

A Cultural Plan for East Devon DC

2017 – 2022

'Our outstanding culture – an East Devon way of life'



Executive Summary

Our purpose

To demonstrate and raise awareness that culture is at the heart of the Council's vision to maintain, enhance and enjoy an outstanding place for everyone in East Devon.

The Plan sets out a direction of travel for our cultural and related services for the next five years and reflects the Council's current Council Plan 2017-22. The Cultural Plan provides a high level framework for a number of more detailed, service specific plans that underpin the work of those services that contribute to the delivery of cultural services in East Devon.

Following the lead of the Government's Culture White Paper we want to use our outstanding place to see greater participation among our communities who do not benefit from many cultural opportunities. We want cultural activities that can help improve health and wellbeing outcomes, to use our cultural heritage to bring social benefits through boosting our local economy and help provide opportunities for people of all backgrounds to get the most from and enjoy the cultural sectors we support.

We will use this Plan to emphasise our view of culture that includes but goes beyond Art, music, books, theatre, music, museums, historic buildings etc to encompass our outstanding environment. We want to ensure that we value and celebrate our nationally important landscapes, unique marine habitat, accessible beaches and internationally important wildlife as part of our outstanding cultural heritage.

We therefore take a broad view of culture as we have opportunities to organize our 'way of life' and enjoy culture in the outdoors, alongside the benefits of health and wellbeing.

Following the lead of both the Government's White Paper on Culture and how we are currently engaging in delivering this 'broad church' definition of culture in East Devon the focus for our work will be within the following areas:

Our Corporate Ambitions:

1. Enhancing the District's environment:

- To promote better enjoyment and understanding of our historic heritage working with our local communities
- Retain and increase the number of Green Flag awards across our green spaces
- Develop a programme of "outdoor events" that celebrate our outstanding environment
- Continue to support the work of both the East Devon and Blackdown Hill AONB Partnerships to promote their value as nationally important landscapes

- Promote the value of the World Heritage Coast as part of the district's offer to visitors

2. Raising the profile of East Devon as a venue for cultural activities

- Support measures to stimulate our town centre economies through our regeneration work and identifying opportunities to support cultural projects
- Engage proactively with town centre management and commercial operators to widen the cultural entertainment within all our towns especially within the emerging community of Cranbrook.

3. Building local community spirit

- Develop a comprehensive programme of events that celebrate our cultural diversity through cross promotional activities of our Countryside, AONB, Streetscene, Housing and Arts based teams.
- Develop community led initiatives such as the Countryside team's community orchard programme that work with local communities to help understand and care for our cultural heritage

4. Meeting the needs of young people

- Review our play facilities to ensure they are contributing to improved health and wellbeing, an understanding of our natural environment and confidence in areas such as natural play.
- Further develop our work with volunteering and apprenticeships especially identifying opportunities within the cultural and environment sectors to help encourage the next generation of cultural champions.
- Explore the potential for creating new entertainment facilities for young people as well as providing a greater choice of venues for music, dance etc through securing CIL and S106 contributions as well as linking into the Council's review of its assets.

5. Enriching the lives of older people

- Engage with and deliver actions relating to improving the health and wellbeing of older people that are identified within the East Devon Public Health Plan
- Develop the outreach work of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery, Housing and Countryside teams in working with local mental health groups such as the Memory Cafe to provide events and activities that help address this issue.

6. Making better use of resources

- Facilitate better collaboration between the Council's cultural services and partners such as Arts Council England as well as local organisations and museums, galleries etc to broker partnership working
- Continue to support the work of Villages in Action which delivers cultural performances into our rural villages

7. Effective marketing of cultural activities

- Co-ordinate all our social media and PR tools to help bring together a more cohesive EDDC cultural offer joining up our events from the Countryside team, the Thelma Hulbert Gallery and Manor Pavilion Theatre
- Develop more effective promotional campaigns for the cultural activities EDDC supports such as the Manor Pavilion Theatre's summer season, the events that take place in our parks and gardens that will attract more visitors and visitor spend.

