Slough announces bid for UK Town of Culture 2028

Tuesday 17 February, 2026

A town ready to rewrite its story

Slough has today announced its intention to bid for **UK Town of Culture 2028**, launching a bold campaign to reshape how the town is seen nationally. The bid aims to dismantle decades of unfair reputations and tired *"The Office"* stereotypes, replacing them with a confident, future-facing story of creativity, connectivity and cultural energy.

The bid sets out to move beyond long-standing perceptions and present Slough as a place defined by its people and its role in the UK's digital and economic infrastructure. Organisers emphasise that the focus will not be on a single year of events, but on using culture to support skills development, community participation and pride in place.

Slough is one of the youngest and most ethnically diverse towns in the UK and sits at the heart of the Thames Valley economy. It is also home to major data centres and digital infrastructure that support large parts of the UK's internet traffic. Located next to Heathrow Airport, the town has long been shaped by migration, movement and global connections.

A new **Town of Culture Steering Group** is being formed to oversee the bid, bringing together representatives from business, education, the voluntary sector, culture and youth organisations. The group will be chaired by **Rob Deeks MBE**, chief executive of **Together As One**, who was recently awarded an MBE for his services to young people and the community in Slough, recognising his long-standing work supporting and empowering young people across the town.

Rob Deeks said:

"Our bid for Town of Culture will be rooted in Slough's everyday stories, its resilience, and its creative ambitions. Culture here is expressed through the arts and events, but also through how people come together, share identity, and shape the place they live. It is about making space for everyone to participate, belong, and thrive."

Slough's bid is not built on aspiration alone. It is rooted in a vibrant and evolving cultural landscape. It has internationally connected music and dance communities, contemporary public art transforming everyday spaces, and is at the heart of Britain's Film and Television Industry with a pool of creative talent. Slough is already a place where culture is lived, not staged. Culture is expressed through faith traditions, community choirs, spoken word, visual arts, grassroots theatre and digital creativity.

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Slough's heritage is industrial, migratory and entrepreneurial, a story of reinvention, resilience and contribution to the national economy, and the 2028 bid will celebrate this living, working, creating town in all its richness.

The bid will be managed by **Vineet Vijh**, Director of community organisation **Viva Slough**, who has been leading wider efforts to promote culture, wellbeing and skills development across the town.

Vineet Vijh said:

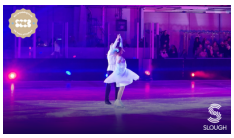
"Slough doesn't need reinvention, but needs recognition. We are digitally connected, globally diverse and full of creative energy. Town of Culture gives us the chance to turn those strengths into pride, opportunity and long-term change."

Get Involved

The bid team is launching a month of intensive community consultation to ensure the final proposal is truly *"built by Slough, for Slough"*. This will include:

- **Town Hall Meetings** – open forums for residents to share their *'Untold Slough'* stories
- **Youth Summits** – sessions in schools, colleges and youth centres throughout February and March

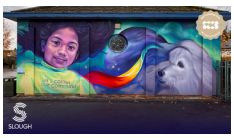
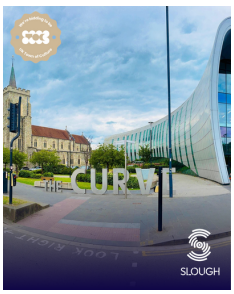
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- **Public Webinar (3 March)** – an open invitation for anyone interested in, or curious about, the bid
- **Small Business Briefing (24 February)** – delivered in collaboration with the **Federation of Small Businesses**, supporting entrepreneurs and developers to align their projects with the 2028 vision
- **Developer Forum (23 February)** – discussions with property developers interested in investment and development in Slough

Early responses from residents, local arts organisations and businesses have been positive.

Toby Kress, Chief Executive of **Plus X Innovation**, said the bid reflected wider changes in how places like Slough are viewed.

“Slough is already a powerhouse of innovation and talent. Town of Culture 2028 is an opportunity to connect that innovation to creativity and community, and to put Slough firmly on the national and international map.”

Gozan John, a 17-year-old A-level student at St Bernards school, said she welcomed the opportunity for young people to be directly involved in shaping the bid.

“So often decisions about places are made without young people being properly involved. What’s exciting about this bid is that our voices are being taken seriously from the start. Slough is full of young talent and ideas, and this feels like a real chance to for them to help shape the town we want to grow up in.”

Seema Kamboj, Director of arts organisation **Apna Virsa (Our Heritage)**, which has been running for over 17 years and works with more than 5,000 Slough residents, said:

“Slough has always been rich in talent, ambition and diversity. What’s been missing is the platform to tell that story on our own terms. This bid is about unlocking the creativity of our different communities, young and old, and showing the country what modern Britain really looks like.”

The bid has the full support of **Slough Borough Council**, local MP **Tan Dhesi**, and Council Leader **Dexter Smith**, all of whom will actively support the campaign.

The UK Town of Culture competition is run by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. The winning town will receive £3 million in funding and hold the title for one year, though organisers stress that bids are assessed on long-term impact rather than the scale of individual events.

Slough is competing in the **large town** category. The deadline for submitting an Expression of Interest is **31 March 2026**.

Media Contact

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Director, Viva Slough

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Related Keywords:

Culture :: Arts :: UK Town Of Culture :: Slough :: Regeneration :: Pride :: 2028 :: Competition :: Events :: Activities :: Economic Development :: Data Centres ::

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