**East Devon District Council are commissioning a Culture Strategy**

**East Devon District Council / Arts &. Culture East Devon (ACED)**

**Brief for the development of a cultural strategy for East Devon**

**Summary**

It is an exciting time for culture in East Devon. Underpinned by a progressive, forward-thinking Council, arts and culture are spearheading the district’s economic and social recovery while leading change in response to climate emergency and growing inequality.

We now wish to consolidate significant recent achievements and maximise culture’s contribution to East Devon’s future wellbeing, wealth and sustainability, by creating a collaboratively agreed 10-year strategy across multiple public, community, statutory and non-statutory partners.

**About East Devon**

The population of East Devon has an older than average age profile. The population is increasing and there is net inward migration from other parts of the UK. The biggest age group moving in is 25-44 year-olds and the largest group moving out is 16-24 year olds.

Average household incomes are above the Devon average but below the England average[[1]](#footnote-2). Overall, the district is relatively well-off and is in the 40% least deprived districts nationally. Crime levels are low and average life expectancy high.

86% of employment is in the services industry including retail, hospitality and health. Qualification levels are high and, prior to the pandemic, unemployment levels were low. There are high numbers of SMEs, microbusinesses and self-employed people.

Two thirds of East Devon District falls within designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Car ownership is high and there is a large out flow of workers leaving the district to work in places such as Exeter, Mid Devon and South Somerset. Exeter International Airport, the main airport for Devon and Cornwall, is in the district but has been adversely impacted by the pandemic, and the collapse of FlyBe.

Levels of home ownership are high with many houses in the three most expensive council tax bands. With high house prices and low wages, affordability of homes is an issue.

East Devon District Council has three priorities for the 2021-23 period:

1. Better homes and communities for all
2. Greener East Devon
3. A resilient economy

We believe that culture, arts and creativity have a central role to play in each of these. We want our new cultural strategy to explore, plan and drive culture’s contribution to:

**Better homes and communities for all**

* Improving the quality of our homes, neighbourhoods and communities, including our new social housing, making them safe and attractive places to live that promote individual and community wellbeing and quality of life
* Encouraging and empowering communities, including our council tenants, to play a strong role in neighbourhood planning and Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 decisions
* Improving our health, wellbeing and quality of life through a vibrant cultural offer and exciting creative participation opportunities for everyone
* Working with town and parish councils to protect and enhance community spaces

**Greener East Devon**

* Maximising the value of arts and culture as a response to climate change, a builder of community resilience and a driver of change
* Complementing, emphasizing and protecting the natural capital of East Devon’s environment
* Promoting viable, sustainable, high quality local communities and neighbourhoods as part of the Local Plan
* Protecting and enhancing our built heritage
* Promoting and enhancing public space and physical community assets

**A resilient economy**

* Finding new ways to develop high streets and town centres as sustainable multipurpose spaces
* Growing the range and quality of employment and self-employment opportunities, including the development of ‘creative clusters’
* Promoting East Devon as a great place to work
* Partnering in major bids for income and inward investment

**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 or tourism service within the Council and it is Thelma Hulbert Gallery, Wild East Devon and the AONBs, along with our Economic Development team, 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**

**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, but not limited to 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 must do**

The strategy *process* must:

* 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) must 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 EDDC 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

Note that the commissioners have limited capacity to manage the logistics of the cultural strategy process and associated consultation. Time costs for management and coordination must be included in the budget. 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.

**Budget available**

A breakdown of all costs must be included. These costs should clearly indicate a rate per day and the number of days required to complete the project broken down against the objectives. Costs should be inclusive of all anticipated expenses.

An overall maximum budget of £25,000 inclusive of VAT has been set for this project and award of the tender will be based on an evaluation taking into account the cost of the proposal along with the technical capability, previous experience and proposed methodology for the work.

**Payment**

The consultancy fee will be payable during the Council’s 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial year. The invoices must be sent to Charlie Plowden, Service Lead – Countryside & Leisure as contract lead before payment is made. All purchase orders will be processed through the Council’s e-procurement system and invoices need to be itemised and not shown as a “lump sum”. The invoices need to be created in PDF format and sent to [cplowden@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:cplowden@eastdevon.gov.uk)

**Indicative timetable**

Deadline for receipt of tenders – Noon 18th January 2022

Interviews – 25th January 2022

Contract starts – 31st January 2022

Complete draft strategy – 31st May 2022

Final strategy presented – 30th June 2022

Strategy formally adopted by all partners including East Devon District Council – 30th June 2022

**Contact details:**

Charlie Plowden, Service Lead – Countryside & Leisure

[cplowden@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:cplowden@eastdevon.gov.uk)

1. 2017 figures [↑](#footnote-ref-2)