

Cabinet Meeting Resolution

**Executive  
Forward Plan  
Reference**

**E3098**

**The Great Spas of Europe**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	31-Oct-18
<b>The Issue</b>	<i>The Great Spas of Europe is a long term international partnership project which could result in a second UNESCO World Heritage inscription for the City of Bath. Cabinet endorsement is sought before the nomination document is submitted to UNESCO.</i>
<b>The decision</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> (unanimously) that the Cabinet agreed endorse the submission of the Great Spas of Europe nomination to UNESCO.
<b>Rationale for decision</b>	<p>This project offers a range of potential benefits. It is good for business, reinforces the identity of Bath as a leading international spa destination and centre of heritage excellence, and realises an opportunity to gain a highly coveted and respected international inscription at a fraction of the expected cost.</p> <p>Through this bid a ‘top table’ of elite European Spas has formed which will be officially recognised through a successful nomination. In terms of tourism management, Bath neither wishes or deserves to be outside of this elite circle, and indeed the comparative analysis process has shown that Bath is included by merit.</p> <p>This initiative offers potentially powerful tourism marketing opportunities. Double nominated UNESCO World Heritage Sites are extremely rare worldwide and the marketing value of this accolade represents a significant investment in helping to ensure the long-term health of one of the district’s primary industries.</p>
<b>Other options considered</b>	<p>Withdraw from the bid. Bath already has World Heritage status and does not necessarily need a second inscription. The primary reason to consider this option would be cost, but as outlined in this report the project benefits are considered to represent a sound business investment and the bulk of the cost has already been committed. As outlined above, withdrawing at this late stage would forego the investment already made, would incur reputational damage and be technically difficult. Following UK Government agreement to include the project on the UNESCO Tentative List, the government are UK project leaders and decisions such as this would technically rest with them.</p> <p>The Council could consider pursuing a bid alone. However, the UK only submits (a maximum of) one nomination annually, and if the UK Government were the lead state party Bath would have to wait in line behind other UK sites awaiting inscription. It is unlikely that Bath would secure Government backing to do this and it could add upwards of a decade to the process.</p> <p>The Council could consider pursuing a bid in a smaller study group. There is no evidence that this would increase the chances of success. It would</p>

	negate some benefits accrued by being part of a larger network and increase the proportion of work (and funding) required from Bath.
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**The Decision is subject to Call-In within 5 working days of publication of the decision**