

**Great Exhibition of the North: guidance for bidding venues**

This guidance is intended to assist those venues that wish to bid for the opportunity to host the Great Exhibition of the North. It sets out the overall objectives of the Great Exhibition of the North, explains the process and timescale, the information that bids should include, and the criteria against which they will be evaluated.

**Part 1: The exhibition (page 2)**

**Part 2: The selection process (page 5)**

**Part 3: Bid requirements (page 7)**

**PART 1: The exhibition: background**

**Background**

Government is running a competition to find a venue in the North of England to host the Great Exhibition of the North. The winning venue will create and implement an exhibition that celebrates great art, culture and design of the North of England, showcasing local artists and performers, cultural organisations and creative businesses, promoting innovative and entrepreneurial activity, and highlighting research conducted by universities in the region.

In November 2015 Government announced £5m funding towards the Great Exhibition of the North. The exhibition is planned to take place in the summer of 2018 at either an existing venue or temporary structure, and will run for a minimum of 2 months.

The chosen venue will build partnerships across the region to ensure that the exhibition is open to a wide range of participants and audiences. It will also provide opportunities for organisations across the region to create and run satellite Great Exhibition of the North events alongside the main exhibition.

The exhibition is part of Government’s investment in the North of England, and follows funding for the Factory Manchester, and Hull UK City of Culture 2017.

Sir Gary Verity, CEO of Welcome to Yorkshire, has been appointed to oversee the project, and will chair a Great Exhibition Board, comprising of individuals from the arts, culture and design sectors, which will report to Ministers. The winning venue will therefore need to work closely with Sir Gary to ensure that the Government’s expectations are met.

**Objective**

The exhibition will celebrate the great art, design and culture of the North of England, showcasing innovative and ambitious cultural and creative activity, and engaging a wide range of audiences and participants.

As well as inspiring and engaging people, the exhibition will also contribute to Government’s objective to maximise economic potential in the knowledge economy and creative sectors in the North. The exhibition will help attract and retain the brightest and best talent, and attract investment from overseas.

**Requirements for host venue**

The winning venue will need to:

* Create an inspiring and innovative exhibition that celebrates the great art, culture, and design of the North of England.
* Present realistic and credible plans for managing, funding, and delivering the exhibition, working with local, regional and national partners.
* Have a track record in producing substantial programmes of cultural activity.
* Build engagement with a wide range of audiences and participants.

We are therefore seeking bids that:

* Are inspirational and creative, demonstrating artistic excellence and innovation.
* Are realistic, affordable and deliverable.
* Include proposals to work with a broad range of local, regional, and national partners.
* Have the support of community, business and third sector organisations in the region.
* Engage a wide range of audiences and participants.

**Scope**

What should the exhibition focus on?

The exhibition should take a broad interpretation of the objectives and focus on:

* art (including visual arts, theatre, dance, music, circus, and literature)
* culture (including heritage, museums and galleries, libraries, film, TV, radio and photography, architecture, crafts, advertising and marketing, IT software and computer services, and publishing)
* design (product, graphic and fashion design).

We would expect to see a range of these areas included in the exhibition.

What format should the exhibition take?

We expect the exhibition to consist of physical exhibits, performing arts events, and interactive displays. It should include extensive interpretative material.

The exhibition should include content from manufacturers, businesses, arts and cultural organisations, creative industries bodies, and universities. The host venue must build partnerships with a broad range of organisations across the local area and the region.

Who is the target audience?

The exhibition should engage with a wide range of audiences, including disadvantaged groups. It must be free to attend. Bids should set out the expected audience size.

We also expect the host venue to work closely with local and regional educational institutions to ensure that young people have the opportunity to engage with the exhibition.

**Eligibility**

Which areas can bid?

We welcome bids from the North of England (defined as Yorkshire, the North West, and the North East).

Who can bid to host the exhibition?

We expect bids to be submitted by venues, local authorities, cultural/creative organisations, cultural consortiums, Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs), or universities in the region. We welcome bids from partnerships, but these must specify which venue will host the event, and there will need to be a lead organisation for information and communication purposes. The local authority/ies must be involved in a formal capacity to provide assurance over financial and legal propriety of the Exhibition. A partnership bid will need to make clear what legal entity will be used for contracting.

What are the requirements for the host venue?