Delivering our ambitions

To be able to achieve positive outcomes for our seven ambitions we need to understand what the role of the Council and its wider cultural service providers will be over the lifetime of this Plan:

1. That in future we clearly focus our efforts only on those cultural activities where there are benefits that go beyond mere "entertainment". Thus we will look for clear wider benefits. We will work to an annually agreed programme of projects with clear links to the Corporate Plan, with pre-defined intended outcomes that have been considered and approved by the Council's Arts & Culture Forum.
2. We will not replicate what community groups already deliver. Where there is existing activity we will merely act as advisor, promoter, creator of linkages, and funding finder.
3. We will continue to challenge all our cultural service areas to seek opportunities to grow their income streams, attract more visitors and also clearly demonstrate their social value in areas such as health and wellbeing to ensure that they are becoming more self financing. In line with the Government's Culture White Paper these publically funded services must demonstrate how they transform lives and bring economic benefits to communities.
4. We will seek to link to, and stimulate the local cultural economy (creative industries, and cultural tourism and green tourism) both through specific projects and through acting as an advisor, promoter, creator of linkages and funding finder.
5. We will seek to maximise inward investment into cultural activity.

The progress of achieving our ambitions within the Plan will be kept under review by the Arts & Culture Forum where all those engaged in delivering cultural outcomes will be invited to present their work and be challenged to show how it meets the Council's commitment to culture. This will include not just internal services but also partner organisations such as Villages in Action, Arts Council for England and SW Museums Alliance.



Cultural Plan for East Devon District Council

Our outstanding East Devon

East Devon is undeniably an area of outstanding landscapes and incredible biodiversity which has over time defined and helped shape the culture of our district. The majority of our residents live in our towns and so will derive a lot of their cultural enjoyment from the facilities within their urban setting. The natural environment in East Devon is the backdrop to ensuring people enjoy their lives, where they are healthy, safe and prosperous and where business is able to thrive.

We are privileged to have our entire coastline designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, two thirds of our district is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, we have five European protected sites for habitat and wildlife and an internationally important Estuary. This doesn't include a plethora of County Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves and over 200 Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Our residents tell us that we live in a beautiful part of the UK and this makes it a great place to live and work.

The importance of this outstanding natural environment is reflected in the value of tourism to the area and with a network of high quality accessible recreational trails such as the South West Coast Path and cycleway such as the Exe Trail enabling visitors and local people to enjoy the stunning scenery.

East Devon also has a rich cultural heritage with writers and artists having been inspired by the landscapes and coastline of the area especially during the Victorian era. The legacy of this is evident today in the abundance of practicing resident artists and craft makers. There are also a large number of active local history, amenity and cultural groups' right across the district. East Devon has a diverse mix of festivals and events such as the Sidmouth Folk Week along with country fairs which celebrate our predominately rural way of life. East Devon also has a wide variety of unique cultural customs such as the tar barrels at Ottery St Mary, the Colyford Goose Fayre and the Honiton Hot Pennies, which illustrate the links with this rural way of life that still exists today.

There is also a thriving local food economy bringing £45,147,000p.a into the district (SW Tourism 2008) which has helped to establish East Devon as an area which produces food of the highest quality due in large part to the outstanding quality of our countryside and the traditional farming practices that respect the environment. This in turn is bringing investment into the district with restaurants, farm shops, breweries and wineries that produce and sell local specialities. Also the growth of local farmers markets, street markets and street trading in our high streets and town centres provides an important outlet for our local food producers.

The Council's ambitions are therefore based around these unique characteristics which make an outstanding East Devon and contribute towards the East Devon way of life

CLlr John O'Leary

Culture Champion & Chair of East Devon Arts & Culture Forum

The Value of Culture

This Plan recognises the many ways in which cultural activities can improve the quality of life for everyone in East Devon:

- **Health and well-being** - as people live longer and remain physically and mentally active later into life, cultural activities can make a significant contribution to ensuring good health is enjoyed throughout our lives. Physical exercise, whether through sport or more informal recreation, promotes good physical health in all stages of life from childhood to old age. The growth in East Devon of cycling, water sports and sailing clearly demonstrates how active our local population is in a range of leisure activities. Cultural activities also have a number of psychological and emotional benefits stimulating mental agility, providing companionship and uplifting the spirit
- **Enhancing the environment** – the built and natural environment are integral to our history and wildlife, and together these shape our environment and impact on our quality of life. The enjoyment of cultural activities such as walking and cycling, visiting a playground or playing a round of golf, are all directly influenced by the quality of the environment. Places that are clean, safe and welcoming encourage people to participate in cultural activities.
- **Promoting economic vitality** – cultural activities make a significant contribution to the economy. Tourism in East Devon generates an estimated 7,000 jobs and visitors to the district spend £250 million p.a and 12% of employment is supported by tourism. Participation in cultural activities also generates much economic activity in other sectors, such as transport and parking, food and retail. The work in restoring Mamhead slipway will provide a significant boost in maritime based leisure activities again bringing visitor spend into the local economy.
- **Lifelong learning and personal development** – cultural activities can be enjoyed throughout life in many different ways and at a variety of levels. Museums, galleries and performing arts make a significant contribution to education, help to inform opinions and broaden our understanding of the world. Cultural activities can also enrich our intellectual and social development and enable people to ‘get more out of life’.
- **Strengthening local identity** – recognised excellence in the arts or simply an attractive environment in which to live, work or visit, all contribute to the value we attach to a place. There are many ways in which cultural activities can stimulate a sense of pride in the District and enhance its reputation as a place to be. And when a community values the place where it lives, it will work harder to protect it and ensure the safety of its residents. Furthermore, engaging people in cultural activities who may otherwise be inclined to commit anti social behaviour can in turn lead to increased community safety.

