

Business Plan Outline
April 2006 – March 2007

Introduction

Living East is the cultural consortium for the East of England and, as such, is the leading advocate for culture in the region. We define culture in its broadest sense, including arts, heritage, museums, archives, tourism, libraries, sport and the creative industries.

Living East's membership comprises representatives from Arts Council England, East; the East of England Tourist Board; English Heritage, Eastern Region; the Heritage Lottery Fund; East of England Museums, Libraries and Archives Council; Screen East and Sport England, East as well as independently appointed board members.

As a consortium we work together as a combined voice for culture in the region.

Vision

Culture should be embedded in the region's future, as culture improves the quality of life of everyone and has a significant impact on the social and economic prospects of the region.

Aim

Our aim is to create a shared voice for the cultural sector in the region. We add value to the work of key cultural and other strategic regional organisations by making connections between them, so that the sum is greater than the parts.

Strategic Objectives

Living East has the strategic overview for culture in the region. We will deliver this by focussing on the following four areas:

- Cultural Planning
- Cultural Intelligence
- Cultural Advocacy
- Culture in Action

1 Cultural Planning

Living East works to ensure that the cultural agenda is embedded within wider policy development processes. It is our broad aim to establish a co-ordinated presence for the cultural sector at the core of regional thinking. We will do this by fostering deeper relationships with regional partners and by continuing to influence the shape and content of important regional strategies and plans.

We are also charged by DCMS to provide an assessment of overall progress towards the delivery of the regional cultural strategy and identify the key regional priorities for the sector. We will carry out our planning role in the following ways:

- Produce a new cultural strategy and action plan through consultation with cultural agencies, other members and key regional partners. This is the RCC's main priority over the coming year
- Aim to get culture included in the long-term planning for the growth and regeneration areas in the region by working closely with local Delivery Vehicles
- Encourage a strategic approach to embedding culture in local authority planning, for example by identifying and disseminating examples of best practice
- Continue to formulate a co-ordinated response to regional strategies and plans
- Agree joint priorities with EEDA, EERA and the Government Office
- Continue to develop our working relationship with other key partners

2 Cultural Intelligence

The Regional Cultural Consortium is required by DCMS to co-ordinate and present the collection of data and intelligence on the cultural sectors. To prepare for this last year Living East commissioned an audit and options analysis. This year Living East will:

- Establish baselines to measure the impact of the cultural strategy
- Add cultural research to the regional observatory
- Develop an area of the cultural observatory that will provide information on cultural research, best practice and provide relevant links to other cultural observatories
- Convene research network meetings every six months
- Identify if there are any opportunities for joint commissioning of research
- Consider options for how this work could be taken forward and seek resources
- Work with Regional Cultural Consortium Research Network on coordinating and getting greatest value from RCC research work
- Feed into national research committee with DCMS via RCC reps

3 Cultural Advocacy

Advocacy is at the heart of all our activity. Living East is charged by DCMS to be a leading advocate for the role of culture, promoting the success and sustainability of initiatives to increase prosperity and quality of life. We are ideally placed to make the case for culture in the East of England and to support our members to do the same. We firmly believe that culture has the capacity to transform people and places. It is also what makes the East of England distinct as a region and we are keen to work with our members to

promote the unique image, identity and diversity of the region, both within a national and international context. We will carry out this core role in the following ways:

- Develop a 'core script for culture' in tandem with the revision of the cultural strategy
- Implement our communications strategy, using the new cultural strategy as our main advocacy tool
- Celebrate and disseminate best practice and case studies from, and for, our members
- Influence opinion formers and decision-making audiences, for example government departments
- Advocate the value of culture to local authorities and work with the Government Office and DCMS to encourage the inclusion of culture in local area agreements and local strategic partnerships
- Work with partners to raise the profile of the region, both nationally and internationally

4 Culture in Action

Culture has the capacity to transform people and places. Living East highlights the role of culture in regional economic and social regeneration, promoting the success and sustainability of initiatives to increase prosperity and quality of life. We focus our activity on areas that have been identified as regional priorities in the cultural strategy:

- Growth & Regeneration
- Creative economy
- Cultural Tourism
- Olympics

In addition there is some work left to be completed on areas of priority from last year's business plan, ie skills and Europe.

4.1 Growth & Regeneration

Living East is working to ensure that culture is recognised as a key component in the development of the three growth areas in the East of England (Thames Gateway South Essex, the M11 corridor and Luton/Bedfordshire aspect of the Milton Keynes South Midlands growth area) and in the wider regeneration areas:

- Influence decision makers as to the importance of cultural infrastructure
- Making culture facilities and cultural provision part of the key drivers of the growth area strategy
- Ensuring culture is included in the regeneration plans of local delivery vehicles
- Advocating for culture to be embedded in planning across the region
- Encourage inter-regional dialogue across all the growth areas

- Work with partners from SE and East Midlands to develop a cultural needs assessment toolkit (as part of the Invest to Save project work)

4.2 Creative Economy

Get the value of the creative economy in the region recognised by doing the following:

- Implement Creative Industries Strategy by taking on an advocacy role with key regional partners
- Support the DCMS in their delivery of the Creative Economy Programme
- Work to ensure that the skills needs of the cultural sector are taken account of by decision makers
- Raising awareness of the importance of creativity

4.3 Cultural Tourism

We will support the cultural agencies, particularly EEDA and EETB, in getting the most from the region's tourism assets:

- Link tourism opportunities more closely with the development of the cultural offer in the region
- Support the development of skills of people in the tourism, leisure and heritage sectors

4.4 Olympics

Establish culture as an essential part of the national and regional Olympic offer:

- Continue membership of the Nations and Regions East Board and Partnership Groups
- Work on the regional economic impact study of the Olympics with EEDA and Sport East
- Take part in the development of a regional culture theme group for the board and Partnership Groups
- Co-ordinate cultural input into the London 2012 Olympics

4.5 Skills

We will aim to attract additional resource to this area so that we can do the following:

- Continue to co-ordinate and support the Cultural Sector Skills & Learning Group (CSSLG) as a regional cultural skills network
- Review the skills development work undertaken for the sector
- Forge links with the emerging cultural Sector Skills councils
- Work with partners to develop a regional cultural leadership network

4.6 Europe

We will aim to attract additional resource to this area so that we can do the following:

- Review opportunities for attracting new forms of European funding into the sector
- Influence the next round of EU structural funds so that they have a cultural component

5 Organisational priorities

In 2006-07 we will work to:

- Continue to make the best use of our board
- Strengthen the position of Living East as a part of the DCMS family of NDPBs
- Continue to develop the team at Living East