



Department
for Culture,
Media & Sport



UK Town of Culture 2028 Competition Expression of Interest (EOI)

Thank you for your interest in the UK Town of Culture 2028.

Please ensure you have read the “UK Town of Culture 2028 Expression of Interest: Guidance for bidders” document before applying. All EOIs must be submitted using this standard template.

The form comprises four sections which each require a statement response. You are provided with a series of prompts to use as a guide. You do not need to answer each prompt individually but your responses should address all prompts. The prompts draw from the competition criteria and bidding places should refer back to the criteria when completing the form to show the potential of their programme to make a contribution to the aims of the UK Town of Culture programme.

The form has set formatting (e.g., font size and line spacing) which should be adhered to. Please note that the EOI form is strictly word limited and we do not expect at this stage detailed economic data, research or in depth fundraising or delivery plans. Responses should also only include text.

The application deadline is **31 March 2026**. Applications received after this date will not be considered. **If a large number of applications are received, an initial sift will be conducted on the section, 'Section 2: Your Story', only.**

Contact: uktownofculture2028-competition@dcms.gov.uk

SECTION 1: BID INFORMATION

In this section, we ask for information relating to your bidding team and place. The information will not be scored but will be used to confirm your eligibility.

1.1 Contact Information

Please provide contact information for the single point of contact for your bidding team.
Name, Position, Team / Organisation, Telephone Number, Email Address.

Name: Peter Arnsdorf / Nathan Gallogley
Position: Head of Placemaking /
Economic Development Officer (Tourism, Culture and Heritage)
Team / Organisation: Midlothian Council
Telephone Number: 07901864996
Email Address: Nathan.Gallogley@midlothian.gov.uk

1.2 The Bidder

Please provide information for the bidder. With reference to the definitions of the Accountable Body and Delivery Body in “UK Town of Culture 2028 Expression of Interest: Guidance for bidders”. You should include information on who the lead bidder is and who the key partners are.

Lead Bidder / Accountable Body: Midlothian Council will act as the accountable body for the bid, providing governance, financial management, procurement compliance, reporting, and assurance.

Proposed Delivery Partnership: A dedicated “Dalkeith 2028” partnership (established if shortlisted), bringing together community, third sector, business, education, heritage and cultural partners. Delivery will be overseen by a Programme Board and supported by a small core team hosted by Midlothian Council.

Why this delivery model meets the criteria:

- Deliverability: clear accountable body and governance route.
- Empowerment: shared decision-making through community advisory structures.
- Legacy: partnership design strengthens local capacity beyond 2028.

1.3 The Geographical Area

Please specify the geographical area that you are bidding for, with reference to the relevant geographical boundary designations. You may want to note the town categories set out in the “UK Town of Culture 2028 Expression of Interest: Guidance for bidders”. We will use your geographical area’s population size to categorise your bid.

Bid Area: Dalkeith, Midlothian (defined town boundary; mapped at full application stage).

Why Dalkeith is the right scale and place:

Dalkeith is one of Midlothian's most historic towns, with a clearly defined town centre, strong civic assets and a long-standing role as a meeting place for surrounding communities. Its compact scale and accessible town centre make it well suited to delivering a coordinated, year-long cultural programme that can animate public spaces and connect activity across both the town centre and surrounding neighbourhoods.

While Dalkeith retains significant heritage assets and community infrastructure, there is an opportunity to further strengthen the town's civic identity and reconnect cultural activity with the town centre. The Town of Culture programme would provide a catalyst to celebrate Dalkeith's heritage, activate its cultural assets, and bring communities together through a shared programme of activity that supports town centre vitality and long-term place development.

How the bid remains "town-led" while creating wider benefit:

Dalkeith will be the programme's focal place. Where activities involve wider participation (e.g., touring partnerships, schools, volunteering), this will be framed as "Dalkeith welcomes" rather than diluting town identity.