The Value of our environment

Drawing on East Devon’s unique cultural characteristics centred on its outstanding countryside and cultural heritage it is reflected into the importance of our natural economy. The importance of promoting and marketing these “assets” as a destination for visitors both domestically and internationally is shown in the levels of spend into the local economy and the jobs that are supported through tourism activities.

KEY FACTS (South West Tourism data 2012)

650,000	Trips by staying visitors
2,857,000	Staying visitor nights
£136,905,000	Spend by staying visitors
4,213,000	Day visits
£119,522,000	Spend by day visitors
£11,977,000	Other tourism related spend
7,083	Jobs related to tourism spending
12%	Of employment is supported by tourism

This is a powerful reminder of the value of the coast and countryside to the local economy, but perhaps more importantly to the prosperity and vibrancy of East Devon's local economy.

Cultural Plan Ambitions

There are 7 ambitions for the Plan:

1. **Enhancing the District's environment** – the quality of the local environment (and our safe enjoyment of it) is a priority of the Corporate Plan, and visiting parks and local countryside makes the greatest contribution to quality of life in the District. Our built and historic heritage is also valued, and contributes to the community's 'pride of place'.

The Plan does recognise the value of our environment as a cultural asset in itself, as well as a place where we can enjoy leisure activities. It is committed to protecting its intrinsic qualities, and to helping people to enjoy and understand our built and natural heritage. The Plan already includes proposals to promote better understanding and enjoyment of our historic heritage, to achieve 'Green Flag' status for a number of parks, to involve the public in promoting excellence in the design of new buildings and open spaces, and to develop a programme of outdoor events.

Priorities:

- To promote better enjoyment and understanding of our historic heritage working with our local communities
- Retain and increase the number of Green Flag awards across our green spaces
- Develop a programme of "outdoor events" that celebrate our outstanding environment
- Continue to support the work of both the East Devon and Blackdown Hill AONB Partnerships to promote their value as nationally important landscapes

- Promote the value of the World Heritage Coast as part of the district’s offer to visitors

2. **Raising the profile of East Devon as a venue for cultural activities** – this needs to be drawn from the current regeneration programmes in the West End, Seaton and Exmouth which are looking to improve the visitor offer alongside our investment in the Thelma Hulbert Gallery, Exmouth and Manor Pavilion theatres, our Museums and cinemas.

The Plan should therefore support measures to stimulate the economy of our town centres, and propose working with town centre management, commercial operators, community safety partners and others to widen the “cultural entertainment” for people in all our towns.

It is the role of this Plan to help maintain an environment in which culture is valued and can thrive. The Plan needs to be flexible and responsive to opportunities to raise the District’s profile as they arise.

Priorities:

- Support measures to stimulate our town centre economies through our regeneration work and identifying opportunities to support cultural projects
- Engage proactively with town centre management and commercial operators to widen the cultural entertainment within all our towns especially within the emerging community of Cranbrook.

3. **Building local community spirit** – culture has a key role in defining a positive identity for the District that the community wants to associate with. Cultural activities can bring together people from all sections of the local community, irrespective of age, ethnic origin or wealth.

The Plan includes a number of proposals that will help to strengthen community spirit, including the development of a programme of events to celebrate East Devon’s cultural diversity.

Priorities:

- Develop a comprehensive programme of events that celebrate our cultural diversity through cross promotional activities of our Countryside, AONB, Streetscene, Housing and Arts based teams.
- Develop community led initiatives such as the Countryside team’s community orchard programme that work with local communities to help understand and care for our cultural heritage

4. **Meeting the needs of young people** – the Plan identifies culture as a vital ingredient in the development of children and young people, and proposes a range of measures that may contribute to their health, well being and social development, and the contribution young people can make to the community.

