

Report to: Cabinet



Date of Meeting 8 January 2025

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## **EDDC Culture Strategy 2022-2031 support**

### **Report summary:**

Since the creation and adoption of the Council's Culture Strategy 2022-2031 a significant amount of progress has happened with the appointment of the Council's Cultural Producer to drive the Strategy's 10-year Delivery Plan forward. The setting up of the Arts Culture East Devon (ACED) network has now attracted over 200 local cultural and creative organisations across the district that is helping to drive community engagement, social capital, pathways for young creatives, engaging in Placemaking schemes and boosting the local economies of our towns and rural areas. This has been supplemented with the funding received from the UK SPF and our cultural programme which has enabled an acceleration of many of our priority areas in the Culture Strategy. The UK SPF has also helped to set up the Creative East Devon Fund which is a competitive application process open to all the District's local creative and cultural organisations within the ACED network to develop and grow their work.

The UK SPF has also supported the initial development of Screen Devon and its business plan for establishing opportunities for inward investment from the film industry into the county. However the uncertainty surrounding the future of the UK SPF and the Council's role in shaping its delivery programmes including culture has meant the critical "lifeline" of seed funding into many grassroots creative and cultural organisations as well as supporting new initiatives such as Screen Devon that have the potential to boost East Devon's local economy are now in jeopardy. The UK SPF has created significant momentum for much of the cultural activities supported by the Council and provided important match funding for new initiatives and programmes bringing in important funding leverage from outside the Council.

The Council Plan has identified the value and importance of its cultural programmes and events within its current Council Plan and how it can help to shape areas such as place making, enable community cohesion and support our local economies with job creation and apprenticeships into the creative and arts sector.

### **Is the proposed decision in accordance with:**

Budget Yes ☐ No ☒

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

### **Recommendation:**

That Cabinet resolves:

1. To approve the support of the Screen Devon scheme and its supporting Key Performance Indicators by granting additional funding of £10,000 for the 2025/26 financial year as set out in the report;
2. To approve the support of the Villages in Action programme and its supporting Key Performance Indicators by granting additional funding of £5,000 (in addition to the existing annual contribution of £10,000) for the 2025/26 financial year to support the recruitment of a new Network Lead in East Devon.

3. That Cabinet recommends to Council that an additional budget of £15,000 is provided from the Council's General Fund Revenue account to fund the recommendations to provide additional funding of £10,000 to Screen Devon and additional funding of £5,000 to Villages in Action as set out in recommendations 1 and 2.

### **Reason for recommendation:**

By continuing to financially support these two organisations EDDC is progressing in the delivery of the [East Devon Cultural Strategy](#), in particular:

- Strengthening and Supporting 'the-people-that-do'
- Cultural Tourism
- Creative Enterprise and Skills
- Connectivity
- Cultural Leadership

Supporting these two organisations will help us reach our strategy goals. These are that by 2031:

1. East Devon's cultural offer is perceived by residents as high quality, interesting, fun, relevant, accessible and well-promoted
2. Residents who have taken part in cultural activity feel that their health, happiness and wellbeing have improved as a result
3. Children and young people across the district feel they have ample opportunities to take part in cultural and creative activities
4. More people work in the cultural and creative industries in East Devon, backed up by more training, skills and pathways to employment
5. Cultural organisations, artists and creative businesses feel connected, resilient and creatively ambitious (professional and voluntary sectors)
6. Investment into arts, museums and heritage through earned income, grants, sponsorship and philanthropy has increased
7. The number and diversity of visitors, audiences and participants in culture and creative activity in East Devon has increased
8. Culture is helping to tackle the climate emergency

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- ☒ Climate Action and Emergency Response
- ☒ Coast, Country and Environment
- ☐ Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- ☐ Communications and Democracy
- ☒ Economy
- ☐ Finance and Assets
- ☐ Strategic Planning
- ☐ Sustainable Homes and Communities
- ☒ Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

**Climate change** Low Impact

**Risk:** Medium Risk; The uncertainty of the future of the UK SPF has meant that a number of programmes of activity such as the cultural programme are potentially unlikely now to continue beyond the final year of 2024/25. The funding that has been received over the last three years has been crucial to support the delivery of multiple priority outputs and outcomes from the Council's Culture Strategy 2022-2031.

**Links to background information** [East Devon Cultural Strategy](#) ; [The Advantage of Establishing a Regional Screen Agency for Devon - Research Report Salas\\_2023-1116 \(eastdevon.gov.uk\)](#); [ACED Directory](#);

**Link to [Council Plan](#)**

Priorities (check which apply)

- ☒ A supported and engaged community
  - ☐ Carbon neutrality and ecological recovery
  - ☒ Resilient economy that supports local business
  - ☐ Financially secure and improving quality of services
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## Report in full

### 1. Screen Devon scheme 2025/26

1.1 Screen Devon emerged out of a two year research project at Exeter University to promote the region's capabilities and develop the local screen industry. It's goals are to improve Devon's prosperity potential, raise the profile of Devon's talent, culture and landscapes, and to ensure that growth was equitably distributed and fair.

1.2 Screen agencies are ordinarily governmental organisations, but this is difficult in Devon due to the number of local authorities in the region and the scale that a screen agency needs to work to. Screen Devon is independent and able to work easily across boundaries to the benefit of all.

1.3 At the Council's Arts and Culture Forum meeting in November 2024 the following points were discussed:

- The estimated market capture of UK productions.
- The South West is the largest English region but only had one film and TV studio, located in Bristol.
- Public service broadcasters are required to base more TV productions in the regions.
- East Devon would benefit from productions based in other Devon local authorities and vice versa, based on the average travel time radius of an hour, which is what is looked at for locations to shoot around a base.
- There is a lot of talent in film making in Devon.
- Eight areas of action:
  - Profile building.
  - Economy.
  - Jobs.
  - Education.
  - Champion screen culture.
  - Sustainability and equality.
  - Research.
  - Future facing.

