

HighTide Strategic Plan 2023-26

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Contents

Executive Summary	2
Purpose of this Strategic Plan	3
History of HighTide	4
About HighTide	4
Company Timeline	4
New Mission, Vision and Values	6
SWOT analysis	8
Strategic Plan 2023-26	12
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	12
Artistic Goals	13
A. Creative Writing in the Community	13
B. Writer Development	16
C. Productions	23
D. Company Impact on Climate-Positive Theatre-Making	31
Audiences: People and Place	36
Our Place	36
Our Audiences	38
Monitoring and Evaluating Audience Data	42
Strengthening our Marketing and Communications	43
Organisational	47
Staff	47
Board and Governance	50
Our Partners	53
Financial	56
HighTide Budget 23-26	56
Financial Management	57
Fundraising	57
Earned Income	61
Ethics	63
Monitoring and Evaluation of the Strategic Plan	64
Appendices	65

Executive Summary

HighTide has been a thriving new writing theatre company since it was founded in 2007. The period of 2023–26 brings with it many amazing opportunities for us, but within a challenging economic context. This is not a time to hold back or shrink. Rather, this is a time for a charity like **HighTide to deepen our artistic impact and increase our social value**. This Strategic Plan illustrates how we hope to do that.

In 2023–26, we will:

- Refocus our **artistic mission** to become a writer-centred theatre company, dedicated to playwrights in the East of England. **Inclusivity** will be at the heart of what we do.
- Stage **exceptional new plays**, written by the region's most exciting new playwrights. For the first time in our history, we will tour them across all four counties of the East - into theatres and community spaces alike - bringing inspiring stories to a far wider range of audiences.
- Create a **Creative Writing in the Community** strand, aiming to bridge the literacy gap and foster a love of reading and writing in targeted primary schools in the Lowestoft area. Called *Story Worlds*, this will help meet our long-term vision of boosting confidence, wellbeing and employability in our home region.
- Create a new **Writer Development** strand, including:
 - Playwrights East: a region-wide playwright development network. It will support our 2030 vision of the East of England as a recognised seedbed of playwriting talent.
 - The new HighTide Writers Group: each year selecting - and paying - six exceptional playwrights to deepen their craft and create meaningful steps into the professional industry.
- Ambitiously represent Arts Council England - our major funder's - **Investment Principles** across all our work.
- Set out a bold vision to be a **Net Zero theatre company by 2030** following a robust Decarbonisation Action Plan, and leading our industry in the new artistic practice of Climate Dramaturgy.
- Reshape our **staff structure and Board** to support this new mission.
- Set out a new and **resilient financial model**, enabling us all to look forward with conviction:
 - Intentionally commissioning a programme that balances both 1. strong audience appeal (and therefore box office potential) and 2. inspiring, challenging and powerful stories.
 - Doubling down on our fundraising, with a new, dedicated Development Manager; a new Advisory Council; a new CEO with a background in arts fundraising; and a Case for Support driven by a new artistic mission which aligns with public and private funders' priorities.

Purpose of this Strategic Plan

This Strategic Plan covers a period of three years from April 2023 through to March 2026, with an additional 2030, 'seven-year horizon'.

The purposes of the plan are manifold as we begin the process of implementing our new vision for HighTide, building our activities and developing our resources to deliver a fully resilient organisation:

- Articulate a clear and common purpose for HighTide in terms of fulfilling our mission and establishing a clear foundation of activity on which to build
- Set out the company's strategic priorities, to guide the artistic programming, the delivery of revenues, the building of our networks and brand; thereby creating a resilient and sustainable operating model
- Create a shared understanding across the organisation of our direction of travel
- Enable us to share our vision and our plans with our stakeholders, and particularly to draw connections between HighTide and ACE's Investment Principles*
- Provide the Board and HighTide staff with a framework for their commitment to the success of HighTide, with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to allow us to track our successes and challenges monitored quarterly and annually
- Build a shared understanding of the role that Trustees, our Advisory Council and wider supporters can play in advocating on our behalf among external stakeholders in these vital years.

