

News story: Eleven bids for £15m Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund

Eleven towns and cities from across Northern England have bid for a share of a new £15 million fund to help build a lasting regional legacy from the Great Exhibition of the North.

The Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund will make grants of up to £4 million available to support major culture and tech capital projects.

The bids include the redevelopment of a former cinema into a live music venue, building four giant brick towers and creating the world's biggest digital artwork.

Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Karen Bradley said:

"These hugely exciting bids demonstrate the scale of cultural ambition across the region, and reflect the great diversity of Northern towns and cities. This £15 million fund will mean that as many people as possible benefit from the Great Exhibition of the North and it is fantastic that so many communities have recognised the transformative potential of culture, design and innovation."

The first round of bids have been coordinated by Local Enterprise Partnerships in Cheshire and Warrington, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Humber, Lancashire, Leeds City Region, Liverpool City Region, North East, Sheffield City Region, Tees Valley, York and North Yorkshire and East Riding.

The bids are:

- Cheshire and Warrington: A bid to create a world class cultural centre for children, young people and their families in Ellesmere Port, home of the critically acclaimed Action Transport Theatre.
- Cumbria: A bid to recognise and celebrate the contribution the World Heritage Lake District makes to the North of England through capital investment in Windermere Jetty, Dove Cottage and the Wordsworth Museum, and Abbot Hall Art Gallery and Museum.
- Greater Manchester: A bid to create a landmark young people's creative venue in Rochdale, providing performing and digital arts participation, performance, production and training.
- Humber: A bid to create the world's biggest digital artwork, using the Humber Bridge as a canvas on which to install over 70,000 individually controllable LED lights.

- Lancashire: A bid to create The Amuseum – Britain’s first museum telling the story of British popular entertainment and Blackpool’s role in one of UK’s greatest creative industries.
- Leeds City Region: A bid to transform the former Bradford Odeon cinema into a 4,000 capacity live music, entertainment and events venue.
- Liverpool City Region: A bid to build on the success of Eureka! The National Children’s Museum in Halifax by creating Eureka! Merseyside, a new cultural attraction on the Wirral waterfront to inspire young people to explore science, technology, engineering, arts and maths.
- North East: A bid to establish a new cultural attraction in Sunderland – ‘National Centre for Imagination’ – focusing on young people’s creativity and imagination, including an institute of performing arts.
- Sheffield City Region: A bid for a major public art project in Sheffield, entitled Onwards and Upwards, that will comprise of a mile-long trail of four sculptural red chimneys to replace the demolished Tinsley cooling towers.
- Tees Valley: A bid to develop a major railway heritage visitor attraction in Tees Valley as part of a wider programme to create a ‘Railway Heritage Quarter’ and protect and conserve the Stockton & Darlington Railway.
- York and North Yorkshire and East Riding: A bid for a project, entitled Constellations: Illuminating Yorkshire’s Coast, to create landmark light installations in six key locations on the North Yorkshire coast.

The fund will boost the Northern Powerhouse and build on the impact of next year’s Great Exhibition of the North. Held in Newcastle and Gateshead next summer, the free family-friendly exhibition will showcase the best of Northern art, design and innovation and is set to be the biggest event in 2018.

The immersive exhibition – supported by £5 million of government funding – will engage communities and businesses from across the region, and promote the bustling and thriving area to the world.

Successful bids to the Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund will encourage sustainable cultural and creative regeneration in the North of England and benefit areas that have historically had low levels of cultural and creative investment. The successful projects will be announced in March 2018.

Press release: UKHO Apprentice wins Bridgwater and Taunton College Apprenticeship Award

Sophie Hodson has won the 'Apprentice Champion' award at Bridgwater and Taunton College's Celebration of Apprenticeships Awards, which was held on 29 November at the college's McMillan Theatre.

UKHO partners with the college to deliver their apprenticeships and was the main sponsor of the event, which saw 21 of the college's 2500 apprentices making it to the final.

