

# LANCASHIRE 2025

UK CITY OF CULTURE BID  
PLAN



**#IMAGINELANCASHIRE**

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# INTRODUCTION

Lancashire is bidding to become UK City of Culture in 2025, the first time that a county has reimagined itself as a virtual city. Lancashire 2025 presents a new, inclusive vision for UK City of Culture, centred around an entire county of 1.5m people. This is a disruptive model, firmly aimed at re-configuring culture for future generations.

Our aim is to drive transformational change within the economy to create a better future for the people of Lancashire, where a year of cultural celebration provides the spark and inspiration as well as the skills and experiences for ongoing, sustainable growth. Lancashire 2025 will inform, engage and activate citizens in the development and production of an ambitious and inclusive cultural programme, focusing on four topics of cultural regeneration.

We will explore the way we live between the real and the imagined to create the Virtual City of Lancashire. This will be a cultural programme using collectively imagined neighbourhoods, physical locations and a shared virtual space.

Lancashire 2025 is an invitation to imagine and create the physical and digital environments, spaces and places for the kinds of lives that we will want to lead and the sort of culture we will want to have. It will reimagine the way we live through high-profile events, creative projects and cultural experiences in 100 locations across the county, while unleashing the creative potential of its 1.5 million citizens.

Lancashire 2025 is more than a year of celebration and cultural exploration. It is a ten-year transformational project that will collaboratively enable positive change and a sustainable future for everyone in Lancashire.

# CONTEXT: OUR STORY

Lancashire transformed the modern world. Factories, mills, forges, farms and fishing boats gave birth to the industrial revolution that led to the creation of the modern city. But changes to industry and demographics, increasing challenges from climate change, pollution, and most recently COVID-19, mean that the 21st-century version of cities needs to change. There should be so much more.

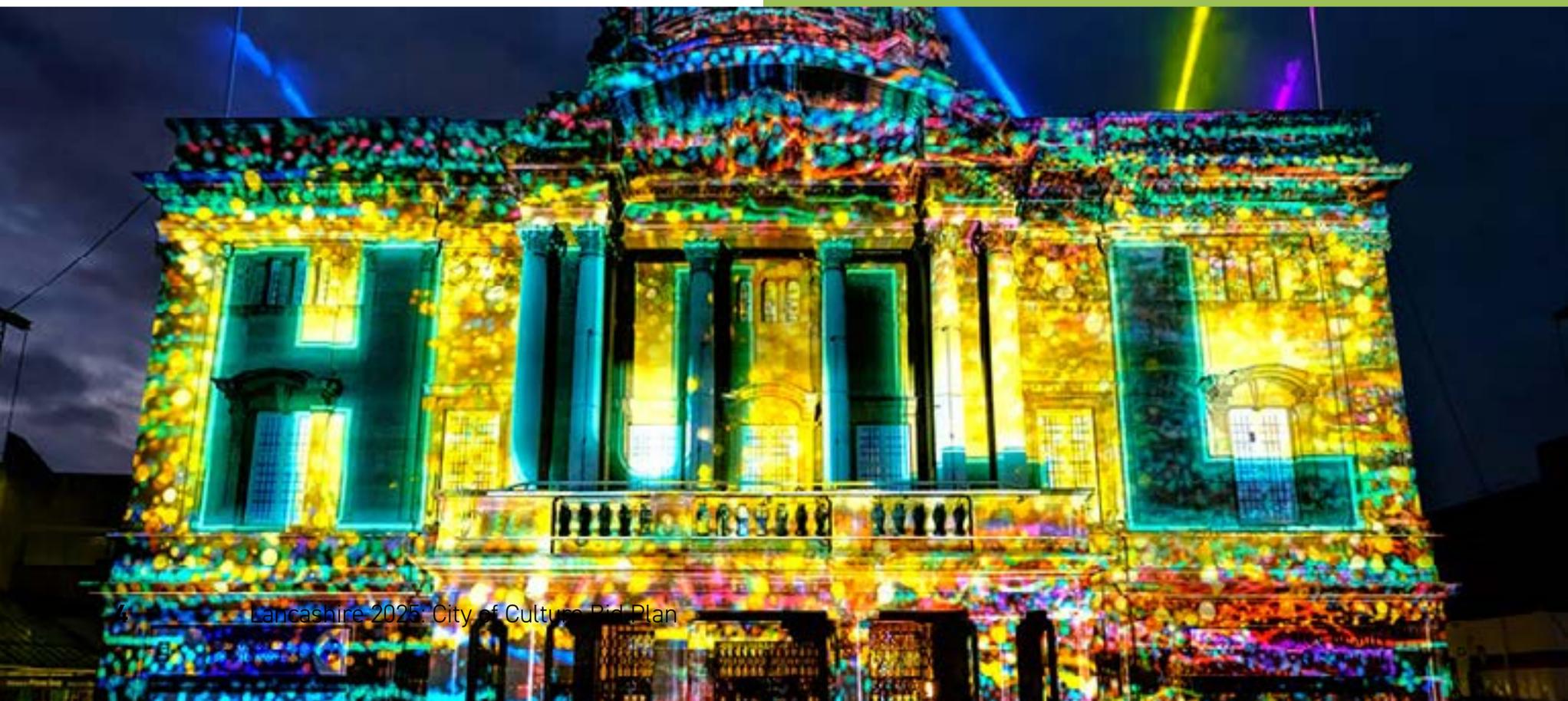
Lancashire 2025 is a story of diverse people, cultures and networks coming together, transcending boundaries of culture, technology and location to imagine new and better futures. It is an exciting collaboration between all of the county's local authorities, universities and the county's enterprise, marketing, digital and creative organisations who have united to help drive a county-scale programme of cultural regeneration.