* ACE's four Investment Principles are:

- Ambition and Quality (A&Q)
- Inclusivity and Relevance (I&R)
- Dynamism (Dynam)
- Environmental Responsibility (ER)

These are noted within our KPI tables.

History of HighTide

"This small, passionate company is a force for good"

Sir Nicholas Hytner, HighTide Patron

"HighTide provides young people with the opportunity to explore, develop and find a bit of joy. I've seen the wonderful changes we've had in terms of confidence and increased vision.

HighTide's work is phenomenally good."

Tibbs Pinter, CEO, 4YP

"I can't express how much I've felt seen and heard by HighTide. The team has been so generous with their time, truly holding safe spaces for artists to make work their own, unique, boundary-pushing ways."

Writer participant in 'School of HighTide' project

HighTide has become a real hunting-ground for new talent."

Daily Telegraph

"A welcome reminder of how intimate and ambitious theatre can be."

The Stage

About HighTide

Launched in 2007, HighTide has produced and toured over 60 productions and supported hundreds of artists, showcasing the very best of British new writing talent. Our productions are political, diverse and joyful and allow our writers the space to ask questions about the world around them and articulate their dreams, fears and passions.

Our alumni include the playwrights Jack Thorne, Vinay Patel, Ella Hickson and Theresa Ikoko; and directors including Chinonyerem Odimba, Michael Longhurst, Kate Wasserberg and Roy Alexander Weise. Our co-producing partners have included the National Theatre, Shakespeare's Globe, the Royal Court and Manchester Royal Exchange.

We are an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.

Company Timeline

HighTide started life as a three-day festival staged by Sam Hodges, Lilli Geissendorfer and Moss Barclay at The Cut in Halesworth in April **2007**, premiering eight short plays by Tom Basden, Steven

Bloomer, Sarah Cuddon, Sam Holcroft, Matthew Morrison, Pericles Snowdon, Megan Walsh and Iain Weatherby. The festival also included short films, poetry, live music, QandA sessions and workshops.

Steven Atkinson joined HighTide in **2008**, becoming Co-Artistic Director with Sam Hodges. The second HighTide Festival included full productions including Adam Brace's *Stovepipe*. HighTide also began its long-term, award-winning relationship with corporate partner Lansons that year, spearheaded by the vision and support of founders Clare Parsons and Tony Langham. To this day they still provide HighTide with invaluable, in-kind office space, company facilities and advocacy..

In **2009**, *Stovepipe* transferred to London as a co-production with the National Theatre and the Bush Theatre. It is named by the Sunday Times as one of the 10 Best Productions of the decade. The third HighTide Festival took place at The Cut.

Between **2010-2015**, HighTide Festivals continue annually in Halesworth producing the world premieres of productions including *Boys* by Ella Hickson, *Bottleneck* by Luke Barnes, *Incognito* by Nick Payne, *Mudlarks* by Vickie Donoghue, *Ditch* by Beth Steel, *Neighbors* by Branden Jacob-Jenkins, *Lidless* by Frances Ya-Chu Cowhig, Alexander Masters' *Stuart: A Life Backwards* by Jack Thorne and *peddling* by Harry Melling. Fringe First Award winning *Lidless* (2010) saw the start of HighTide regularly producing plays at the Edinburgh Fringe. Then in 2014 *peddling* transferred to New York as part of 59E59's Brits of Broadway season.

In **2012**, HighTide became an Arts Council England National Portfolio organisation, receiving funding from the East of England office.

In 2017 and 2018 it expanded its reach, curating a new festival in Walthamstow, north London.

In **2019**, Suba Das replaced Steven Atkinson as Artistic Director following Steven's decision to move on to a freelance career. Suba began plans to move HighTide away from a purely festival-based model.

The **2020** global pandemic of Covid-19 forced HighTide to flex its business model. The company responded quickly with the *Lighthouse Programme*, digitally supporting over 400 artists during the lockdowns with digital resources and support.

