

Report to: Arts & Culture Forum



Date of Meeting 1st December 2021

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

East Devon DC Culture Strategy workscope

Report summary:

The report provides a workscope for the planned Culture Strategy that was approved by Cabinet in May 2021. It provides a detailed scoping document for the future development and enhancement of the Council's ambitions for cultural development as articulated in the Council Plan. The Culture Strategy will seek to build on the existing work of the Council focussed mainly around the THG, as a cultural hub and the Arts & Culture Forum and the newly created Arts Culture East Devon (ACED) network through a more cohesive and strategic approach to arts and culture and also seeking to add capacity and resource into meeting these ambitions.

The Culture Strategy workscope will also seek to synergise with the planned Tourism Strategy work to enable an enhanced cultural programme can help to support and link into the District's distinctive cultural tourism offer through better promotion, marketing and scaling up of the Council's work in this area that are linked directly to the social and economic recovery of the district through cultural tourism, green initiatives, educational opportunities and 'Made in Devon' retail.

The Culture Strategy workscope is an opportunity to place culture at the heart of the Council's recovery planning (both economically and socially) is the main driver for this report and its recommendations.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

Recommend to Cabinet to approve the Scope of Work for producing the Culture Strategy Evidence Base as detailed in the report.

Reason for recommendation:

To enable East Devon District Council to commence the preparation of its Culture Strategy in accordance with Arts Council England guidance.

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergency response
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Tourism, Sport, Leisure & Culture
- Democracy, Transparency and Communications
- Economy and Assets

- Finance
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk;

Links to background information

Link to [Council Plan](#):

Priorities (check which apply)

- Outstanding Place and Environment
- Outstanding Homes and Communities
- Outstanding Economic Growth, Productivity, and Prosperity
- Outstanding Council and Council Services

Purpose of report

East Devon Culture Strategy

The Arts Council England (ACE) Strategy 2020-2030 'Let's Create' has set out an ambition to achieve by 2030, that England is a country in which "the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish, and where every one of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences". To be achieved through;

- **Creative People:** Everyone can develop and express creativity throughout their life.
- **Cultural Communities:** Villages, towns and cities thrive through a collaborative approach to culture.
- **A creative and cultural country:** England's cultural sector is innovative, collaborative and international.

It is through this ACE Strategy ambition and also the LGA's 'Creative Places: Supporting your local creative economy' 2020 document that the Council's Culture Strategy will seek to establish how the Council can put in place various programmes, resources and partnerships to build on its existing commitments within the arts and cultural sectors and also establish a clear "roadmap" to how this can further support the development of East Devon's cultural visitor economy.

Culture in East Devon

The majority of the creative arts and cultural work undertaken by the Council is through the Thelma Hulbert Gallery and its Out & About programme. Other important cultural providers are The Manor Pavilion Theatre, Sidmouth which has a popular and successful programme of dance, musicals, drama, comedy and ballet performances throughout the year and is an award winning community theatre.

The Wild East Devon and AONB teams deliver programmes which connect culture with our outstanding environment and promote the value of our rich cultural heritage. LED through the Exmouth Pavilion supports a popular programme of entertainment.

Recently the work of the Council's Events Officer has started to explore opportunities for enabling new events activities such as music festivals and outdoor theatre.

There is no clearly defined cultural service within the Council and it is Thelma Hulbert Gallery, Wild East Devon and the AONBs which provide the majority of the advice, support and outputs that help to support our visitor economy and provide a diverse programme of creative arts and cultural activities.

In 2021, in recognition of its expanding role in East Devon's future, the district's cultural and creative sector has come together with other place-based partners in a new executive grouping, Arts & Culture East Devon (ACED), led by Council Officers and Elected Members. The ACED executive grouping is informed by an open public forum, the ACED network.

In order to maximise the continuing contribution of culture to place-based strategic agendas, in East Devon and beyond, East Devon District Council and ACED are now commissioning a cultural strategy. We are therefore seeking consultants with extensive experience in cultural strategy process, development and design.

