



North Devon Council

Report Date: 4/7/22

Topic: Northern Devon Culture Strategy 2022-2027

Report by: Museum Manager

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This paper introduces “Flourishing Culture” the draft Northern Devon Culture Strategy prepared by Consultants Things Made Public with Arts Council funding for North Devon and Torrington District Councils.
- 1.2. Flourishing Culture has been developed for the district councils of North Devon and Torrington as a vision and action plan for the development of the cultural sector over the next 5 years.
- 1.3. This is the final draft, and final adjustments are being made in consultation with Torrington District Council. The first draft was presented to Northern Devon Futures on 25th April 2022.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. The committee notes the Culture Strategy currently at final draft stage.
- 2.2. The committee delegates the power to approve the final Strategy to the Head of Place, Property and Regeneration in consultation with the Leader and Lead member for Economic Development and Strategic planning policy, following the conclusion of discussions with Torrington District Council.
- 2.3. The Committee endorses the creation of a Northern Devon Cultural Partnership to support the delivery of this Strategy.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. Adoption of a Culture Strategy is a precondition for application to certain Arts Council funding streams.
- 3.2. The Culture strategy is now at final draft stage and nearing completion. In order for its adoption to coincide with funding opportunities, it is requested that this be delegated to officers following receipt of final amendments.
- 3.3. When delegating the adoption of the final draft this endorses the creation of a Northern Devon Cultural Partnership to work in close partnership with Arts Council England to ensure that there is a clear delivery plan for this Strategy.
- 3.4. North Devon’s status as an Arts Council Priority Place and Torrington as a Levelling Up Culture Priority Place mean that now is the right time to be seeking funding for culture.
- 3.5. We are currently working on an application to Arts Council’s Cultural Development Fund, with a submission date for EOI of 29th July.
- 3.6. We are considering an additional application to Arts Council’s Place Partnership Fund.

4. REPORT

4.1. The strategy has been developed in line with North Devon Council and Torridge Council policies and in collaboration with stakeholders from across the cultural sector as well as the environment, business, community and education sectors and the general public. It sets out the value that culture brings to Northern Devon, the aspiration for what it could be and a set of priorities for raising the ambition, sustainability and impact of culture in all its forms in Northern Devon.

4.2. VISION & THEMES. The vision created, based on consultation with over 900 people and consideration of our area's cultural ecology and special qualities, is as follows:

In the next 5 years, Northern Devon will be locally, nationally and internationally recognised as a place where creativity thrives in symbiosis with its communities and landscapes.

Northern Devon will be a place where all forms of culture are nurtured and celebrated.

Our region's creativity, rooted in our identity, heritage and environment, will be as breathtaking as our beaches, wild like our seas and as divergent our landscapes..

The expressions of our culture will be reflective of all that live here, honouring our past traditions, whilst creating a platform for our dreams of the future.

It will be a place where creativity thrives, where all voices are heard and where communities use culture as a vehicle for change and action.

4.3. Achieving a vision of thriving creativity and culture across the region will require building on the strengths and addressing the challenges of Northern Devon's cultural landscape. To achieve this the Culture Strategy for Northern Devon focuses on **2 main themes**:

Culture – Helping Places Thrive takes inspiration from the region's landscape to support a cultural offer that is as unique, diverse, celebrated and generous as its natural surroundings. This theme explores culture that is expressive of place, connects people to where they live, is protective of the environment and is distributed across the whole region. It recognises the built heritage of our towns and the need to support their role as the beating heart of cultural activity.

Culture – Helping People Blossom builds on a long history of culture passing between people in Northern Devon, from skills being shared through the generations, to ideas travelling the world through trade. This theme

explores how everyone in Northern Devon has opportunities to connect with one another, develop their creative potential, increase their mental wellbeing and experience great culture.

4.4. The themes are further developed into a series of priorities and suggested actions, supported by case studies from other parts of the UK and abroad. These include a focus on outdoor arts and festivals, digital and community activity, protecting the environment, talent development, national and international connections and improving visibility.

4.5. Recognising the particular importance for culture of Northern Devon's towns as hubs of activity that radiate out and mutually support culture across the region, the strategy sets out **3 Steps** for enhancing culture in town centres.

Cultural Planning - Integrating culture into visions and plans for town centres
Public Realm - Maximising the potential for culture in the public realm of town centres
Cultural Infrastructure - Leveraging temporary and long term physical spaces for cultural use

4.6. The Strategy recommends that these steps are achieved by establishing a Town Team for Culture in Barnstaple, Bideford and Ilfracombe. It identifies Ilfracombe as the place with the greatest potential to benefit from cultural investment through this process.