HighTide returned to live performance in **2021** with the *Inventing The Future Festival*, a presentation of play readings including *Kabul Goes Pop* by Walæed Akhtar.

In **2022**, the company moved to commit further to the East of England, taking an office at the New Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich giving a regular base in Suffolk. The year also saw HighTide present its first

full tour since the pandemic began, with *When The Long Trick's Over* by Olivier award winner Morgan Lloyd Malcolm. A co-production with the New Wolsey Theatre, it opened in Ipswich before touring across the East of England to venues including Jubilee Hall, Aldeburgh and The Cut, Halesworth, where HighTide started its life 12 years before. In addition, the hit of 2021's *Inventing The Future Festival*, *Kabul Goes Pop* received a full production and tour by Brixton House in association with HighTide and the Mercury Colchester.

2022 saw the departure of Suba Das to lead Liverpool's Everyman and Playhouse and the appointment of Clare Slater as HighTide's new Artistic Director. With a 15-year-long track record of developing new writing talent at the Donmar Warehouse, National Theatre and the Gate Theatre, coupled with a commitment to inclusivity and engagement, Clare also brings a determination to prioritise climate-positive practices in everything the company does.

In June **2023**, Emma Butler Smith joined the company as Executive Director and Joint-CEO (previously CEO of Marina Theatre, Lowestoft). Over a 10 month period she worked with Clare and the Board to evaluate the company's long-term needs - designing this Strategic Plan amongst other valuable contributions. Emma recognised an opportunity for a senior-level restructure to allow more on-the-ground delivery of HighTide projects and productions in the long-term. She left the company in March 2024 having made this recommendation of a sole CEO model.

2023/24 onwards: a new artistic mission

2023/24 saw a reimagining of HighTide's artistic mission, under new Artistic Director, Clare Slater.

Building on HighTide's celebrated legacy as a new writing company, HighTide reshaped to become wholly writer-centred, with a deeper, more focused commitment to creative writing and playwrights in the East of England. Working in collaboration with local partners, they now hope to create a thriving community of playwrights in the east.

New Mission, Vision and Values

Our artistic mission

HighTide is a writer-centred theatre company, based in the East of England. We produce new plays by playwrights from our region, touring across the East and beyond. We run a year-round writer development programme that creates space for East of England playwrights to thrive. We offer creative writing programmes in schools and community groups to build confidence, wellbeing and employability.

We are committed to ensuring everyone, from all backgrounds, can participate in the joy and power of theatre. We believe that partnership and collaboration makes better theatre, as well as more lasting, positive social change.

HighTide holds the climate crisis in its name; a daily reminder of our responsibility to act now - with imagination and creativity. We see climate and social justice as inextricably linked and believe that theatre can help rehearse a better future for us all.

Our 2030 vision

For our playwrights:

By 2030, the East of England will be a recognised seedbed of exceptional, diverse and thriving playwriting talent.

For our communities:

By 2030, HighTide's targeted creative writing programmes will have increased confidence, wellbeing and employability in our home region.

For our industry:

By 2030, HighTide will have shown that it is not only possible, but creatively exhilarating, to become a Net Zero theatre company.

For us as a company:

By 2030, HighTide will continue to be a nationally celebrated new writing company, led by our values and with strong financial resilience.

Our values

- Inclusive
- Ambitious
- Collaborative
- Kind and candid
- Dedicated to writers
- Focussed on the East of England

SWOT analysis

This refreshed approach for HighTide was supported by rigorous SWOT analysis of the company's position locally and nationally, and how it will contribute to ACE's *Lets Create* strategy and its Investment Principles.