Aim of cultural strategy

East Devon's cultural strategy will:

- Build and secure place-based strategic partnerships and local community ownership around a **shared 10 year vision for East Devon** and the surrounding areas.
- Reflect the needs of people who live and work in the district
- Provide a compelling and robust framework to attract future investment from public, private, community and social enterprise sectors, including national investment sources such as Department for Culture, Media and Sport; Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Arts Council England and the National Lottery.
- Guide a sustainable, inclusive development of the area that is fit to meet global challenges of climate and ecological breakdown and growing inequalities.

Process

What the strategy process should do

The strategy *process* should:

- Build trust
- Be consultative
- Develop effective partnerships
- Promote ownership by senior local authority officers and leadership, community and statutory sector partners
- Allow for iteration
- Map the area's current assets and infrastructure (physical, human and intangible)
- Inclusively engage East Devon's communities
- Research and understand culture's current and potential economic and social value to East Devon, based on data and evidence
- Identify existing and planned capital investments and projects that culture can and will contribute to
- Collaboratively develop a vision, goals, priorities and objectives that are both ambitious and achievable

- Draw on evidence and consultation to plot the future value of culture in delivering place-based agendas including (but not limited to): Team Devon; Public Health Strategic Action Plan; East Devon Local Plan; East Devon Council Plan 2021-23; East Devon Housing Strategy; Climate Change Strategy, Economic Development Strategy
- Evolve in dialogue with a concurrent process to develop a Tourism Strategy for East Devon.

The document(s)

The document(s) should combine rigour with immediate accessibility for a broad range of readers. The costs for production of the document(s) must be included in the budget.

Articulate a distinctive and inspiring vision for arts and culture in East Devon for the next 5-10 years

Communicate the relationship and contribution to other local place-based strategies

Identify the priority objectives arising from the vision that are achievable and owned by one or more partners to the strategy

Identify how we can deliver this vision, including roles of public, community and private sectors and the potential for new structures and partnerships

Set out specific, agreed, deliverable actions and partner buy-in needed to deliver the vision and goals

Identify strategy ownership, shared responsibilities, delivery mechanisms and governance

Outline milestones, timeframes and monitoring framework

Describe and quantify the financial and human resources needed to deliver the strategy and action plan

Outline a resourcing and funding plan, including who will invest and where new investment might come from, including alternative scenarios and options

Include a Delivery Plan, which identifies how the outcomes from the consultation can be realised, including the potential for alternative delivery models.

Cultural Strategy Steering Group

The Arts & Culture East Devon (ACED) Executive Group will act as the steering group for the cultural strategy development. The group will co-opt specific expertise and experience as needed.

Specification for consultant/company/individual

- Track record in developing strategic partnerships and engaging key stakeholders from within and especially outside the cultural sector
- Experience of research, consultation and evaluation in the cultural sector, including the research, development and delivery of strategies that have achieved their vision
- Experience in engagement, mapping and strategic analysis tools
- Good understanding of the challenges affecting the cultural sector beyond the major urban centres and in rural areas
- Good understanding of the challenges affecting the cultural sector as a result of the Covid pandemic
- Extensive knowledge of current UK cultural policy and its possible future shape
- Understanding of the financial, political and resource pressures facing local authorities

- Good experience of consulting multiple stakeholders and diverse communities
- Experience of leveraging public and private investment

An initial list of stakeholders and consultees will be provided, but further research will be needed to identify others and ensure that marginalised voices and those with low engagement in culture, are included.

Indicative timetable

[6 December] Out to tender

[10 January] Deadline for receipt of tenders

[19/20 January] Interviews

[31 January] Contract starts

[Mid May] Complete draft strategy

[Mid June] Final strategy presented

[Mid June] Strategy formally adopted by all partners including East Devon District Council

Financial implications: The report has no direct financial implications at this stage.

Legal implications: The report does not raise any specific legal implications requiring comment.