

CULTURAL STRATEGY

2022 - 2031

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ARTS &
CULTURE
EAST
DEVON

FOREWORD



Welcome to East Devon's Cultural Strategy 2022-2031.

Here, you will find ideas and practical plans that bring creativity into local residents' lives – as artists, volunteers, audiences, participants and practitioners.

The strategy celebrates the strengths of our beautiful and welcoming district and aims to grow the cultural offer in East Devon over the next decade.

Culture will help enhance our everyday lives, bringing benefits for health, happiness and wellbeing for all ages. It adds to the vibrancy and attractiveness of our communities and provides opportunities for volunteering. The economic benefits range from new training and skills pathways that help us retain younger people, through to increased tourist visits and spend.

Many of the initiatives outlined here scale up and add value to projects already underway by East Devon District Council, including tackling climate change, economic development, place-making, health and housing.

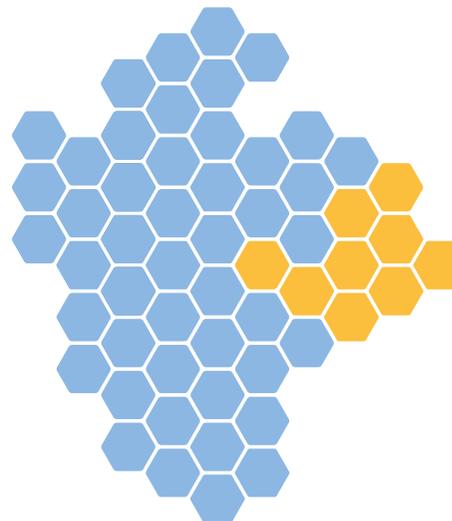
The strategy sets out a vision that we hope everyone will embrace, but in practical terms is focussed on where we feel our Council can have the most effective impact. Some of our plans will be implemented across the whole district and open to all; others are targeted at places or people where need or opportunity are greatest, or where there is a particular gap.

We can't and won't do everything at once. Some actions will be delivered immediately; others are more complex and will emerge over the next five to ten years as we raise inward investment and work with partners to achieve them.

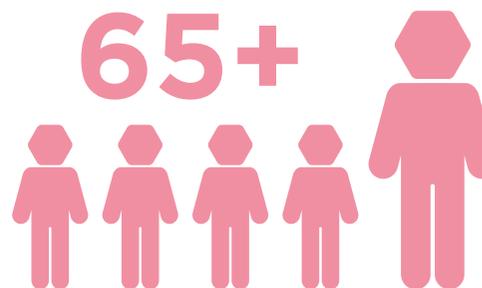
I'm very grateful to everyone who has helped to inform and shape this strategy. I am delighted that we have an ambitious and practical framework for culture and look forward to working with many local residents and organisations to shape an exciting, creative future for East Devon.

Councillor Nick Hookway
Portfolio Holder Tourism, Sport, Leisure and Culture

SNAPSHOT OF EAST DEVON



EAST DEVON POPULATION IS
C.146,000



AGE RANGE GROWING MORE
 THAN ANY OTHER

98.4%
 WHITE BRITISH



ONE OF
 THE LOWEST CRIME
 RATE AREAS IN BRITAIN

IN THE **40% LEAST DEPRIVED**
 DISTRICTS NATIONALLY, THOUGH
1 IN 5 CHILDREN IN EAST DEVON
 LIVE IN POVERTY



LIFE EXPECTANCY
 IS IN THE TOP
10% NATIONALLY

EAST DEVON HAS THE **4TH HIGHEST**
 AVERAGE AGE OF RESIDENTS IN
 ENGLAND, BUT IN SOME OF OUR
 COMMUNITIES, SUCH AS CRANBROOK,
 THE PROPORTION OF 0-4 YEAR-OLDS
 IS 4 TIMES THE NATIONAL AVERAGE

INTRODUCTION

WHY WE NEED A STRATEGY

Across towns and villages, along the seaside and in the rolling hills of our countryside parishes, East Devon has a thriving cultural scene, with many opportunities for local residents and visitors to get creative.