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-held reputation for high-quality theatre in the region and industry • Renewed NPO status: practical stability; vote of confidence; recognition as an artistic company of significance • Well-regarded Board of trustees and Advisory Council members • High profile supporters • Strong, experienced and respected new CEO • Solid financial position with reserves • Good relationship with funders and stakeholders • Producing and touring theatre in an under-served area • Tighter focus of only working with playwrights based in or from East of England • Building solid relations with regional producing and receiving venues • Developing relationships with extensive range of less culturally-daunting, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate clear new mission and vision for the company following change from festival model • Change of model enables a more fleet-of-foot approach to work: being agile and fluid enables creativity, growth and change • Post-Pandemic, there's a real interest in creative writing and self-expression • Deeper embedding in the region: increased time spent working out of Ipswich office; travelling widely to create strategic partnerships • HT Board now includes key arts leaders based/working in the East of England; opportunity to increase our impact in the region • Staff restructure in 2023 and 2024 allowing for appointments to revitalise fundraising and marketing/communications. • Recruitment of new staff (Engagement Manager and Associate Producer) all based in the East of England and with considerable experience of working in the arts in the region, to support audience, participant, artist, and stakeholder engagement in the region. • Develop deeper relationships with extensive range of non-traditional performance spaces

non-traditional performance spaces:
easier thresholds to cross

- Early-adopter in articulating importance of climate-careful practices: being the change we want to see. People say that they care whether venues share their own social and environmental values - particularly when it comes to the climate crisis - 51% more likely to attend if organisations take an active stance on these issues. (Audience Answers survey)
- New fit-for-purpose website tested and launched in 2023, providing us with a more Dynaic resource to reach and engage audiences, artists and audiences
- Fleet-of-foot ability to start projects in specific places of need and expand when/if the moment is right.

- Increase income by growing touring and flexing detail of model across the East of England
- Build track record in delivering high quality work in new contexts and areas within region
- Making content available through digital allows for new, national and international audiences as well as enabling people with access issues to see HighTide's work
- Majority of HighTide staff now have extensive experience of CRM systems, enabling more rigorous and in-depth analysis of data; as well as improved surveying mechanisms via ACE Culture Counts and Illuminate.
- Opportunity to grow social media activity and refresh online voice, impact and brand.
- Further developing brand profile through high quality associations and strong PR support
- Increasing links with community groups in the region, through expert partnerships can also begin to explore the extremes of low engagement: ex-services, diaspora communities, current/ex-offenders, the housing insecure
- Free workshops and accessible ticket prices will improve access to creative activities to those from lower socio-economic backgrounds
- Forge more and deeper links with state schools who have less time given to creativity and recognise need for exciting, innovative programmes that address oracy and literacy
- Develop relationships with private schools who have greater financial resources, more control

WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reported low audience levels across industry, esp for new writing, following Covid-19 pandemic and cost of living crisis • Cost-of-living fears rank above Covid concerns as the principal factor behind lower attendance. Least engaged audiences continue to be most affected, compounding the existing inequality gap in cultural consumption (Audience Answers survey) • Lack of regular product/profile since 2019 has diminished awareness of company and brand • Moving work away from original base area with its committed audiences and supporters • Expanding area of focus from only Suffolk to four counties of East of England • Dependency on funding (and lack of opportunity for corporate support in region) • Social media profile/activity was, historically, low/infrequent

over curriculum and an appetite for extra-curricular work
THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of or reduction in guaranteed funding for more than one year • Less funding available/directed away from the arts post-pandemic, with more competition for diminishing resources (Audience Answers survey) • Reduced disposable income due to CoL: 61% of people say that the cost-of-living is already putting them off attending cultural events (Audience Answers survey) • Unclear perception of company within industry: "Is HT a festival, or is it a touring company?" • Dependency and instability of annual trust and foundation income • Change from festival model lacks local/regional impact 'splash', diluting brand/profile • Reduction in rate of TTR in 2025 • 40% of people say they now tend to book tickets more last-minute than they did pre-pandemic • Public may be confused by idea of seeing theatre in pubs, museums etc • Paines Plough potentially moving to region following ACE NPO recommendations, creating acclaimed competition for new writing on the doorstep