The Plan could have a commitment to reviewing the provision of play and recreational facilities, to further develop opportunities for volunteering, developing employment skills through apprenticeships and to explore the potential for the creation of new entertainment facilities for

young people. In addition, the Plan recognises need for the development of a greater choice of venues for rehearsal and performance of live music, comedy and dance.

Priorities:

- Review our play facilities to ensure they are contributing to improved health and wellbeing, an understanding of our natural environment and confidence in areas such as natural play.
- Further develop our work with volunteering and apprenticeships especially identifying opportunities within the cultural and environment sectors to help encourage the next generation of cultural champions.
- Explore the potential for creating new entertainment facilities for young people as well as providing a greater choice of venues for music, dance etc through securing CIL and S106 contributions as well as linking into the Council's review of its assets.

5. **Enriching the lives of older people** – participation in cultural activities can help older people to remain physically fit and healthy and to combat the loneliness and isolation that are often a consequence of older age. The East Devon Public Health Plan identifies personal health and well-being as a priority, and enabling older people to stay fit and healthy which could be through cultural activities. A number of measures could be proposed that will contribute to the social inclusion of older people and promote health and well-being in later life. In addition there is an opportunity to work more closely with other service providers in developing new opportunities for older people to participate in cultural activities through the Public Health Plan.

Priorities:

- Engage with and deliver actions relating to improving the health and wellbeing of older people that are identified within the East Devon Public Health Plan
- Develop the outreach work of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery, Housing and Countryside teams in working with local mental health groups such as the Memory Cafe to provide events and activities that help address this issue.

6. **Making better use of resources** – the budgetary challenges being faced by the public sector (local government, Arts Council etc) will mean the need for much closer working between partners which offers the opportunity to achieve more through sharing resources. This may take the form of expertise or facilities (such as community centres, village halls, school sites etc), and the Plan makes a number of proposals for better use of resources to benefit local cultural provision. Further collaborative work will provide new opportunities for better use of existing resources.

Priorities:

- Facilitate better collaboration between the Council's cultural services and partners such as Arts Council England as well as local organisations and museums, galleries etc to broker partnership working
- Continue to support the work of Villages in Action which delivers cultural performances into our rural villages

7. **Effective marketing of cultural activities** – East Devon is fortunate in having a rich and varied cultural life, and this Plan will aim to build on the strong foundations that exist. However, there are a number of barriers to take-up and participation in cultural activities that can prevent everybody enjoying the same opportunities for cultural activities. Some barriers are more difficult to overcome than others (for example, lack of public transport operating on some routes late in the evenings particularly in rural areas), but one of the most common barriers relates to low awareness of events, services and activities.

Priorities:

- Co-ordinate all our social media and PR tools to help bring together a more cohesive EDDC cultural offer joining up our events from the Countryside team, the Thelma Hulbert Gallery and Manor Pavilion Theatre
- Develop more effective promotional campaigns for the cultural activities EDDC supports such as the Manor Pavilion Theatre’s summer season, the events that take place in our parks and gardens that will attract more visitors and visitor spend.

This Plan is committed to improving the ways in which information is provided to the community and visitors through better co-ordination of information. The use of social media and joining up programmes of events and activities across the Council’s cultural service providers is a high priority within the Plan.

Delivering our Cultural Ambitions

To be able to deliver our Ambitions within the Plan we will need to identify existing corporate programmes and initiatives that can draw on resources to help facilitate agreed cultural outcomes. The Council has four main delivery vehicles to either deliver cultural activities directly or through being a broker and enabler working within a wider partnership.

1. Regeneration and the growth agenda

East Devon is going through exciting and challenging times. The Council is presented with multiple opportunities to create hubs for cultural development. They include:

- Exmouth regeneration
- Seaton regeneration and the Seaton Jurassic centre
- Axminster regeneration
- Creation of a new town at Cranbrook and the Growth Point area
- Ongoing opportunities arising from the Jurassic Coast, World Heritage designation
- Seaton Wetlands project
- Regeneration of Port Royal in Sidmouth

These large scale programmes of regeneration activity all provide the opportunity to use cultural place making to help shape the development of the community such as Cranbrook. They also present the opportunity to unlock significant amounts of funding through the Heritage Lottery Fund, Coastal Community Fund etc to support the construction and running of cultural venues.

2. Cultural service providers

The Council's broad view of culture means that there are a significant number of services delivering cultural outcomes either directly or through working in partnership with local communities. The key service areas are: Led, Thelma Hulbert Gallery, Manor Pavilion theatre, Community Development team, Countryside team, Parks & Gardens team, Regeneration team, Growth Point team, East Devon and Blackdown Hills AONB teams. Each area has a service plan that identifies outcomes which are helping to deliver the ambitions within the Plan.