# THE UK CITY OF CULTURE

The overall aim of the UK City of Culture programme is to encourage the use of culture and creativity as a catalyst for regeneration, to promote the development of new partnerships, and to encourage ambition, innovation and inspiration in cultural and creative activity.

The title for UK City of Culture is awarded every four years by the government. UK City of Culture is more than an event. The title has had a transformational impact on previous host cities, securing millions of pounds of investment and acting as a catalyst for culture-led place-making and regeneration.

Coventry was due to begin its UK City of Culture year in May 2021, following previous winners Hull 2017 and Derry-Londonderry 2013. Lancashire joins a number of cities and areas competing for the title, with Bradford, Medway, and Southampton already having announced their intentions to bid.



# OUR MISSION

Lancashire 2025 exists to enhance the wellbeing of everyone in the county and future generations, regardless of location, through the development of unique arts and cultural ecosystems. Our mission is to produce an ambitious and inclusive cultural programme that will be woven together to integrate the urban, the suburban, the coast and the countryside.

**OUR VISION IS OF A VIRTUAL CITY OF 1.5 MILLION CITIZENS THAT CONNECTS THE DIVERSE IDENTITIES OF LANCASHIRE TO RESHAPE A BETTER, CREATIVE AND MORE SUSTAINABLE WAY OF LIVING FOR THE UK.**

## PRIORITIES

**PARTICIPATION** Lancashire 2025 will build and cultivate active and empowered citizens to drive wellbeing in regeneration. We will generate learning experiences.

We will develop creative citizens.

**PROGRAMMING** Lancashire 2025 will produce an ambitious and inclusive programme across the county that will connect the urban, the coast and the countryside.

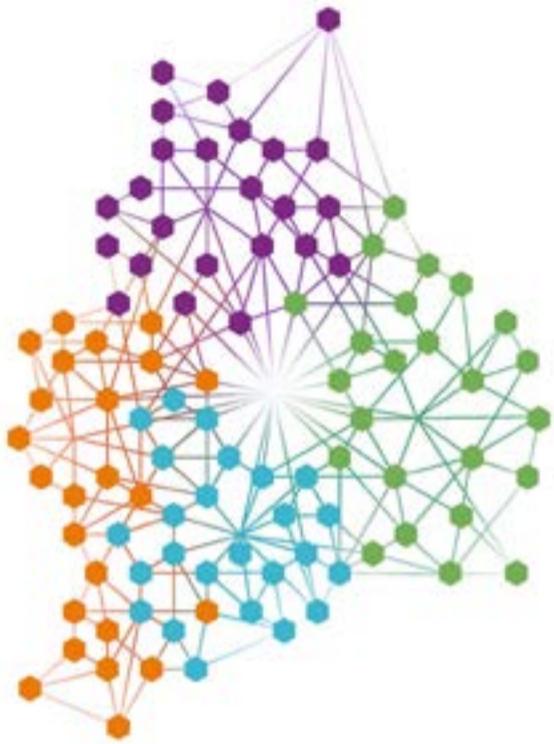
We will commission new ideas.