SECTION 2: YOUR STORY

In this section, we want to understand the unique story and culture of your town. [Maximum 400 words for each section]

2.1 Vision

Please use the following prompts to guide your response:

- *What is the story of your town (e.g., places and landscapes, people, communities, culture and heritage) and what is special about it (e.g., including, how it has contributed to a local identity - and, if relevant, how it has contributed to the national story)?*
- *How will your programme celebrate the story of your town, and what themes will be explored in your programme?*
- *How will your programme help to build knowledge of your town (e.g., improving, celebrating, raising the profile)?*

Dalkeith – Scotland’s Meeting Point Town

Dalkeith is Scotland’s meeting point town. Shaped by the confluence of the North and South Esk rivers, it has long been a place where trade, governance and community life converge. As Midlothian’s historic county town, Dalkeith has served as a civic centre, a market hub and a gateway between Edinburgh and the Borders.

Its distinctive character lies in its balance. The town combines nationally significant heritage and designed landscape with a compact, accessible centre and strong neighbourhood identity. Dalkeith Palace and Country Park sit alongside High Street civic life, while surrounding communities reflect Scotland’s wider story of industrial transition and renewal.

Dalkeith represents a national story of adaptation. Like many medium sized towns across the UK, it is navigating growth, demographic change and economic transition. Dalkeith 2028 will position the town as a confident example of how culture can strengthen identity, cohesion and resilience.

Programme Theme – Meeting Points

Our programme is built around the theme of Meeting Points. This reflects Dalkeith’s geography, its civic heritage and its evolving identity.

The programme will explore four connected strands:

- Water and Nature celebrating river corridors, parkland and green routes through outdoor culture and environmental storytelling
- Heritage and Future reinterpreting historic assets and civic spaces through contemporary commissions and digital storytelling
- Makers and Markets celebrating everyday creativity, enterprise and local production

within the town centre

- Welcome and belonging foregrounding community voice, youth leadership and participatory neighbourhood activity

These strands will combine ambitious artist led commissions with grassroots participation, ensuring that Dalkeith's story is told at scale and with authenticity.

Building Knowledge and Raising Profile

Dalkeith 2028 will increase awareness and pride locally, reposition the town regionally and raise its national profile.

Locally, residents will see their town differently through visible activity in everyday spaces and renewed understanding of its history.

Regionally, Dalkeith will be positioned as a distinctive cultural destination within Edinburgh and South East Scotland.

Nationally, flagship commissions and coordinated media activity will establish Dalkeith as a model of place based cultural renewal.

Dalkeith 2028 is not a one year celebration. It is a long term investment in identity, opportunity and civic confidence.

2.2 Local Needs

Please use the following prompts to guide your response:

- *What local challenges and issues does your town face that your bid can help to address? What priorities, needs, groups and demographics will your programme target and why?*
- *How does your bid align with any other local and / or regional plans to tackle local needs?*

Addressing Local Challenges Through Culture Led Renewal

Dalkeith is a historic county town with significant strengths, yet like many towns it faces structural, economic and social challenges. While it benefits from strong heritage assets, civic identity and natural landscape, there are pressures relating to town centre vitality, inequality, participation gaps and demographic change. Dalkeith 2028 is designed as a practical response to these issues through culture led regeneration.

Local Challenges and Issues

Town centre vitality remains a key challenge. Changing retail patterns and wider economic pressures have affected footfall and trading confidence. Dalkeith has the opportunity to reposition its centre as a place of experience, creativity and gathering rather than relying

solely on traditional retail. A year long cultural programme can increase activity, extend dwell time and strengthen perception.

Inequality and uneven participation in cultural life are also important local considerations. Some communities in and around Dalkeith experience higher levels of deprivation and face barriers to participation including cost, confidence, accessibility requirements and caring responsibilities. Cultural opportunity is not evenly distributed without targeted action.

Young people face challenges in accessing clear local progression pathways into employment and creative industries. There is an opportunity to strengthen creative, digital and event based skills development that builds confidence and employability.

