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19th July 2021

Dear Secretary of State

Re: UK City of Culture 2025 Competition

As leaders of the five local authorities that comprise the former “Gwent” we believe that there is a strength and unique appeal in a City of Newport led, regional offer and would welcome your support for our bid.

As a region, our past, present and future are inextricably linked. We share a social, cultural and economic history underpinned by our internationally recognised heritage. From Roman settlements at Caerleon and Caerwent to Norman settlements across the region, an industrial heritage built on coal, iron and steel; a UNESCO World Heritage site at Blaenavon, the advancement of democracy through the chartist and suffragette movements and the birthplace of the architect of the NHS. Our unique geography and landscape, framed by our industrial and maritime heritage, has shaped this shared history and culture.

Our heritage assets are internationally recognised; this is acknowledged by the investment that our heritage organisations have made in the restoration of our assets including the £8.75m investment in the Transporter Bridge by HLF and the recent announcement of £5m investment by Cadw in Caerphilly Castle. The unique landscape is complementary to and forms part of this cultural heritage; the Gwent Levels, Valleys Regional Park, Brecon Beacons National Park, Cwmcarn Scenic Drive, the Monmouthshire and Brecon canal, all enhance the visitor offer and contribute to the well being of our communities.

We have a strong case to make in terms of our cultural identity across a range of themes including, heritage, arts, sports and music. We can also demonstrate that there are measurable benefits for the region associated with being the City of Culture in 2025. Alongside economic growth from increased tourism, we can build and celebrate more cohesive communities and showcase the digital and data focussed opportunities which are available for investors.

Within this Newport is a Gateway City; gateway to Wales, the gateway to England and a global gateway through our international port. We are also a City of Sanctuary. Newport is fast emerging as a ‘Data City’ within a digitally empowered region and we need to nurture and grow that opportunity. We need to embed it in everything we do to ensure that the region develops in a resilient and sustainable way, for the benefit of our future generations. Capacity to deliver a year round programme of events will be the key to any successful bid. The International Convention Centre Wales is located within Newport. Facilities within Newport and the surrounding region are excellent and in some cases unique. We have hosted numerous high profile events including the Ryder Cup, G8 Summit, NATO summit, Tour of Britain, British Transplant Games, National Eisteddfod and the Urdd Eisteddfod within the region.

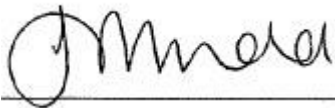
The “Gwent” local area has a rich cultural heritage and a growing presence and expertise in digital and data. There is strong potential to develop a bid that both embraces our past and projects forward to the future, incorporating advanced digital technology to take forward access to cultural

events and experiences across the whole of the “Gwent” region. Our strength however, lies in our people and our communities; both our spatially defined neighbourhoods and communities and our communities of interest. Ours is a region rich in social and cultural capital and a successful bid would provide the global platform on which to showcase this.

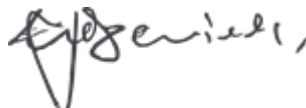
We would value your support for a Newport led bid for UK City of Culture 2025. As we collaborate to build back better there is a significant opportunity to develop a blueprint for a modern connected city embedded within a region steeped in history and culture. This will showcase the “Gwent” regional offer at its finest and deliver a lasting legacy of cultural enrichment and economic prosperity.

Thank you for your support and encouragement on this topic.

Yours sincerely



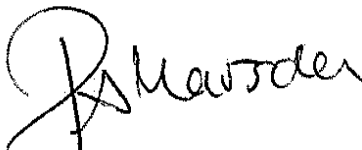
Cllr Jane Mudd Leader
Newport City Council



Cllr Nigel Daniels Leader
Blaenau Gwent Council



Cllr Richard John
Monmouthshire County
Council



Cllr Phillipa Marsden Leader
Caerphilly County Borough Council



Cllr Anthony Hunt Leader
Torfaen County Borough Council