This Cultural Strategy aims to strengthen and promote our excellent existing offer. It also recognises that our district has a highly polarised demographic profile – with notably high proportions of both older residents and very young children. We therefore need to offer high quality creative opportunities, accessible to people of all ages, in all communities.

Some progress has already been made. Our first Cultural Strategy has raised the profile of culture within East Devon District Council and the new post of Portfolio Holder for Tourism, Sport, Leisure and Culture provides political leadership.

During the pandemic, our team at Thelma Hulbert Gallery established a new network for artists and creative practitioners called Arts and Culture East Devon (ACED), helping local people stay in touch (albeit virtually at first), access funding opportunities and connect with others across the district.

These ACED meetings identified shared opportunities and challenges and the need for a joined up approach if we want to make culture an even greater part of East Devon life.

So, in January 2022, East Devon District Council (EDDC) began working with specialist consultants, FEI, to develop a Cultural Strategy which will help us achieve our goals.

WHAT WE MEAN BY CULTURE

‘Culture’ is used in this document to mean all those areas of activity associated with the artforms and organisations in which Arts Council England invests: collections, digital and combined arts, dance, libraries, literature, museums, music, theatre, and the visual arts.

Culture can be made and shared by a huge range of organisations and individuals: creative practitioners and artists, entrepreneurs and volunteers, community groups and businesses, local authorities and friends’ groups, and many more.

Culture can take place in purpose-built and unusual venues, in parks, high streets, village halls and natural landscapes. Culture is where creativity is shared with others.

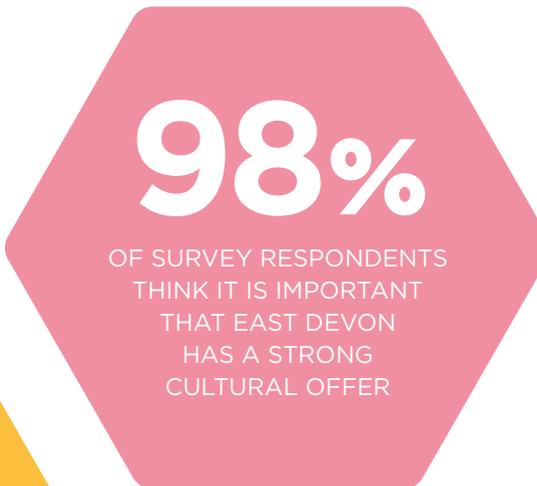
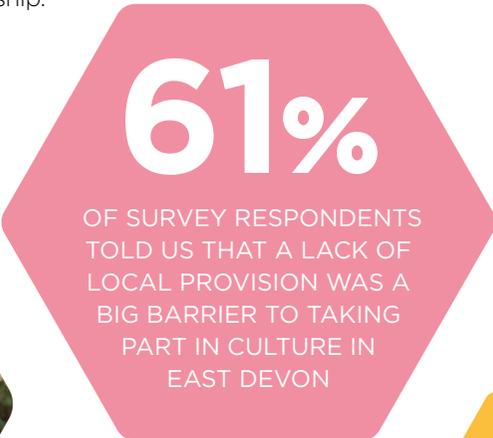
HOW WE DEVELOPED THE STRATEGY

To ensure our strategy is distinctive, ambitious, relevant and deliverable, a range of work was undertaken to provide the evidence base for the approach we are taking.

We reviewed local, regional and national policies and plans, such as Levelling Up, that could influence our Cultural Strategy and gathered information about capital projects that are under development in East Devon.

We mapped people, places, organisations and activities to find out what is already happening across East Devon and how it is currently funded. This included arts organisations, events, festivals, museums and classes – 235 were identified, with activity in all towns and parishes. We explored the local and regional market for culture and the potential for future growth of audiences and visitors.