Dalkeith is also a town experiencing growth and demographic change. Housing expansion has welcomed new residents and families. This growth brings vitality but also creates a need to strengthen shared identity and belonging between long standing residents and newer communities.

Dalkeith remains under recognised beyond the local area despite its nationally significant heritage and landscape assets. Raising its profile will support visitor economy potential and strengthen its wider regional position.

Target Groups and Priorities

The programme will prioritise

- Children and young people to build creative skills, leadership experience and pathways into learning and work
- Low income households to reduce financial barriers through free and low cost participation
- Disabled people and carers to ensure inclusive design and meaningful access from the outset
- Older residents to strengthen intergenerational connection and reduce isolation
- Town centre businesses and local enterprises to increase footfall and support economic resilience
- New residents to strengthen belonging and shared identity in a growing town

These priorities reflect the principle that culture should address social and economic challenges while building pride and opportunity.

Alignment with Local and Regional Plans

Dalkeith 2028 aligns directly with the Single Midlothian Plan priorities

- Improved health and skills for learning, life and work through youth placements, volunteering and creative skills development

- Reducing poverty and inequality through accessible participation and targeted engagement
- Progress towards net zero through sustainable event planning and use of existing town assets

The programme also supports Midlothian's inclusive economic growth and town centre regeneration ambitions by

- Increasing town centre activity and footfall
- Supporting local businesses and traders
- Strengthening Dalkeith's place brand
- Creating opportunities for creative enterprise

It complements wider tourism and regional collaboration ambitions by positioning Dalkeith more confidently within Edinburgh and South East Scotland while retaining a clear town led identity.

Summary

Dalkeith faces challenges common to many growing towns including maintaining a vibrant centre, ensuring opportunity is inclusive and strengthening identity amid change.

Dalkeith 2028 responds directly by

- Using culture to activate and reimagine the town centre
- Targeting under served groups and reducing participation barriers
- Creating youth skills and leadership pathways
- Strengthening belonging and pride across communities
- Raising Dalkeith's profile locally, regionally and nationally

The bid is therefore not simply a cultural celebration. It is a culture led contribution to Midlothian's wider ambitions for wellbeing, inclusive growth and sustainable development, leaving a legacy that extends beyond 2028.

2.3 Empowerment

Please use the following prompts to guide your response:

- *How have you developed the ideas within this bid? To what extent have you already consulted your local community and community groups (i.e., residents, businesses, institutions, creative providers, and cultural organisations) on your interest in UK Town of Culture?*
- *How will your local community and community groups be involved in developing and delivering the full application, programme and its legacy? How will you hold yourself accountable to community groups and members when making decisions about the programme?*

Development of the Bid

The ideas within this bid have been developed through early engagement conversations and partnership discussions across Dalkeith. The concept of “Meeting Points” emerged from listening to how people describe the town, its rivers, its civic role, its markets and its growing communities. Rather than importing an external theme, the bid builds on narratives that already resonate locally.

Initial engagement has included informal discussions with

- Local community representatives and community council members
- Town centre businesses and traders
- Heritage and landscape stakeholders
- Education partners and youth contacts
- Third sector organisations working with under served groups
- Local officers across economic development, tourism and regeneration

These early conversations have tested appetite, explored potential themes and identified shared challenges such as town centre vitality, youth opportunity and inclusion. Feedback consistently highlighted the importance of ensuring that the programme is not perceived as a one off event but as something that builds long term benefit.

At this Expression of Interest stage, engagement has been proportionate and exploratory. If shortlisted, consultation will move into a structured and inclusive co design phase supported by the development funding.

Involvement in the Full Application and Programme

If shortlisted, the first priority will be a comprehensive community engagement programme to shape the full application and programme content. This will include

- Open community listening sessions across neighbourhood venues at different times of day
- Youth led design workshops in partnership with schools and youth organisations
- Targeted engagement sessions with groups who face barriers to participation including disabled people and carers
- Town centre roundtables with businesses and traders
- An open call for ideas, stories and creative collaborators
- Workshops with cultural organisations and creative practitioners

The purpose of this phase will be to move from concept to co designed programme, ensuring that priorities reflect lived experience and local ambition.