**PARTNERSHIPS** Lancashire 2025 will collaborate with the public, private and social sectors in a range of different ways to generate sustainable resources for culture in Lancashire.

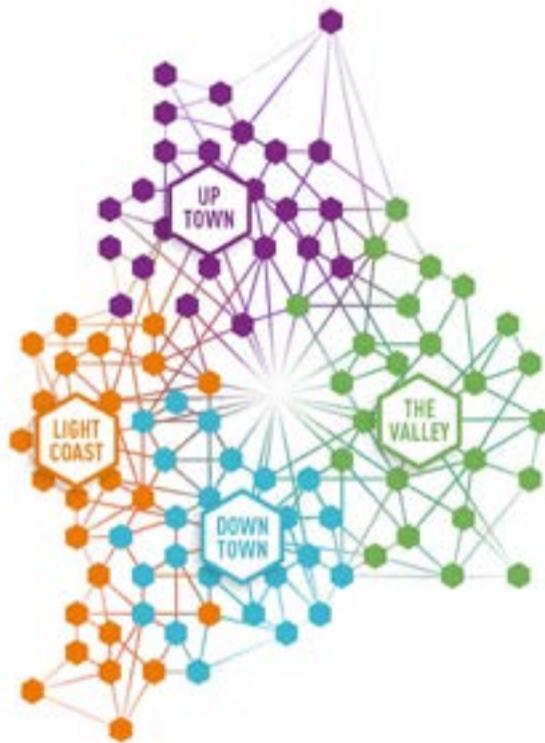
We will drive cultural regeneration.

# PROGRAMME

The programme for Lancashire 2025 is based on the theme: The Way We Live. The Virtual City of Lancashire will be built on three components, using real-world, imagined and digital design. These include:



100 physical locations representing the land available for commissioned creative production and cultural transformation in the Virtual City of Lancashire



Four programmes representing our imagined neighbourhoods that support the physical and virtual events in the Virtual City of Lancashire



Shared virtual space representing an amalgamation of components that residents and visitors see, hear, touch or talk to as they interact with the Virtual City of Lancashire

A collaboratively imagined cultural environment using citizen-engaged rules and governance mechanisms will provide a single digital gateway to access the 2025 programme and events