And we consulted widely, through interviews, workshops and a public survey which had nearly 500 responses. This all took place between February-March 2022.



THE STRATEGY

OUR VISION

Our vision is for East Devon to be a **VIBRANT CULTURAL ECOSYSTEM** whose distinctive communities and outstanding natural environment are enhanced and enriched through creativity, curiosity and collaboration.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to balance the unique identities, independence and quirks of each East Devon community with the need to work together on ambitious, shared initiatives that transcend any one organisation, artform or place. This will include partners from within and beyond our district.

OUR VALUES

Our values underpin the strategy. We will be:

COLLABORATIVE

Local community spirit drives much of our current cultural activity. This will be a strategy that empowers more local people to shape and get involved with culture at all stages of their lives, delivered with and for local people from all parts of the district

RESILIENT

We will build resilience of the creative and cultural sector by connecting, supporting and securing investment in local artists and practitioners, and attracting new investment

DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE

We will draw on and reflect the diversity of contemporary society and celebrate the variety of activity that takes place in East Devon, ensuring an inclusive approach and equality of opportunity

CONNECTED WITH NATURE

East Devon has an abundance of opportunities to connect nature, culture, wellbeing and people in mutually beneficial ways. We will use culture and creativity to enhance, inspire and engage people, to support our goal of carbon neutrality by 2040 and help mitigate against the threats of climate change on our communities



WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

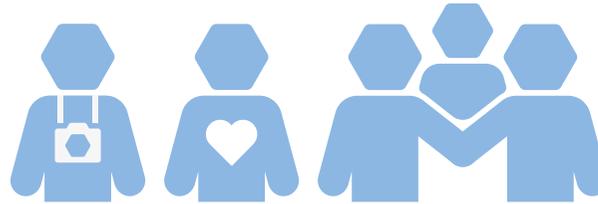
A set of indicators, measured using quantitative and qualitative data, will track progress and help us understand what impact the strategy is having.

OUR GOAL IS THAT BY 2031:

- East Devon’s cultural offer is perceived by residents as high quality, interesting, fun, relevant, accessible and well-promoted
- Residents who have taken part in cultural activity feel that their health, happiness and wellbeing have improved as a result
- Children and young people across the district feel they have ample opportunities to take part in cultural and creative activities
- More people work in the cultural and creative industries in East Devon, backed up by more training, skills and pathways to employment

- Cultural organisations, artists and creative businesses feel connected, resilient and creatively ambitious (professional and voluntary sectors)
- Investment into arts, museums and heritage through earned income, grants, sponsorship and philanthropy has increased
- The number and diversity of visitors, audiences and participants in culture and creative activity in East Devon has increased
- Culture is helping to tackle the climate emergency

SURVEY RESPONDENTS FELT THAT CULTURE COULD CONTRIBUTE “VERY WELL”



TO ATTRACTING TOURISTS (75%),
 PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELLBEING (66%)
 AND BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES (64%)
 IN EAST DEVON



DEFINITIONS

SHORT-TERM

Already underway or can be within 3-6 months, via existing resources or once the Cultural Producer is appointed

MEDIUM-TERM

To be undertaken within 3 years; requires additional planning, fundraising and resources, including partnership working

LONG-TERM

3-10 year timescale for more complex work programmes

THEME 1

STRENGTHEN AND SUPPORT THE 'PEOPLE-THAT-DO'

OBJECTIVE

Support the unique, community-led cultural organisations whose efforts enhance the high quality of life and wellbeing in East Devon's towns and villages



