Culture: Incentive, Momentum & Impact

Kerry Wilson

Institute of Cultural Capital

**BA (Hons) Events Management:**

***Policy, Politics and Events***

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UK CITY OF CULTURE

# UK City of Culture: Integral factors to consider

## Liverpool 08 and European Capital of Culture (ECoC)

- UKCoC launched in 2009 on back of 'success' of Liverpool 08
- Relationship between UKCoC and ECoC extends beyond stimulus to emulate Liverpool's success, via ECoC bidding experiences of other UK cities

## Cultural policy discourse

- Fuelled by momentum at time of launch around culture-led/cultural regeneration, and concept of cultural interventions as catalysts for urban development and economic growth/recovery

## Cultural leadership

- Spearheaded at point of inception by engaging, charismatic, persuasive dual force of Phil Redmond CBE and Andy Burnham MP
- Ongoing committed, consistent leadership and advocacy has been (and continues to be) crucial since change of Government in 2010

# The story behind UK City of Culture



**“...cities can actually galvanize people to say ‘come on let’s all do it’ for that one year... it gives people that psychological target we all need to achieve things”.**

Phil Redmond, August 2011

## Reflections from Prof Phil Redmond CBE, Chair of UKCoC Independent Advisory Panel:

- Personal observations on the Liverpool 08 experience played a formative role in terms of **media exposure** (externally); the **collective experience** of working together (internally); and the combined **economic rewards**.
- The title expressed as a **‘badge of authority’** to come together, rebrand and market a city’s cultural offer, attracting national attention and events (e.g Turner prize).
- Culture becomes the **connecting catalyst** between different agencies, businesses, services and communities within cities, encouraging greater collaboration.

Full interview: <http://culturalcitiesresearch.net/uk-city-of-culture-2/>

## It's not the Winning: research with UKCoC 2013 bidding cities

- Funded by **Arts and Humanities Research Council** (2011-12) as part of 'Creative Economy' strand of Connected Communities research programme
- Brought together network of key stakeholders – bidding 'communities of interest' – from shortlisted cities of **Birmingham, Norwich and Sheffield**
- Four events including research workshops in each city
- Now developing research projects emerging from network discussions (e.g. PhD studentship in collaboration with Hull University Business School)
- Twitter feed still active **@culturalcities**

# The UKCoC 'incentive' & the bidding experience

- Bidding for the title [re]energised strategic cultural planning within cities:
  - Collaborative asset-mapping and marketing within Sheffield using culture as an original objective;
  - An 'added value' vehicle for existing cultural strategy in Birmingham;
  - Creation of strategy for 'social change' in Norwich led by arts/cultural sector.
- Clear evidence of consistent, sustained momentum between ECoC 2008 and UKCoC 2013 bidding experiences for Birmingham and Norwich:
  - Revitalised cultural strategy for Birmingham; reinvigorated confidence in cultural leadership in Norwich; another opportunity to promote cultural offer(s) on national basis via press coverage etc.
- Impact upon collaborative working and cultural communities of practice was significant, within and across sectors and local government departments.

# The impact of bidding for UKCoC 2013

- Despite the positive incentives, **the impact of bidding and losing** has ramifications:
  - It's a **transient experience** and difficult to maintain momentum without the incentive of bid deadlines and associated activities;
  - **Negative correlations between ECoC and UKCoC** when experienced as two successive losses!
  - **Political and economic context** is significant, including relationship between public subsidy and commercial sponsorship and the capacity of different cities to enable either/both. Affects the extent to which cultural plans go ahead without the 'badge of authority'.

## Recommendations from the bidding cities

- The **mythological 'Liverpool Model'** – issues of scale, replicability and the perceived dominance of regeneration objectives. UKCoC bid requirements should enable a more flexible, relative 'holistic case' for culture.
- At the time all was quiet from Derry-Londonderry as winning city, so **lost momentum regarding the incentive of the title** and what the actual benefits would be. More visibility required.
- Enable greater, sustainable connections between bidding/winning cities and subsequent **learning opportunities for cultural planning**.

# Reflections from the academic community

- In the absence of any discernible national cultural policy, the UKCoC initiative creates opportunities to think of culture as a **hybrid public policy project beyond** 'the arts' as a unit of economic activity and 'the city' as a dominant metropolis – Jonathan Vickery
- Such public policy elements however are problematic in relation to the **'cultural city' as a symbol of the creative economy**, and the impact upon artists, producers and makers and their creative practices – Roberta Communion
- There is another inherent risk that defining the 'cultural city' **promotes some and obfuscates other city cultures** and cultural identities – Oliver Mould
- The idea of the **cultural city as a temporally defined artistic or cultural 'host'** also raises questions as to whose culture is being celebrated or represented, and how visiting arts/cultural events can be reconciled with 'native', situated cultural offers – Peter Campbell

# Emerging research interests

- **Cultural titles and entitlement:**
  - Comparative value and impact of different cultural titles
  - Communities, entitlement and empowerment in the cultural city – who participates and benefits?
  - Role of resistance and counter-culture – the alternative cultural city
- **Cultural collaborations:**
  - Impact and cultural value of cross-sector collaborations
  - Impact upon organisational cultures and professional identities
- **Cultural titles and cultural leadership:**
  - The developmental impact of bidding for/hosting the cultural city on leadership capacity within cities
  - Public intellectuals, figureheads and representations of the cultural city

# Derry-Londonderry 2013 legacy

No definitive 'impact' study published (yet):

- 2740 fte- £97.1 million GVA
- £166 million capital investment
- 40 new businesses
- 4 k world hosts /600neets -1st city in UK
- 1million visitors
- +20 % beds and +22%occupancy(1%NI)
- 91% residents rated the year +7 /10
- 83% residents from most deprived wards took part
- 60k Facebook /16k Twitter
- See What a Year celebratory video:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lZe79mg-Yjo&app=desktop>



<http://www.cityofculture2013.com/> | @derry2013



# Revisiting our three integral factors...

## European Capital of Culture returns to UK in 2023

- Should UKCoC continue in its current format, there will be titles held either side of ECoC in relatively short time frame (2021 and 2025) – how will UKCoC discern itself from ECoC and inspire cities to bid for one or both?

## Cultural policy discourse

- Dichotomy between rhetoric of culture-led regeneration and impact of austerity measures on cultural sector – a very different political culture from 2009.
- ‘Redefinition of culture’ seeking to realign economic imperatives and asset-based notions of regeneration; culture seen as more embedded part of public policy.

## Cultural leadership

- The imperative now is to develop a sustainable administrative infrastructure for UKCoC, which limits the need to campaign for its survival per award with DCMS. The return of ECoC creates an additional challenge.
- Current arts funding debates concerning regionalism and London dominance generating interest in UKCoC programme and its value – a contextual economic justification?

# Contact details

Kerry Wilson – [k.m.wilson@ljmu.ac.uk](mailto:k.m.wilson@ljmu.ac.uk)

@KWilsonWA8 | @culturalcities

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[www.iccliverpool.ac.uk](http://www.iccliverpool.ac.uk) | @iccliverpool

‘It’s not the Winning’ report available from: <http://iccliverpool.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Cultural-Cities-FINAL-report-July-2012.pdf>

  
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