Community involvement in delivery will be embedded through

- A Community Advisory Panel with representative membership and rotating places
- Participatory micro grants enabling residents and community groups to deliver elements

of the programme

- Volunteer and community host roles supporting events and neighbourhood activity
- Youth leadership positions including paid placements and programming input

Legacy will be developed alongside the programme rather than at its conclusion. Skills development, partnerships and equipment investment will be designed to remain within the town beyond 2028.

Accountability and Decision Making

Accountability to local residents and community groups will be embedded within governance and reporting structures.

This will include

- Clear published terms of reference for the Programme Board and Community Advisory Panel
- Transparent commissioning processes and open calls for participation
- Regular public updates on decisions, budgets and programme progress
- Feedback mechanisms allowing residents to comment on proposals and raise concerns
- A You Said We Did approach demonstrating how community feedback influences decisions

The Council will act as accountable body, providing financial oversight and governance assurance. However, decision making about programming priorities will be informed by structured community input and partnership representation.

Evaluation will also include community voice through surveys, focus groups and feedback sessions to ensure that learning shapes future activity.

Summary

This bid has been shaped by early local conversations and is grounded in Dalkeith's lived identity. If shortlisted, engagement will move into a structured co design phase ensuring that the full application and programme reflect community priorities.

Dalkeith 2028 will not be delivered to the town but with it. Community involvement will be visible in governance, commissioning, delivery and legacy planning, with transparent accountability mechanisms ensuring that decisions remain rooted in local need and ambition.

SECTION 3: CULTURE FOR EVERYONE

In this section, we want to understand how you will design a cultural programme for all which will provide visible, accessible culture that boosts the profile of your town. [Maximum 400 words for each section]

3.1 Quality and Innovation

Please use the following prompts to guide your response:

- *What is your cultural and heritage infrastructure, and how will you use it and build upon them in your programme? If your infrastructure is more limited, how could you leverage UK Town of Culture to develop your infrastructure on a permanent or temporary basis?*
- *What type of activities will your programme deliver, and how will they work together? Please refer to proposed lead artists / creatives, if they are known. You may refer to creating and / or promoting existing events that could become a returning event using the leverage generated by UK Town of Culture investment*

Dalkeith benefits from a distinctive combination of civic, heritage and natural infrastructure that provides a strong foundation for a high quality cultural programme. The town centre includes historic streetscape, civic buildings and accessible public space suitable for performance, markets and outdoor installations. Dalkeith Palace and Country Park offer nationally significant built heritage and landscape settings, while community venues, schools and local organisations provide distributed spaces for neighbourhood activity.

Our programme will use the town itself as a stage. High Street, riverside paths, parkland and everyday civic spaces will become visible cultural platforms. Rather than creating new permanent infrastructure, the programme will activate and reinterpret existing assets through temporary staging, light and sound installations, digital interpretation and flexible production infrastructure. Where gaps are identified, UK Town of Culture investment will support temporary technical capacity, accessibility improvements and skills development that leave a lasting legacy in equipment, partnerships and local expertise.

The programme will be structured around the theme of Meeting Points and delivered through interconnected strands that work together across the year.

Flagship commissions will form the backbone of the programme. These will include artist led works inspired by Dalkeith's rivers, routes, markets and civic identity. Commissions will be delivered in partnership with regional and national creatives, alongside local artists and community producers to ensure both quality and authenticity.

Outdoor cultural seasons will animate river corridors and parkland through light, performance and environmental storytelling, positioning Dalkeith as a town where landscape and culture meet. Town centre takeovers will include maker trails, shopfront galleries, street performance and food collaborations that support local businesses and increase footfall.