## SEASON ONE: WINTER

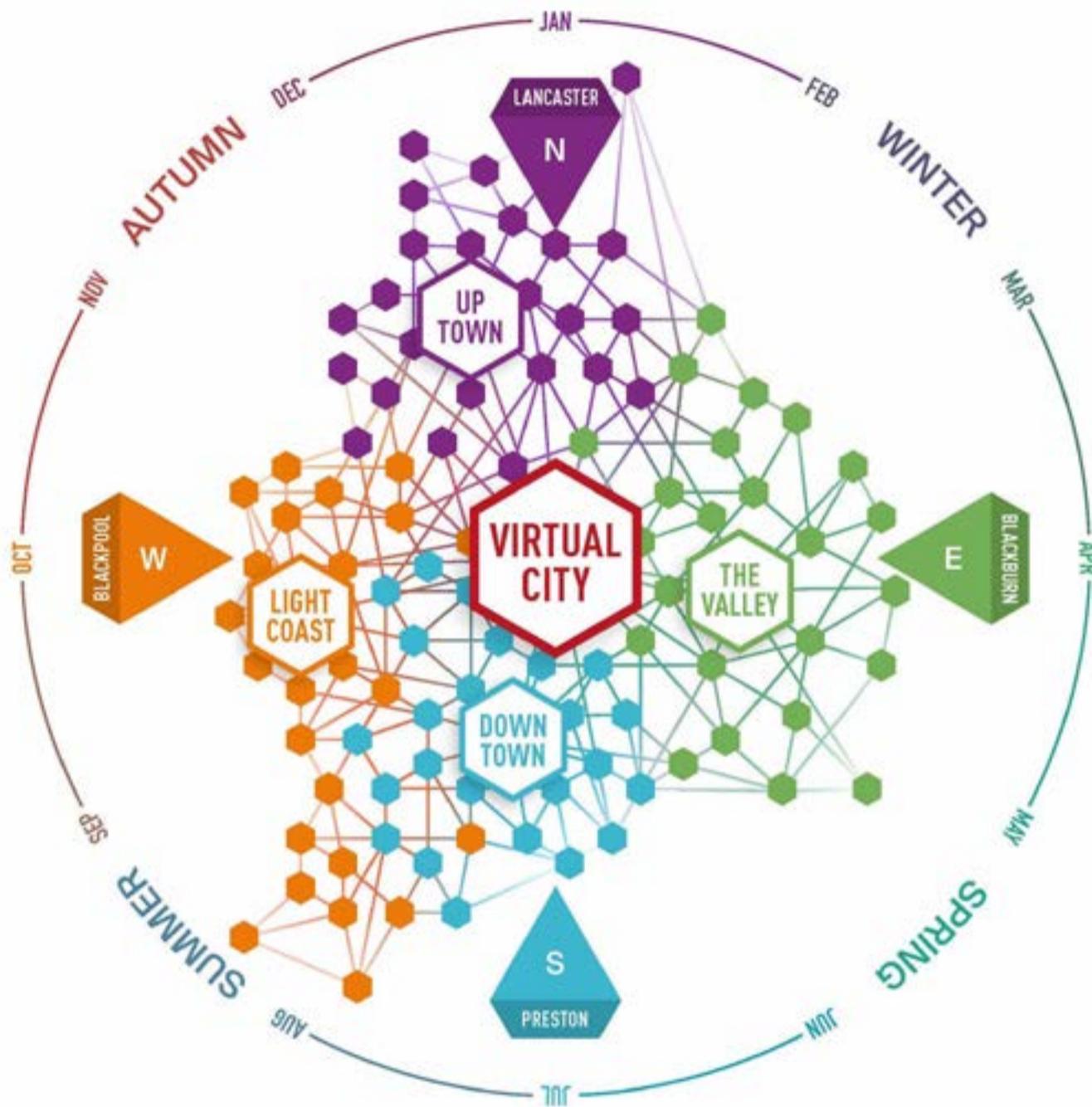
### THE UPTOWN PROGRAMME

The winter programme of cultural events will run from December 21 -19 March 2025. The Season Gateway will be situated in Lancaster.

## SEASON TWO: SPRING

### THE VALLEY PROGRAMME

The spring programme of cultural events will run from 20 March-19 June 2025. The Season Gateway will be situated in Blackburn.



## SEASON THREE: SUMMER

### THE DOWNTOWN PROGRAMME

The summer programme of cultural events will run from 20 June-21 September 2025. The Season Gateway will be situated in Preston.

## SEASON FOUR: AUTUMN

### THE LIGHTCOAST PROGRAMME

The autumn programme of cultural events will run from 22 September - 20 December 2025. The Season Gateway will be situated in Blackpool.

# PROGRAMME THEME

Lancashire 2025 is based on the theme **The Way We Live** and the programme focuses on **four topics to inspire cultural regeneration that will reimagine the way we live** through high-profile events, creative projects and cultural experiences.

## THE FOUR TOPICS:

**LIVING** New ideas for inspiring change in health, happiness, social change and ethical living.

**CONNECTION** New ideas for inspiring connection with shared heritage, stories, social interaction and cultural awareness.

**NATURE** New ideas for inspiring innovation in landscape ecology, spatial planning, healthier environments and sustainable living.

**DIGITAL** New ideas for inspiring disruption in digital worlds, open technology, augmented landscapes and digital ecosystems.

## PROGRAMME ACTIVITY

Four programmes will revolve around new commissions for 100 physical locations and each one will have a digital element.