The venue should consist of an exhibition space in which visitors can view exhibits, as well as a suitable reception area to welcome visitors. The venue and all exhibits should be accessible to all users, including those with disabilities. You will also need to consider accessibility for staff and participating artists. For guidance you may wish to refer to Arts Council England's publication <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication_archive/building-inclusion-physical-access-guidance-for-the-arts/>

The bid should provide details of transport links, including information about public transport, and parking spaces located in or near to the venue. The venue must be accessible to visitors and residents across the area.

The venue must have appropriate environmental controls. Bids should set out details of the lighting, humidity and temperature within the proposed exhibition space.

The venue must have a high level of security in order to prevent damage to exhibits. Bids should set out details of how the exhibition will be patrolled, as well as information relating to the venue’s existing or proposed alarm system.

**Funding**

Government has committed £5m of funding towards the Great Exhibition of the North. However, we expect the winning venue to increase the total budget available for the Exhibition by making use of local resources and budgets, and building partnerships with both public and private funders. Bids should include evidence of a credible fundraising plan, including information on how new sources of funding will be developed.

Bids should set out what the costs of delivering the exhibition will be, and explain the proposed breakdown between administration, marketing, and funding the delivery of the exhibition.

**PART 2: Selection process**

The selection process is intended to ensure that the best possible bid from across the North of England is selected. The process should lead to the selection of a venue that has an ambitious but realistic proposal for the Great Exhibition of the North.

The process itself will bring wider benefits. Although only one venue will host the Great Exhibition of the North, the exhibition will showcase cultural and creative activity from the North of England, so there will be opportunities for organisations and practitioners across the region to contribute. The winning venue will be expected to form partnerships with organisations across the North of England, so that the exhibition is not limited to promoting the art, culture and design of one local area. While only one venue will host the exhibition, the bidder may wish to consider opportunities for other events and activities taking place in the region to act as Great Exhibition of the North satellite events.

The process of developing bids will foster the development of ideas and partnerships that can carry on irrespective of whether a bid is successful. We encourage you to think about what elements of your bid you may be able to take forward with the winning venue, should your bid be unsuccessful.

We will issue a press release on who has submitted bids, and on the results of the selection process. We expect bids to receive local publicity.

We realise there are costs associated with developing and submitting a bid. The selection process is intended to strike a balance between asking bidders to provide sufficient information to enable a robust evaluation, and being reasonable about what is expected. You may fund your bid using public, private or other sources.

**How to bid**

If you wish to bid to host the Great Exhibition of the North, you must submit the bid by 30 June 2016. DCMS will try to answer any questions you may have about the process.

You should submit your bid in electronic form to great-exhibition@culture.gov.uk

Three workshops are being held across Northern England to provide guidance to bidders and interested partners. These will be held in Manchester on April 14, Doncaster on April 18 and Chester-le-street on April 26. For more information follow the links below or email great-exhibition@culture.gov.uk.

[https://www.eventbrite.com/e/great-exhibition-of-the-north-guidance-event-tickets-24087820319](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/great-exhibition-of-the-north-guidance-event-tickets-24087820319%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

[https://www.eventbrite.com/e/great-exhibition-guidance-event-tickets-24088586611](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/great-exhibition-guidance-event-tickets-24088586611%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

[https://www.eventbrite.com/e/great-exhibition-of-the-north-guidance-event-tickets-24088694935](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/great-exhibition-of-the-north-guidance-event-tickets-24088694935%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

**Assessment**

The bids will be assessed in line with the criteria set out below. The bids will be assessed by the Great Exhibition of the North board, which will be chaired by Sir Gary Verity who has been appointed by Government to oversee this project. Depending on the number and quality of bids received, we may decide to introduce a shortlisting stage, with those shortlisted invited to re-submit final bids in light of feedback given by the board. The board will make a recommendation to Ministers on which venue should host the Great Exhibition of the North.

**Timescale**

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| --- | --- |
| Competition announced/launched | April 2016 |
| Closing date for competition | 30 June 2016 |
| Board assess bids and make recommendation to Ministers | July - August 2016 |
| Winning city/venue announced | September 2016 |
| Exhibition opens | July 2018 |

**PART 3: Bid requirements**

**Content**

We are seeking bids that offer:

* Ambitious plans to create an inspiring exhibition that celebrates the great art, culture, and design of the North of England
* Realistic and credible plans for managing, funding, and delivering the exhibition.
* A commitment to engaging with a wide range of audiences.
* A commitment to working with a broad range of local, regional, and national partners

**Format**

The following guidelines must be followed:

* Bids must be written in clear English in no smaller than 10-point font.
* Bids may include pictures and graphics to enhance the material.