Sophie (Finance Assistant and Apprentice) won the 'Apprentice Champion' award, and was also a finalist in the 'Apprentice of the Year' category.

Catherine Porter, Agency & Cost Financial Controller at the UKHO and Sophie's line manager, said:

"Sophie has impressed us all since the day that she joined us. She had never used our financial system before but picked this up very quickly which is key in our roles. Working with her is a delight as she has got a lovely personality and is always proactive. She is forming good relationships around the business and the internal stakeholders that she interacts with are always extremely positive about her. This area is new to her but her commitment to the job and team is commendable."

Amy Carrillo, Head of Human Resources at the UKHO, was a guest speaker at the awards. Speaking about the importance of apprenticeships to the UKHO, Amy said:

"We have found that apprenticeships have helped us address skill shortages, particularly in the digital field where there is a nationwide skill shortage. We have 20 digital apprenticeships covering cyber security, IT professions, software testing and data analysis. These apprentices are helping us to build a more sustainable future for our digital transition.

We are harnessing new talent and bringing in fresh ideas. Not only that, we are also using apprenticeships to re-train or upskill existing team members.

We have three Data Analyst apprentices that were already part of our production team and have 11 Management apprentices from our teams.

In addition, the UKHO are offering 12 professional apprenticeships across the organisation in finance, HR, procurement, marketing, customer services and business administration up to level 5."

News story: New charging systems for electric vehicles: apply for contracts

Organisations can apply for a share of £80,000 to examine how low-carbon and smart electric vehicle charging infrastructure could be introduced in Edinburgh.

[The City of Edinburgh Council](#) has up to £80,000 to invest in studies that look at how smart energy systems and renewable energy could be integrated into a future mass-market electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

A further £200,000 could be available to prototype the best ideas in a second phase of the competition.

Funding for this competition is under the SBRI (Small Business Research Initiative) programme.

Creating an integrated charging infrastructure

[Scottish Government](#) has set out new targets for carbon reduction and electric vehicles. This includes phasing out the need for diesel and petrol vehicles by 2032 and significantly expanding the country's charging network.

In this competition, Edinburgh is seeking projects that combine on-site generation of renewable energy, battery storage and smart meters with innovative software systems to control everything.

Its aim is to have financially self-sustaining, closed-loop vehicle charging systems, with smart grid and vehicle-to-grid capabilities.

Competition information

- the competition opens on 4 December 2017, and the deadline for registration is midday on 7 February 2018
 - SBRI is open to any organisation that can demonstrate a route to market for its idea
 - we expect phase 1 contracts to be worth up to £20,000 and to last up to 6 months
 - phase 2 contracts could be worth up to £100,000
 - successful projects will attract 100% funded development contracts
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Press release: New UK Chief Veterinary Officer appointed

She will take over from Nigel Gibbens who is stepping down at the end of February 2018 following a highly successful 10 years in the post.

Christine will join Defra from her current high profile position in Australia, where she has been working as the CVO in New South Wales since August 2016. During her time there she led major improvements to biosecurity across many farming sectors.

She comes from a farming family in the south of Scotland, with a background in beef cattle and sheep.

Christine will be returning to Defra where she was Deputy Director for Animal Traceability and Public Health in 2016. She is an experienced veterinarian and worked for a number of years in private practice in Scotland and the north of England, prior to joining the Animal Health agency (now part of the Animal and Plant Health Agency) in 2008 as a Divisional Veterinary Manager in Scotland.

During a decade as Chief Vet Nigel Gibbens has been instrumental in driving animal welfare improvements both at a national and international level, and Christine will now build on that work.

The Government has recently made a number of announcements on improving animal welfare and is committed to further reforms as we leave the EU.

Speaking about her appointment, Christine Middlemiss said:

I am delighted to have been appointed and it will be a privilege to lead my veterinary colleagues to support our farming and food industry in this hugely important role.

I am very much looking forward to working again with the team at Defra, its agencies, the devolved administrations and all the individuals and groups which will contribute to meet future challenges across animal health and welfare.