We will celebrate the culture of Lancashire and the wider offer of our region through the **Lancashire 2025 Mark**, giving everyone a chance to be part of Lancashire 2025.

The year of cultural celebration will include:

- Four programmes
- 100 New Commissions
- 1,000 Cultural Events
- Opening and Closing Ceremonies
- Online programme



## PROGRAMME INFRASTRUCTURE

The infrastructure for Lancashire 2025 will both develop the programme and create a legacy of sustainable systems. These will include:

### **A CITIZEN-FOCUSED PARTICIPATORY SYSTEM**

This will enable cultural participation from cultural planning to creative production and event presentation, giving citizens the power to make real decisions on what cultural projects are developed.

### **A DIGITAL MUSEUM**

This will preserve both the tangible and intangible aspects of their stories and enable citizens to participate in the creation of a repository of digital material for future generations.

### **CREATIVE CITIZEN HUB**

This is a centre for building the skills and environment for culture and creativity to thrive in 2025 and beyond.

This new cultural infrastructure is a disruptive model firmly aimed at re-configuring culture for future generations. It could be used as a blueprint for other non-metropolitan or post-industrial areas as a mechanism of change.

# OUTCOMES

Lancashire is a brilliant collective of brands, brains, products, people and places. It is a county that makes things, with innovation in its DNA. Lancashire is 80% rural, with 137 miles of coast and two stunning areas of outstanding natural beauty. But, we need to put Lancashire on the map. We need to celebrate the pride of all Lancastrians.

Becoming UK City of Culture in 2025 will enable us to achieve a series of specific outcomes. It will drive us towards a longer-term legacy. But, more than that, it will position Lancashire where we belong, for the ultimate benefit of all our residents.

## **By the end of our year of culture, the Lancashire 2025 programme will have:**

- Put in place a bolder commissioning and innovation infrastructure
- Enhanced the capacity of cultural organisations and events using Lancashire 2025's participatory system and engaged creative citizens
- Improved crossovers between culture and industry through embedded practices and infrastructure
- Developed a new compelling cultural narrative for local people and visitors
- Connected urban areas, smaller towns and rural areas working together to achieve presence, scale and impact
- Empowered and inspired people to be actively involved in culture

# LEGACY ASPIRATIONS

## **We are looking to create long term impact as our legacy:**

We are making a cultural city for a new generation, a county of creative citizens exercising their right to take part in cultural life. But, city making never ends.

**IN 2026:** Lancashire will have levelled up with other areas of the north that have previously attracted greater levels of investment and support. We will be recognised as a bedrock of England's North West, specialising in creative and cultural technology production.

**IN 2027:** Lancashire will have applied to become a UNESCO City of Creative Citizens, joining 180 cities from 72 countries and giving us a voice on a global stage that will position Lancashire as a destination for creativity and enterprise for generations to come.

**BY 2032:** The Virtual City of Lancashire has shifted the model for the county's growth, as businesses across the county commit to placing culture and creativity at the core of their sustainable development strategies, policies, and initiatives.



# BID MANAGEMENT

Citizen engagement and participation is at the heart of our bid - it is led by Lancashire. Lancashire 2025's bid is being co-ordinated by a strategic partnership between:

- Lancashire County Council
- The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership
- Marketing Lancashire
- University of Central Lancashire

The bid is being developed in partnership with:

- Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
- Blackpool Council
- Lancaster City Council
- Preston City Council

And in association with all Lancashire's local authorities.

Supported by Creative Lancashire and Digital Lancashire.

# KEY DATES

## BIDDING

- Bid Programme Call from 30 April - 31 August 2021
- Bid Campaign from June 2021 to May 2022
- Bid submission between December 2021 - March 2022
- The winner of the 2025 UK City of Culture competition will be announced in May 2022 in Coventry as part of Coventry 2021 UK City of Culture.

Lancashire 2025 expects to submit its bid in March 2022.

# LANCASHIRE 2025

## UK CITY OF CULTURE BID



### WEBSITE

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[#ImagineLancashire](https://twitter.com/hashtag/ImagineLancashire)