The work programmes of these teams are delivering:

- Play projects being undertaken through the district
- Investment into our leisure facilities at Exmouth
- Targeting Making it Local funds into development of rural tourism projects
- Delivering outreach programmes with local mental health groups and socially disadvantaged groups in communities that have least access to our cultural work;
- Programme of outdoor classroom activities that engage all our school children in the outstanding natural environment of the district;
- Running a programme of outdoor events that use our outstanding green spaces to celebrate our cultural heritage and engage as wider audience base as possible;
- Cultural heritage programmes being delivered by the East Devon and Blackdown Hills AONB Partnerships that work directly with local communities such as the Blackdown Hill's Natural Futures project and East Devon AONB's Legacy to Landscape project.

Focusing on the next 12 months the Service Plans of the wider cultural service providers already target:

- The continued formation of Cranbrook Country Park and delivering the Healthy New Town programme
- Delivering the East Devon Public Health Plan through cross service working
- The continued enhancements of the external environment at the Thelma Hulbert Gallery
- Expanding the experiential offer at Seaton Wetlands for its visitors
- Making the new Seaton Jurassic visitor centre the hub for sustainable tourism in Seaton
- Delivering a range of new outreach projects for physical activity, mental health and wellbeing targeting our most socially deprived communities (Led, Housing & Countryside)

Maximising the potential of the natural assets of East Devon provides innovative opportunities for uplifting tourism in the District.

3. Planning Policy and Delivery Process

Currently, the Council has not been able to maximize cultural benefits through the planning process. This Plan provides a means for ensuring that the new system will deliver improvements. A priority over the forthcoming months will be to develop a framework that:

- Secures contributions through the Community Infrastructure Levy towards funding cultural projects
- Achieves more enhancements in the public realm
- Realises improvements in design through a better understanding of the role of culture
- Firmly embeds a sense of place and cultural benefits within the Local Plan process

This work links in closely with the role of the Council's Asset Management Forum.

4. Arts & Culture Forum

In 2012 the Council ran an Arts & Culture Task and Finish Forum to help direct the future of culture and this set a useful direction that was adopted by the Council. This led to the creation of an East Devon Arts & Culture Forum which provides a strategic steer for the Council's work in all areas of cultural development with internal services and our wider partnerships, so vital to realizing the ambitions in this Plan.

The Forum also holds to account our partners such as the Arts Council Villages in Action and SW Museums Alliance to ensure that our funding is supporting agreed outcomes that help deliver our Cultural Plan.

Implementing our Ambitions

This Plan will only make a difference to the cultural life of the District if it is able to put ideas into action. The Cultural Plan sets out ways in which the issues that have been identified can be addressed. Some of these actions can be achieved within a relatively short term whilst others require a longer-term commitment. The Plan recognises that the Council acting alone will not achieve this, and the commitment of many different organisations working together is vital to the success of achieving our ambitions. The Plan seeks to build these partnerships by identifying the areas of common interest shared by different organisations expressed via links with other strategies and plans.

The Plan acknowledges that little can be achieved without the investment of resources - this may be through direct financial investment or grant aid, or may be simply a commitment of people's time or shared knowledge and expertise. Whatever the nature of the resources required, it is almost always the case that pooling resources through partnership working can achieve more. The Council's Procurement Plan sets out the principles and policies that guide the Council in its procurement of goods and services, and advocates a number of approaches, including the use of effective partnerships and working with neighbouring authorities. Therefore, the Council will use the full range of approaches to secure the resources necessary to implement the Plan and its ambitions.

The success of the Plan will be assessed by a number of measures. Progress towards achieving these will be monitored and reported through annual Service Plans of those Services actively engaged in delivering our cultural ambitions and the performance monitoring framework adopted by the Council. This will provide the Arts & Culture Forum the opportunity to review the effectiveness of the Plan and amend it in the light of changing circumstances. This will enable the Plan to remain relevant throughout its lifespan. This commitment to a rolling review will be brought alongside the annual review of the East Devon Public Health Plan to ensure widespread ownership of the Plan.

There is no doubt that Councils are not mandatorily required to deliver cultural activity though this is becoming more overtly expected.

Culture is a vital part of our way of life that contributes towards who we are and our quality of life. This Plan recognises the value of culture in our everyday lives, and identifies ways in which we can work with partners to improve the cultural experience for residents and visitors to our outstanding area.