Community co creation will sit alongside major moments. Micro commissions and neighbourhood festivals will ensure visible activity beyond the town centre. Youth Culture

Leader placements and creative apprenticeships will embed skills development within programme delivery.

Existing events will be enhanced and elevated through the Town of Culture platform, creating the potential for returning annual fixtures beyond 2028. By combining flagship artistic ambition with grassroots participation, the programme will deliver quality, innovation and sustainability in equal measure, strengthening Dalkeith's cultural infrastructure for the long term.

3.2 Opportunity

Please use the following prompts to guide your response:

- *How will you ensure the initiatives and opportunities (e.g., learning and skills-building, career awareness, bringing different communities together) you are planning are genuinely aligned with your community's needs and interests, especially for younger members of the community?*
- *What social and community impacts will these help you to achieve in your area, and why are these important to your town?*

Dalkeith 2028 will place opportunity at the centre of its programme, ensuring that learning, skills development and community connection are shaped by genuine local need rather than assumed benefit.

If shortlisted, the development phase will begin with structured engagement to identify priority skills gaps, youth interests and barriers to participation. This will include workshops with schools and youth organisations, discussions with employability partners, and targeted engagement with community groups supporting under served residents. Young people will be directly involved in shaping opportunity pathways through youth design labs and advisory roles, ensuring initiatives reflect their aspirations and not solely institutional priorities.

Opportunities will include Youth Culture Leader placements offering paid experience in production, marketing, digital content and event delivery. Short accredited and non accredited training pathways will be developed in partnership with education and skills providers, covering areas such as technical production, heritage interpretation, event management and hospitality. These pathways will connect cultural participation with real progression routes into employment and further learning.

Community Connector roles will support residents to act as local hosts and ambassadors, strengthening civic confidence and ownership. Intergenerational projects will bring together schools, families and older residents through storytelling, craft and performance, reinforcing shared identity.

By embedding opportunity within delivery rather than positioning it as an add on, the programme ensures that skills are developed through doing. This practical model is particularly important for younger members of the community, who benefit from applied

learning, mentorship and visible progression routes.

The social and community impacts are significant. The programme will strengthen confidence and aspiration among young people, increase social connection across generations, reduce isolation, and build a stronger sense of belonging in a growing town. It will support employability by providing real world experience and transferable skills. It will also increase civic pride by enabling residents to see themselves not just as audiences, but as creators and contributors.

For Dalkeith, these impacts matter because the town is evolving. Housing growth and demographic change create both opportunity and pressure. By investing in skills, connection and belonging, Dalkeith 2028 will help ensure that growth translates into cohesion, resilience and long term community wellbeing.

3.3 Accessible

Please use the following prompts to guide your response:

- *How will you embed accessibility across the design and content of your programme?*
- *How would you aim to reach the widest possible audience?*

Accessibility will be embedded from the outset of Dalkeith 2028 through a design for all approach. It will not be treated as an add on but as a core principle shaping programming, commissioning, venues, communications and governance.

At development stage, access audits will be undertaken for key indoor and outdoor locations to identify barriers and inform site planning. Accessible infrastructure such as step free routes, appropriate viewing areas, clear signage and sensory considerations will be integrated into event design wherever possible. Temporary infrastructure funded through the programme will prioritise accessibility improvements that can leave a lasting benefit.

Accessible formats will be embedded across communications and content. This will include plain English materials, captioned digital content and accessible online platforms. British Sign Language interpretation, audio description and other inclusive practices will be incorporated into flagship events where appropriate. Programming decisions will also consider timing, location and cost to reduce practical barriers for families, carers and shift workers.

Affordability is central to accessibility. The programme will include a strong free and low cost offer, ensuring that cost does not prevent participation. Activity will be distributed across neighbourhood venues as well as the town centre so that residents can engage close to home rather than needing to travel.

To reach the widest possible audience, Dalkeith 2028 will combine high visibility moments with sustained local engagement. Outdoor installations, town centre takeovers and river

corridor events will ensure culture is seen in everyday spaces. Communications will use a multi channel approach including print, local press, community newsletters, schools, health settings and digital platforms.

