

Culture theme

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1. Better integration of cultural provision and delivery across Devon

Why was the high level strategic issue chosen? (using evidence base and theme lead's expertise on subject area)

The opportunity for people to participate in cultural opportunities in Devon is being adversely affected by the fragmented nature of service provision and delivery across the county.

Examples of fragmentation include:

- Different sectors (e.g. sport, arts, and heritage) have tended to develop in distinct ways within the varying remits of their national and regional agendas (e.g. through Sport England, Arts Council England, English Heritage).
- The provision of many cultural services is not a statutory requirement for local authorities. As a result, councils in Devon have taken different approaches to promoting culture and service delivery in some areas has come under pressure.
- Although there are some strong county partnerships for specific cultural activities (e.g. the new Active Devon Partnership), there are currently no robust cultural partnerships in Devon that cover the breadth of the cultural sector at the county level.
- There remains much to be done to bring together professional, private, community and voluntary interests within the cultural sector. Devon has a large number of very small cultural service providers (e.g. in the creative industries).
- Information about cultural opportunities is scattered among different sources and databases. This makes it more difficult for people to easily access information across the cultural sector.

Why the particular contributory (linked) issues have been chosen? (using the evidence base and the theme leads' expertise on their subject areas)

- Children & Young People – very strong links to the children's agenda through e.g. young cultural creators; extended schools; and sport and recreation.
- Economy – very strong links to creative industries and the skills agenda; also to community regeneration.
- Energy – provision of local cultural opportunities can reduce need to travel.
- Environment – direct overlap between culture and environment through e.g. conservation of protected landscapes and access to the countryside. Strong links to accessibility issues.

- Health – very strong links to achieving mental and physical well-being among all age groups.
- Housing – public realm and design, which fall within the cultural sector, is key to quality housing and sustainable development
- Older People – strong links with happiness, active lifestyles, use of leisure time and volunteering.
- Strong Communities – very strong links with diversity, inclusiveness, faith groups and the value communities place on a ‘sense of place’.

How the findings of the *Evidence Base Theme Reports, Check For sensitivity to equality* has informed the issue

The report has highlighted the potential for cultural initiatives to provide an important opportunity for communicating about equality and in offering positive experiences, especially for vulnerable people. It has emphasised the importance of culture as a driver of community development and social inclusion, breaking down barriers and prejudice as well as exploring local distinctiveness. The links between culture and the stronger communities theme are particular important as is the need to take account of the needs of people in rural communities.

How the contributions made during the public consultation of the *evidence base have been integrated within/dealt with?*

Five key issues raised in the consultation are:

- the part that faith communities play in the cultural life of the county, especially in the many rural communities of Devon.
- The need to support cultural opportunities that are coming under threat. The recent decision by the Government to divert over £600m of lottery funding from arts, heritage and sport to the Olympics will have a direct effect on future provision in Devon.
- The potential that the creative industries represent for the economic growth of Devon and for the promotion of the Devon ‘brand’.
- The importance of cultural providers having a joint cultural development plan with shared priorities.
- The need to provide cultural facilities for people in new developments in Devon.