Bids will be assessed in relation to their content, not their form of presentation.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Element** | **Requirement** | **Indicative score** |
| PART A | **Summary**One page summary of your bid | None. For information only. |
| PART B | **Venue** | Total maximum score: 20 |
|  | 1. Why should your venue host the Great Exhibition of the North?2. What are the transport links to the venue?3. How will you ensure that the venue is accessible to all?4. What previous track record does your venue have in delivering large scale exhibitions?5. How will you ensure the appropriate environmental and security controls are in place?6. How will the infrastructure of your area deal with additional visitors (eg increase in demand on transport, and accommodation)? | * Evidence of track record in delivering significant cultural programmes and events
* Evidence that the venue is easily accessible to audiences
* A clear plan to ensure the venue is accessible to disabled people
* Credible infrastructure plans for managing visitor numbers
* Plans to ensure the appropriate environmental and security controls realistic
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| PART C | **Exhibition content** | Total maximum score: 20 |
|  | 7. What will the main themes of your exhibition be?8. What are the main cultural assets in your area that you will be building on?9. What are the main cultural assets in the region that you will be building on?10. What will be distinctive and innovative about your exhibition?11. How will you ensure the exhibition showcases cultural excellence?12. How will you ensure diversity in the exhibition?13. How will you use digital technology and innovation in your exhibition?14. What previous track record do you have in curatorial leadership? | * Clear, strong vision for the exhibition
* Evidence that the exhibition will showcase great art, culture, and design from the local area and from across the region
* Appropriate use of existing cultural assets
* Proposals for distinctive elements across a range of artforms
* Credible plans for ensuring diversity
* Credible, deliverable plans for using digital technology
* Evidence of redible track record in curatorial leadership
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| PART D | **Partnerships** | Total maximum score: 20 |
|  | 15. Which local, regional and national partnerships will be involved in delivering the exhibition?16. Which local, regional, and national artists and cultural and creative practitioners will be invited to participate in the exhibition?17. How will you ensure that local and regional educational institutions are involved in the exhibition?17. How will you ensure that the exhibition does not conflict with existing cultural events in the North? 18. How will you use local, regional and national media to promote the exhibition?19. What are the opportunities for other cultural and creative events across the region to run alongside the main exhibition? | * Evidence of a wide range of organisations supporting the bid
* Clear process for involving cultural and creative organisations and practitioners across the region
* Description of how any tensions with partners would be managed
* Evidence of plans to work with local and regional education institutions
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| PART E | **Audiences** | Total maximum score: 20 |
|  | 20. How will you encourage and extend engagement and participation in cultural activities amongst different groups and communities in your area?21. How will you maximise participation and access through digital technologies?22. What interpretative material will you provide alongside the exhibition?23. What size of audience do expect to reach? | * Clear description of how the exhibition will have broad appeal across a range of audiences
* Expected impact of the exhibition on different groups and communities
* Proposed exhibition will reach a sizeable audience
* Realistic plans for engaging people through digital technologies
* A clear plan to ensure the exhibition is accessible to disadvantaged groups
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| PART F | **Delivery: management and funding** | Total maximum score: 10 |
|  | 23. Who is leading your bid?24. How many staff will be working on the development and implementation of the exhibition?25. How much do you expect it to cost to deliver your exhibition?26. How much additional funding do you expect to require over and above existing Government support?27. Where do you expect to get this funding from?28. What do you see as the main risks for the successful delivery of your exhibition, and how will you mitigate these? | * Clear management and governance arrangements
* Realistic cost estimates
* Realistic funding plans and aspirations
* Key risks have been identified
* Proposed mitigation measures are credible and realistic
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| Part F | **Impact** | Total maximum score: 10 |
|  | 29. How will the exhibition boost the cultural and creative sectors in your area?30. How will the exhibition contribute to economic growth in your area?31. How will the exhibition link to current tourism activity in your area?32. How will you maximise the impact on your tourism economy?33. How will the exhibition contribute to community cohesion and health and wellbeing in the area? | * Is it clear what impact the exhibition would have on cultural and creative sectors?
* Is it clear what impact the exhibition would have on economic growth?
* Is it clear how the exhibition would be used to raise the profile of the area and market it to visitors?
* Will the exhibition make a measurable impact on community cohesion and health and wellbeing?
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