ACTIONS	POTENTIAL WORK PROGRAMMES	TIMESCALE
<p>1.1 Invest in and strengthen our many thriving, often volunteer-run cultural venues and programmes across East Devon</p>	<p>1.1.1 Build post-Covid confidence and capacity for volunteers and community groups in our towns and parishes through training in governance, business planning, digital transformation and fundraising, and reducing carbon impact, as well as training in core creative skills, such as producing live events, interpretation, collections management</p>	SHORT/MEDIUM
	<p>1.1.2 Enhance the quality and appeal of collections, and the sustainability of local museums, through a programme of shared capital investment in display and interpretation</p>	MEDIUM
	<p>1.1.3 Explore the potential of a new network that supports more community asset transfers and sharing of policy support and good practice for village halls and other cultural venues, to ensure their place at the heart of our communities</p>	MEDIUM
<p>1.2 Support and champion volunteering</p>	<p>1.2.1 Celebrate East Devon's volunteers through recognition and rewards</p>	SHORT
	<p>1.2.2 Explore the potential for promoting and diversifying volunteering opportunities through a central portal, such as Volunteer Makers</p>	MEDIUM

SMALL-SCALE PERFORMING ARTS CENTRES

MUSEUMS

EAST DEVON HAS MORE THAN

100

PUBLIC VENUES FOR CULTURE

INCLUDING

VILLAGE HALLS

LIBRARIES

HERITAGE SITES

AN ART GALLERY

THEME 2

PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

OBJECTIVE

Establish East Devon as an innovator and regional beacon of culture-led environmental protection, enhancement and activism



ACTIONS	POTENTIAL WORK PROGRAMMES	TIMESCALE
<p>2.1 Develop a year-round programme that celebrates and connects people with East Devon’s natural environment and inspires them to protect and enhance it – potentially in collaboration with South Somerset</p>	<p>2.1.1 Link with a range of nature, tourism and cultural organisations, and the University of Exeter, to audit/understand the current offer and develop an ambitious year-round programme, connecting culture and nature across the district</p>	SHORT/MEDIUM
	<p>2.1.2 Work with local museums and South West Museums Development to engage in national conversations about the climate crisis and enable displays of natural science and biodiversity collections in East Devon’s museums</p>	MEDIUM
	<p>2.1.3 Invest in initiatives which work closely with communities in creative, innovative ways to connect local people with nature and the challenges we face in preserving it, especially within communities not currently engaging. For example: Tidelines (Exmouth), Sidmouth Seafest, Thelma Hulbert Gallery’s Creative Cabin (touring)</p>	SHORT
<p>2.2 Improve the environmental practices of the district’s cultural festivals to establish them as leaders in sustainable event management</p>	<p>2.2.1 Use Julie’s Bicycle, a recognised tool for monitoring cultural impact, to support EDDC-funded and independent festivals to monitor and improve their environmental performance, leading to a sustainable events guide</p>	SHORT/MEDIUM



THEME 3 CULTURAL TOURISM

OBJECTIVE

Establish new cultural products, partnerships and promotional activity to mutually benefit and grow the creative and visit or economies



ACTIONS	POTENTIAL WORK PROGRAMMES	TIMESCALE
<p>3.1 Test new collaborations to pilot new products that can support growth in sustainable cultural tourism</p>	<p>3.1.1 Linking with the new Tourism Strategy, develop a central ‘what’s on’ hub to inform both the tourism industry and consumers about the local cultural offer</p>	SHORT
	<p>3.1.2 Support new ‘product development’ in the tourism sector to attract visitors beyond the peak season by working with cultural partners to promote art classes, retreats, workshops, links with food, wellbeing, sustainability and nature</p>	MEDIUM
	<p>3.1.3 Invest in cultural visitor attractions that have potential to attract national visitors for a broad season (April-October) and across the district. This could centre around visual arts, via Thelma Hulbert Gallery, Killerton House and Ocean, along with galleries and public art</p>	LONG
<p>3.2 Support and promote festivals and events which bring significant visitor spend and profile to East Devon, building on current strengths</p>	<p>3.2.1 Work with independent promoters and local Destination Marketing Organisations, as well as the in-house events team, to maximise impact from notable events and festivals, with particular focus on those that take place in June/early July and September/October (i.e. beyond the peak tourism season)</p>	MEDIUM

