

Agenda Item 12 – Motion from Cllr Ian Bond:

The Council notes the Department of Culture, Media & Sport's announcement of a 'UK Town of Culture 2028 competition', with a 31 March 2026 deadline for Expressions of Interest, that Ventnor is eligible to enter under the 'small town' (population under 20,000) category, and that the Ventnor Exchange is proposing to assemble a bid from the town.

The Government's Expert Advisory Panel, chaired by Phil Redmond, will assess applications against three criteria:

- Your story – the unique story and identity of the town;
- Culture for everyone – how an inclusive cultural programme will be designed;
- Making it happen – how the programme will be delivered.

The winning town, to be decided by the Secretary of State in early 2027, will receive £3 million to deliver a cultural programme of around six months in 2028, with two further awards of £250,000 for the other finalists. Those towns that are shortlisted will receive £60,000 to support development of a full bid.

Accordingly, the Council resolves:

- to support, in principle, an Expression of Interest for Ventnor to participate in the UK Town of Culture competition;
- that the bid will require a partnership to be put together for the bid project, involving the Council, local cultural organisations and the community, and delegates to its Policy & Resources Committee responsibility for agreeing an appropriate governance structure to engage with such a partnership;
- that Ventnor Exchange will be the appropriate partner to assemble and lead the partnership and act as "Delivery Body" for the bid, with most likely the IOWC required to fulfil the role of "Accountable Body", should the bid succeed;
- to receive a further report at its April meeting,
and notes:
- the need for early discussion with the IOWC for their officer input, should the partnership agree to proceed;
- that there are no financial implications for the Council at this stage.