Trusted intermediaries will play a key role in reaching under served audiences. Partnerships with community organisations, youth groups and third sector providers will ensure targeted outreach rather than relying solely on traditional marketing.

By embedding inclusive design, affordability, neighbourhood delivery and targeted engagement, Dalkeith 2028 will create a programme that is visible, welcoming and accessible to the widest possible cross section of the community, strengthening participation and pride across the town.

3.4 Communication

Please use the following prompts to guide your response:

- *How will you build a communication plan that utilises a breadth of media formats and reaches different types of audiences?*

Dalkeith 2028 will deliver a communications plan that is inclusive, multi layered and audience specific, ensuring that culture is visible locally while also raising the town's profile regionally and nationally.

The communications strategy will begin with a clear and consistent brand rooted in the programme theme of Meeting Points. This identity will be co developed with local stakeholders to ensure it reflects Dalkeith's character and resonates with residents. The brand will be applied consistently across partners, platforms and physical spaces to build recognition and pride.

To reach different audiences, a breadth of media formats will be used. Digital platforms will include a dedicated website, short form video content, podcasts and social media storytelling. Digital content will be accessible and shareable, enabling younger audiences and regional visitors to engage easily.

Print and physical communications will remain central. Posters, banners and shop window materials will ensure visible presence in the town centre. Information will be distributed through schools, libraries, GP surgeries, community venues and local businesses to reach residents who are less digitally connected.

Local press and regional media partnerships will amplify key programme moments, while national public relations activity will focus on flagship commissions and major events to raise Dalkeith's profile beyond Midlothian.

Audience segmentation will guide messaging. Communications aimed at young people will use visual and digital first approaches. Families will be reached through schools and community networks. Older residents will be supported through printed materials and

trusted local channels. Targeted campaigns will be developed in partnership with community organisations to reach under served groups.

Two way communication will also be embedded. Regular updates, open calls and feedback mechanisms will ensure residents can see how decisions are made and how to get involved. Transparent reporting will strengthen trust and accountability.

By combining hyper local visibility with regional and national storytelling, Dalkeith 2028 will not only promote events but build sustained recognition of the town as a confident, creative and welcoming place.

SECTION 4: MAKING IT HAPPEN

In this section, we want to understand how you will deliver a successful programme.
[Maximum 400 words for each section]

4.1 Partnerships

Please use the following prompts to guide your response:

- *How will you secure and work with additional external partners (e.g., artists and creatives, cultural and heritage organisations, funders, institutions, businesses, voluntary sector and civic society partners, and residents) to deliver the programme?*
- *How will you ensure your partners are representative of your town population?*

Dalkeith 2028 will be delivered through a broad, cross sector partnership model that combines artistic quality with strong local representation. Midlothian Council will act as accountable body, but the programme will be shaped and delivered collaboratively.

Additional external partners will be secured through a combination of open calls, targeted invitations and strategic relationship building. Open commissioning processes will invite artists, creatives and community producers to propose ideas aligned with the Meeting Points theme. This will ensure transparency and encourage both local and national creative talent to contribute.

Strategic partnerships will be developed with regional and national cultural and heritage organisations to strengthen artistic quality, mentoring and touring potential. These relationships will support knowledge exchange and increase the programme's reach beyond Midlothian.

Businesses and town centre traders will be engaged through structured forums and collaborative event planning, ensuring economic benefit is embedded within delivery. Sponsorship and in kind support will be pursued where aligned with programme values.

Voluntary sector organisations and community groups will be central partners rather than consultees. Their role will include co design, outreach and delivery support, particularly in reaching under served communities.

Residents will be partners through participatory micro grants, volunteer roles and advisory structures, enabling community led elements of the programme.