15

FESTIVALS
A YEAR

EAST DEVON HAS AT LEAST 15 FESTIVALS EACH YEAR, INCLUDING FLAGSHIP SUMMER EVENTS SUCH AS SIDMOUTH FOLK FESTIVAL AND BEAUTIFUL DAYS

THEME 4

CREATIVE ENTERPRISE AND SKILLS

OBJECTIVE

Build inspiring talent development pathways for the current and next generation of East Devon creatives



ACTIONS	POTENTIAL WORK PROGRAMMES	TIMESCALE
<p>4.1 Develop opportunities for young people to learn and apply creative and cultural skills in East Devon</p>	<p>4.1.1 Explore the concept of a creative digital skills hub for films, TV and gaming – possibly linked to the Future Skills Centre run by Exeter College</p>	MEDIUM/LONG
	<p>4.1.2 Join Devon Local Cultural Education Partnership (LCEP) and/or explore the value in setting up a more localised LCEP to strengthen links between the cultural sector and schools / education providers</p>	SHORT
	<p>4.1.3 Coordinate a programme of paid creative apprenticeships across a range of East Devon cultural organisations, to provide pathways to employment and increase capacity of the local cultural sector</p>	MEDIUM/LONG
	<p>4.1.4 Establish a regular Youth Forum for young creatives and activists to help shape and influence the cultural offer</p>	SHORT
<p>4.2 Utilise empty or underused spaces for creative activities</p>	<p>4.2.1 Run a pilot programme to enable artists and community groups to take meanwhile leases on empty shops, for use as studios, workshops and pop-up galleries</p>	SHORT/MEDIUM
	<p>4.2.2 Invest in co-working, workshop and mixed use spaces to strengthen community infrastructure, especially in new developments, and take advantage of the shift away from commuting and towards local working</p>	MEDIUM/LONG



THEME 5

NEW PLACES FOR CULTURE

OBJECTIVE

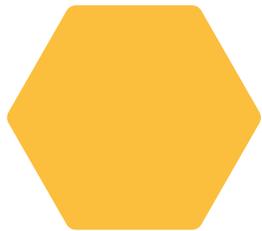
Ensure all East Devon residents, especially children and young people, can experience high quality culture and creativity in their local areas

ACTIONS	POTENTIAL WORK PROGRAMMES	TIMESCALE
5.1 Explore the concept of Exmouth Cultural Quarter as a way to link the town's activities and develop new or improved places and spaces for culture	5.1.1 Link with the Exmouth place-making and masterplan to audit/understand current provision, local needs and opinions to shape a vision and delivery plan for culture in the town	SHORT
	5.1.2 Explore the potential of Exmouth Pavilion as a creative hub for young people	MEDIUM/LONG
5.2 Integrate cultural spaces and opportunities into new housing developments	5.2.1 Work with local residents, Libraries Unlimited and other partners to ensure Cranbrook and other new housing developments have an appropriate, high quality cultural offer co-designed with local residents	MEDIUM
	5.2.2 Lever planning gain to embed new indoor and outdoor cultural spaces for culture in new developments	MEDIUM



43%

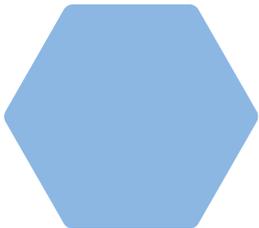
OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS TOLD US THAT NOT HAVING ENOUGH INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT'S ON IS A BIG BARRIER TO TAKING PART IN CULTURE IN EAST DEVON



THEME 6 CONNECTIVITY

OBJECTIVE

Support the sector to connect, work collectively, share best practice and lever investment through greater joint working



ACTIONS	POTENTIAL WORK PROGRAMMES	TIMESCALE
<p>6.1 Resource and promote Arts and Culture East Devon (ACED) as a network, connector and champion of the local creative and cultural sector, working with members to shape its ongoing development</p>	<p>6.1.1 Continue building the ACED network via regular meetings, newsletters, information-sharing and socials</p>	SHORT/MEDIUM
	<p>6.1.2 Convene a steering group to devise a business plan for ACED, reflecting on success to date and exploring how best to democratise its leadership and management, maximise effectiveness and build its role in supporting delivery of this Cultural Strategy</p>	SHORT
	<p>6.1.3 Establish new networks that link with ACED, to provide specialised communities of practice</p>	SHORT/MEDIUM