1.4 Initial funding would be from other Devon district councils (6 out of 10 have committed so far), Devon County Council, Exeter Culture, Plymouth Culture and the University of Exeter.

1.5 A request was made for a £10,000 contribution from East Devon DC towards the £72,000 core funding for 2025/26. Screen Devon is a five to ten year project that would take time to build capacity, profile and reputation. It would help to make sure that East Devon benefitted from the national growth of the film and TV sector. It was reported that medium budget feature film would spend £66,000 per day in a local region. The Forum noted that Screen Cornwall figures revealed that film and TV production was worth £5m to the local economy.

1.6 The Forum agreed that Screen Devon was an excellent idea and a fantastic opportunity for the area. It would help to keep creative people in Devon. Tourism in the area would also benefit as well as local employment and arts education.

1.7 The contribution of £10,000 from East Devon DC this year from the UK SPF has been put towards the hire of a General Manager and Officer, who will begin in January 2025.

## **1.8 Screen Devon – KPIs (2025 – 2026)**

KPI 1: Screen Devon will offer one training or skills development workshop for up to **10 people** seeking pathways into the creative Industries, in East Devon.

KPI 2: Screen Devon will host one in-person networking event for Cultural organisations, artists and creative businesses based in East Devon with the opportunity to access 1-to-1 mentoring from industry experts: up to **5 mentoring sessions and 25 attendees**.

KPI 3: Screen Devon will deliver a session to demystify Green Film production and help understand industry-standard Green Policies. **1 workshop for 8 people**

1.9 These goals align with the cultural strategy by ensuring cultural organisations, artists and creative businesses feel connected, resilient and creatively ambitious, it also addresses the goal of more people working in the cultural and creative industries in East Devon, backed up by more training, skills and pathways to employment as well as increasing the number and diversity of visitors, audiences and participants in culture and creative activity in East Devon.

## **2 Villages in Action (ViA) programme**

2.1 Villages in Action (ViA) was established in 2001 to bring live performance, arts and cultural events to rural communities across Devon. For over two decades ViA have worked alongside communities to grow opportunities for Devon's towns and villages to host a whole range of excellent creative work – across dance, theatre, music, circus, spoken word, poetry, visual arts and more.

2.2 Since 2021, ViA have embarked on a new journey – to shift the way they think about rural touring in Devon. With their network of promoters and co-curators, they are reimagining the way communities create and welcome new work and the people who make it.

2.3 Through their [Agri]Culture model, ViA aim to strengthen the voice of our towns and villages in both hosting and creating work that reflects our changing communities and the wider world. At its heart, this model is about making work together, and making work happen together. Participatory activities, artist residencies and creative skills opportunities run alongside invitations to host and see visiting performances. ViA's aim is that, over time, this culturally driven action-network will grow meaningful social & cultural capital within rural communities.

2.4 Villages in Action (ViA) is seeking an uplift of £5,000 to the annual contribution from the Council which is currently £10,000 (an amount that has remained the same since 2010) to support the recruitment of a [Agri] Culture Network Lead in East Devon.

## 2.5 The aims of this role:

- To galvanise the East Devon network - to act as a local support for new promoters and members of the network, offering on the ground support for first-time events, risk assessment and other event management training.
- To represent Villages in Action at co-creation meetings with partners, wider networking events, meeting representatives from other organisations to better collaborate, plan and co-design shared projects with a focus on community-based asset development.
- To offer paid employment opportunities, and a chance to grow the team in line with our longer-term ambitions to grow the East Devon hub of Villages in Action.

## 2.6 Engagement details:

- 24 days a year (April 2025- March 2026)
- £5000/year based on £120-£175/day freelance rate + expenses for travel and expenses

## 2.7 Villages in Action - KPIs (2025/26)

KPI 1: To develop 2 new strategic partnerships with at least 4 new East Devon based organisations, with a minimum of 2 collaborative funding bid submissions for shared project work.

- This addresses the East Devon Cultural Strategy goal to increase investment into arts, museums and heritage through earned income, grants, sponsorship and philanthropy as well ensuring cultural organisations, artists and creative businesses feel connected, resilient and creatively ambitious.

KPI 2: To provide 2 new paid freelance opportunities for East Devon residents for the network in East Devon, and direct Continuing Professional Development for up to 15 East Devon based volunteers in Event Management, Risk Assessment, Impact and Evaluation and Artist Support.

- This addresses the East Devon Cultural Strategy goal of more people working in the cultural and creative industries in East Devon, backed up by more training, skills and pathways to employment.

2.8 The opportunity to help support and scale up the level of rural touring programmes across East Devon through ViA with a modest investment is based on a proven track record of delivery and a robust framework of review and evaluation that is presented to the Council's Arts & Culture Forum on an annual basis to ensure it is achieving the desired outcomes and KPIs.

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## Financial implications:

The 25/26 draft budget is being prepared and presented and explains the significant challenges upon the general fund in year to maintain a balanced budget and also explains the remaining uncertainties with regards to central government assistance at this time. Although the additional funding of £15k being requested here is not overly material in this regard, these financial pressures should be considered when approving any additional budget that has not already been included within the 25/26 budget papers and then be compared with the potential benefits/merits that each project will bring to the council or region.

**Legal implications:**

Legal time will be needed to prepare and complete grant funding agreements for the two projects. There are no substantive legal issues to be added to this report