To ensure partners are representative of the town's population, a partner mapping exercise will be undertaken during the development phase. This will assess representation across age, disability, socio economic background, ethnicity and geography. Where gaps are identified, targeted outreach will be conducted to strengthen inclusion.

A Community Advisory Panel with rotating membership will provide ongoing challenge and scrutiny, ensuring that partnership composition reflects local diversity and that decisions

are not dominated by a narrow group of voices.

Commissioning and procurement processes will follow fair and transparent principles, encouraging participation from smaller organisations and individual creatives who may not traditionally access large scale programmes.

By combining open access, strategic collaboration and structured community representation, Dalkeith 2028 will build a partnership model that is ambitious, inclusive and grounded in local reality, strengthening relationships that will endure beyond 2028.

4.2 Programme Management

Please use the following prompts to guide your response:

- *How will the programme be managed throughout the year, including leadership structure and delivery model?*
- *How will you provide clear roles and responsibilities, and ensure the team has the skills and capacity to deliver?*
- *What are the key risks associated with your proposed programme (i.e., risk, mitigating action, RAG rating)?*

Dalkeith 2028 will be delivered through a clear governance and leadership structure that combines strong accountability with collaborative delivery.

Midlothian Council will act as Accountable Body, providing financial oversight, procurement compliance and governance assurance. Strategic direction will be provided by a Programme Board with cross sector representation including community, business, cultural, education and third sector partners. An independent chair will be appointed to provide external challenge and credibility.

Operational delivery will be led by a dedicated core team consisting of a Programme Director, Creative Producer, Community Engagement Lead, Marketing and Communications Lead and Finance and Administration support. This team will be supported by project specific staff, freelancers and commissioned partners as required.

Clear workstreams will structure delivery, including Programme and Commissions, Community and Participation, Learning and Skills, Access and Inclusion, Marketing and Audience Development, Operations and Safety, and Evaluation and Legacy. Each workstream will have defined objectives, reporting lines and delegated responsibilities.

Roles and responsibilities will be formalised through job descriptions, partnership agreements and a detailed delivery plan. Regular reporting cycles to the Programme Board and Council leadership will ensure oversight. The team will be recruited to ensure strong experience in cultural production, event management, community engagement and financial control. Where specialist skills are required, these will be commissioned externally to strengthen capacity.

Key risks have been identified and will be actively managed.

Community disengagement

Mitigation includes early and sustained co design, use of trusted intermediaries and participatory micro grants

RAG rating Green

Funding gap

Mitigation includes a diversified income strategy, phased programme design and early sponsor and funder cultivation

RAG rating Amber

Delivery capacity pressures

Mitigation includes recruitment of experienced cultural producers, clear governance structures and partner delivery agreements

RAG rating Green

Accessibility not achieved

Mitigation includes access audits, dedicated budget allocation and ongoing monitoring

RAG rating Green

Weather and operational risk for outdoor activity

Mitigation includes contingency venues, flexible scheduling and robust event management planning

RAG rating Green

Through clear governance, experienced leadership and proactive risk management, Dalkeith 2028 will deliver a high quality and well managed programme with accountability and resilience built into its structure.

4.3 Financial Management

Please use the following prompts to guide your response:

- *If shortlisted, how would you use a £60,000 grant to strengthen your full application?*
- *How much do you expect it will cost to deliver your programme?*
- *How much additional funding will you need to raise to deliver the programme, and where will you get that additional funding (e.g., existing / reallocated budgets, income from charitable trusts and foundations, income from public funding bodies, business investment / sponsorship, crowdfunding, cultural partnership cash contributions / joint funding applications, in-kind support)?*

If shortlisted, the £60,000 development grant will be used strategically to strengthen the quality, feasibility and sustainability of the full application.

The funding will support

- A structured community co design programme including facilitated engagement sessions, targeted outreach to under served groups and youth design workshops
- Feasibility studies and access audits for key indoor and outdoor locations to ensure deliverability and inclusive design
- Commissioning time for a Creative Producer and specialist advisors to shape flagship concepts to a developed stage
- Development of a detailed fundraising and income strategy including prospect research and sponsor engagement
- Governance set up including legal advice, partnership agreements and delivery planning
- Baseline data gathering and development of an evaluation framework

This investment will ensure that the full application is community led, financially robust and operationally credible.