4.7. In Barnstaple a Culture Team has already been established as part of Future High Streets. The Strategy supports an application to the Cultural Development Fund to support the creation and delivery of a more detailed Culture Plan for Barnstaple, and work on this is now in progress.

4.8. GOALS: The Strategy identifies measurable goals to be achieved over the next 5 years:

- Increase the number of people attending more than 3 arts and culture events per year
- Increase the number of people participating in more than 3 arts and culture events per year
- Reduce the number of people taking part in no arts and culture activity per year
- Increase the number of people actively participating in creative activity
- Increase the number of people in rural locations accessing high quality arts and culture
- Increase the number of people in deprived areas accessing high quality arts and culture
- Increase the diversity of people accessing high quality arts and

culture

- Increase the number of NPO organisations regularly delivering work in Northern Devon
- Increase the average level of per head funding from ACE and NLHF
- Increase the proportion of creative industry employment in Northern Devon
- Increase the number of artists, makers and creative businesses accessing business support
- Increase the total floorspace of creative workspaces
- Increase the number of young people represented on cultural boards and decision making bodies
- Increase the number of young people taking arts and design subjects at A-Level or further education
- Increase the number of followers of Northern Devon cultural organisations on social media
- Lower the collective carbon footprint of board organisations of the Northern Devon Cultural Partnership
- Increase the number of national and international organisations working in partnership with Northern Devon

4.9. DELIVERY: The Strategy identifies a number of potential funding streams for achieving these goals, while recognising that delivery will depend on a cross-sectoral approach, not local authorities alone.

4.10. It recommends the creation of a Northern Devon Cultural Partnership to work in close partnership with Arts Council England and sets out a suggested process.

4.11. We anticipate that the Partnership will work closely with Northern Devon Futures and would likely include specific sub-groups working in the areas of Culture & Environment and Culture & Education, and Culture & Health.

4.12. Many potential partners have already been engaged in the creation of the Strategy but building a balanced and agile partnership may be a long process.

4.13. Some Cultural Partnerships (e.g. Exeter Culture, Torbay Culture) act independently while being hosted by an existing organisation. Others find that a separate legal identity is beneficial (e.g. Plymouth Culture)

4.14. After adoption of the Strategy by both Councils there will be a public launch event, inviting participation in the Cultural Partnership.

4.15. The Cultural partnership will meet quarterly in the first instance, but will be self-directed.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. Support for the quarterly Cultural Partnership meetings will be provided by the museum manager
- 5.2. Funding applications will be submitted to the Cultural Development Fund to deliver the Strategy in Barnstaple

6. EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

- 6.1. Please detail if there are/are not any equalities implications anticipated as a result of this report. If so, please complete the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Summary form available on Insite and email to the Corporate and Community Services Team at equality@northdevon.gov.uk.
- 6.2. No negative impacts identified.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Please undertake an Environmental Assessment and complete the checklist (EAC) form available on Insite. If there are no environmental implications arising from your proposals please state that there are none. If after completion of the assessment there are environmental implications please provide a brief summary. If you require any further information please contact the Sustainability and Climate Change Officer. Email completed EACs to donna.sibley@torridge.gov.uk

No negative impacts identified. The strategy includes a target to “Lower the collective carbon footprint of board organisations of the Northern Devon Cultural Partnership”

8. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 8.1. What impact, positive or negative, does the subject of this report have on:
 - 8.1.1. The commercialisation agenda: The strategy will guide the Barnstaple Culture plan, and Cultural Development Fund application which will support cultural uses of NDC assets in the Town Centre, including the cultural workspaces at Boutport Street and the Pannier Market
 - 8.1.2. Improving customer focus: The report recommends setting up a new Cultural Partnership for closer working with charitable, commercial and community groups for the benefit of our local area

Regeneration or economic development: The strategy sets out a focus on supporting the cultural economy, with specific targets for increasing employment and floorspace in this sector, as well as increasing external investment.



9. CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

- 9.1. Article of Part 3 Annex 1 paragraph:1(f)
- 9.2. Referred or delegated power? Delegated

10. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

- 10.1.1.1. This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1.1.1. The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Flourishing Culture, the Northern Devon Culture Strategy (The background papers are available for inspection and kept by the author of the report).

12. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

The author (below) confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers: Alison Mills, Museum Manager