The UK Government has made no secret it wants to cement its place as a world-leader on animal welfare as they leave the European Union, and I'm delighted to have an opportunity to play a part in that.

Welcoming the appointment, the government's Chief Veterinary Officer, Nigel Gibbens, said:

I would like to congratulate Christine on her success against a strong field of candidates and I am certain she will be a great addition to the department.

Her breadth of experience from work within Government and in the private sector will enable her to provide excellent veterinary leadership to the Defra group to deliver government's ongoing commitment to maintaining our high animal health and welfare standards and to represent the interests of the whole of the UK internationally.

Animal Welfare Minister Lord Gardiner added:

I warmly welcome Christine to her important role. She brings to it a wealth of experience and enthusiasm.

This Government is embarking on an ambitious programme of animal welfare reform, including plans to increase the maximum sentence for animal cruelty to five years in prison and introducing mandatory CCTV in all abattoirs. Christine will be invaluable in helping us in achieving world leading standards.

I thank Nigel Gibbens for his outstanding contribution as CVO over the past ten years. Leaving the department at the end of February, he is hugely respected across the veterinary community and beyond – leading on responses to disease outbreaks including avian influenza and advising government on issues from antimicrobial resistance to animal welfare.

Christine will take up her new role as CVO for the UK on the 1 March 2018.

News story: UK-China relations flourish at the 2017 People-to-People Dialogue

The breadth and depth of UK-China cooperation will be on display this week (4-7 December) during a visit to the UK by Chinese Vice Premier Madame Liu Yandong for the UK-China People-to-People (P2P) Dialogue.

The P2P Dialogue is co-chaired by Secretary of State for Health Jeremy Hunt and Madame Liu. The Chinese Vice Premier will visit Edinburgh and Oxford as well as London, where she will meet senior figures and attend a variety of events. She will also meet with the Foreign Secretary to discuss a number of

issues including modern slavery, women's equality and the DPRK.

The P2P Dialogue will enhance the UK-China partnership by promoting further collaboration on a broad range of issues including health, education, culture, science and innovation, tourism and sport.

Ministers are expected to agree a range of initiatives including new joint UK-China health agreements that will further our work on a number of healthcare challenges, further collaboration on female leadership and empowerment, and strengthening existing collaboration between higher education institutions.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

The UK-China relationship is strong and continues to deliver benefits for both countries, so I am delighted to welcome Madame Liu to the UK for the People-to-People Dialogue.

China and Britain are both global powers with a global outlook, and will continue to work together to solve the big issues facing our world today, build economies of the future and develop our people-to-people links.

Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt said:

I am delighted to once again co-chair the People-to-People Dialogue, which will reaffirm the strong ties between the UK and China and underline our commitment to working together to solve some of the biggest issues facing the world today.

Health is a key pillar in this relationship, which is why we will be collaborating to tackle major health issues such as fighting disease and improving health outcomes for all.

1. The theme for the UK-China P2P Dialogue in 2017 is Spirit of Youth, a UK government campaign in China that promotes deeper collaboration and exchange through inspiring the next generation of leaders in both countries.
2. The P2P Dialogue will maintain the momentum of the Golden Era of bilateral relations, established during President Xi's State Visit in 2015.
3. During her visit to the UK, Vice-Premier Liu is expected to:
 - Meet the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary in London, and visit HRH The Princess Royal and the Duke of York at Buckingham Palace
 - Witness the launch of the UK-China joint Science and Innovation strategy
 - Co-chair a cross-cutting plenary meeting of the P2P with Jeremy Hunt MP, Secretary of State for Health and UK chair of the P2P. The

meeting will also be attended by Justine Greening, Karen Bradley and a senior ministerial delegation from both the UK and China.

- Participate in a forum for CEOs in the creative industries and a roundtable of Young Leaders including young parliamentarians.
- Travel to Edinburgh, where she will receive an honorary degree from Edinburgh University.
- Travel to Oxford, where she will deliver a speech at the Sheldonian Theatre.