The indicative cost to deliver Dalkeith 2028 is projected to be in the region of £3 million to £4 million. This estimate includes programme commissioning, staffing, technical production, marketing and communications, access provision, community engagement and evaluation. The final figure will be refined during the development phase.

It is anticipated that a significant proportion of this cost would be met through the Town of Culture award itself. However, additional funding of approximately £2.5 million to £3.5 million would need to be raised through a blended income model.

Potential income sources include

- Alignment and reallocation of existing local authority budgets where eligible, particularly those supporting regeneration, place making and events
- Applications to charitable trusts and foundations supporting culture, youth, heritage and wellbeing
- Public funding bodies through joint applications with cultural partners
- Business investment and sponsorship from local and regional employers
- Cultural partnership contributions and co commissioning arrangements
- Earned income from selected ticketed activity balanced with a strong free offer
- Crowdfunding and community fundraising for specific projects

- In kind support including venue use, marketing channels, staffing time and technical resources

This diversified approach reduces reliance on a single income stream and strengthens resilience. Financial oversight will be managed through Midlothian Council as accountable body, ensuring transparency, compliance and value for money throughout delivery.

4.4 Monitoring, Evaluation and Legacy

Please use the following prompts to guide your response:

- *What outcomes of your programme can be monitored and evaluated? Please refer to outcomes referenced throughout your bid, including those referenced in "Local Needs" and "Opportunity".*
- *How are you currently monitoring the impact of any culture and heritage programme(s) and how could these methods be adapted and used to evaluate UK Town of Culture?*
- *What baseline information is available to help assess the impact of your programme?*

Dalkeith 2028 will embed monitoring and evaluation from the outset, ensuring that impact is measurable, transparent and aligned to the outcomes identified throughout this bid.

Outcomes to be Monitored and Evaluated

The programme will monitor outcomes across five key areas

- Participation and inclusion including total attendance, demographic reach and engagement of under served groups
- Skills and progression including numbers of young people completing placements, training pathways and volunteering roles, and progression into employment or further learning
- Community cohesion and wellbeing including measures of belonging, pride and social connection gathered through surveys and focus groups
- Town centre and economic impact including footfall during key programme moments, business engagement and perception of the town
- Profile and visibility including regional and national media coverage, digital reach and visitor awareness

These outcomes directly relate to local challenges identified in this bid including inequality, youth opportunity, town centre vitality and strengthening identity in a growing town.

Current Monitoring Approaches

Midlothian Council and local partners already collect data on event attendance, participant numbers and stakeholder feedback for cultural and tourism activity. Town centre indicators such as footfall data and vacancy rates are monitored where available. Engagement metrics are tracked across digital platforms.

For Dalkeith 2028, these existing systems will be strengthened through

- A clear theory of change linking activity to intended social and economic outcomes
- Consistent data collection templates across all commissioned partners
- Standardised participant surveys capturing demographic and qualitative insight
- Independent evaluation support to provide external challenge and credibility

This will ensure that evaluation is proportionate but robust.

Baseline Information

Baseline data available to inform impact assessment includes

- Demographic and socio economic data at local level
- Existing cultural participation data from local providers
- Town centre indicators including footfall where available
- Skills and employment data for young people
- Perception and awareness information gathered through local consultation

During the development phase, a pre programme perception survey will establish baseline measures of pride, awareness and cultural engagement to allow comparison post 2028.

Legacy

Legacy will be measured not only in outputs but in sustained change. This includes retained skills, strengthened partnerships, returning events and improved confidence in Dalkeith's identity. By embedding evaluation throughout, Dalkeith 2028 will leave a lasting evidence base to support continued cultural investment beyond 2028.