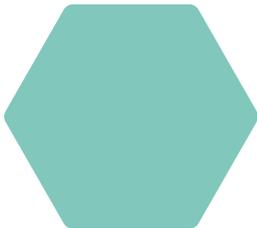


THEME 7 CULTURAL LEADERSHIP

OBJECTIVE

Be ambitious and drive change by bringing together a diverse range of partners to drive forward and advocate for the Cultural Strategy and secure inward investment

ACTIONS	POTENTIAL WORK PROGRAMMES	TIMESCALE
<p>7.1 Provide leadership and stewardship to drive forward the strategy and bring partners on board</p>	<p>7.1.1 Establish a Cultural Compact or other partnership to lead this strategy, including collaborative projects and shared funding bids</p>	SHORT
	<p>7.1.2 Integrate Cultural Strategy Objectives and Actions into wider Council plans, staff work schedules and resource planning to understand what resources are available and where gaps remain</p>	SHORT/MEDIUM
	<p>7.1.3 Invest in a Cultural Producer to provide a central hub for our strategic values, advocacy, communications and development of the strategy, including coordination of the Cultural Compact and ACED network</p>	SHORT/MEDIUM
	<p>7.1.4 Assign a small budget to pay freelancers for their time in strategic leadership roles, such as the Cultural Compact</p>	SHORT

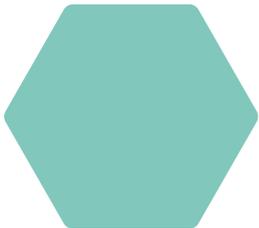


THEME 8

CAPTURE VALUE

OBJECTIVE

Ensure continuous learning and improvement by monitoring and evaluating the change that creativity and culture has on people and place



ACTIONS	POTENTIAL WORK PROGRAMMES	TIMESCALE
8.1 Develop a single evaluation process that captures the social, economic, environmental and health & wellbeing value of culture, enabling advocacy for the sector as a whole	8.1.1 Work with Arts Council England and other regional partners, such as Plymouth or Exeter to explore tools available for measuring impact across East Devon cultural organisations	MEDIUM



NEXT STEPS

The priority is to begin implementing the strategy by putting in place the partnerships and resources required to achieve our ambitions.

This includes bringing together partners from a range of disciplines, both within and beyond East Devon District Council, to set up a Cultural Compact or other similar strategic alliance.

We will also work with the members of the nascent Arts and Culture East Devon (ACED) network to connect artists and practitioners with the potential work programmes that deliver the strategy and which can attract funding - through, for example, bids to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Arts Council England's Cultural Development Fund.

There is a recognition that without identifying additional capacity and resource, the ability to take forward many of the exciting opportunities identified within the Cultural Strategy will be limited.

We will therefore seek to appoint a Cultural Producer who will be a linchpin for coordination, communications, advocacy and fundraising. This role will take forward the Strategy's ambitions and values, act as a conduit and enabler between East Devon District Council's services (Growth, Development & Prosperity, Countryside and Leisure, Property Services, Marketing and Communication and Events) and seek out fundraising and investment opportunities.

The Cultural Producer will be situated within the Thelma Hulbert Gallery / ACED team who will support the postholder to meet deliverables by utilising existing networks, resources and shared expertise in cultural engagement, marketing and programming.

The ACED Network will be developed, operating internally and externally to support fundraising, education and outreach, cultural tourism and partnership building.

Our aim is to have the Cultural Producer in place within the next three months to support strategic funding applications.



PHOTO CREDITS

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PAGES - 7 & 12 - **KYLE BAKER PHOTOGRAPHY**



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