- Geographical and transportation limitations of working in a wide and largely rural area
- Limitations of only working with East of England playwrights
- One-night performances precludes hyper-local word-of-mouth recommendations
- Small casts and simple pared-back design may be seen as 'not value for money' by some audiences
- Little-known writers and cast may deter some audiences (i.e. no star names)

- Eastern Angles new AD moving away from 'history and hessian' subject matter to a more contemporary approach akin to HighTide
- Mooted official company address move to Ipswich base means adding another NPO to an already NPO-rich town
- School resources both in terms of finances and curriculum space is more squeezed

Strategic Plan 2023–26

Informed by this SWOT analysis, and guided by our new Mission, Vision and Values, we can now outline our ambitions and KPIs for the next 3 years (with 2030 on our horizon), under the headings:

- Artistic Goals
- Audiences
- Organisational
- Financial

It should be noted that HighTide’s work is generously, but only partly, funded by our ACE NPO grant. A significant proportion – most of our projects and productions, in fact – rely on additional funds also being raised from individual giving, trusts and foundations and corporate partnerships. The KPIs tables highlight this.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion is the golden thread which runs through all of HighTide’s work. This Strategic Plan sets us EDI targets for our lead artists, workshop participants, audiences, staff and Board. We have fixed these against the 2021 census data for our region, to ensure all our activity is accessed by a fair representation of our immediate community. For example, by 2026 we want our Playwrights East membership to represent the East of England’s own demographic statistic and so to be at least:

- 50% female-identifying
- 15% disabled or neurodivergent
- 35% from working-class origins
- 8% from the global majority
- 3% from the LGBTQ+ community

Whilst we uphold all protected characteristics, this period at HighTide has a particular, strategic EDI focus on three minority or marginalised groups, due to their relevance to our home region:

- those from or in the **East of England**
 - Whilst not a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, geographical context is increasingly recognised as an identity-type worthy of attention. Under-representation from our region, in our industry, is significant.
- those from **working class origins**

- Again, whilst not a protected characteristic, socio-economic background is a recognised barrier to opportunity and progression and our region has a higher than national average population of those from working-class origins.
- those from the **d/Deaf and disabled communities**
 - our region has higher than national average in these protected characteristics. We will also spend the period better understanding neurodiversity in our region and how that maps across into our activity.

Instead of writing a separate EDI Action Plan, a truer representation of our thinking is to integrate it throughout this Strategic Plan. The “I&R” (Inclusivity and Relevance) KPIs demarcate those targets.

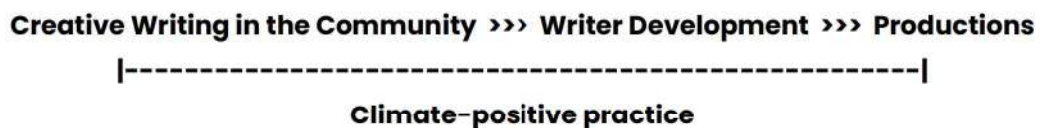
Artistic Goals

HighTide has a 16-year history of producing high-quality theatre in a festival context. Under new AD Clare Slater, the company has refreshed its artistic mission by focusing on East of England based writers, engaging communities across a wider geographical area encompassing Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire, and championing climate conscious theatre-making.

Our artistic goals for the period are split out into four strands:

- A. Creative Writing in the Community**
- B. Writer Development**
- C. Productions**
- D. Company Impact on climate-positive theatre making**

These artistic goals form a sequential pathway of writer development, supported by climate-positive practice:



A. Creative Writing in the Community

By 2030, HighTide’s targeted creative writing programmes will have increased confidence, wellbeing and employability in our home region.

In this period, our community work will remain focussed in Suffolk. When it comes to meaningful and long-lasting community engagement, we believe in the principle of “inch wide, mile deep”, especially whilst HighTide remains a small-scale organisation.

Taking our lead from the evidence-based report, [Suffolk’s Hidden Needs](#) (Suffolk Community Foundation/University of Suffolk, 2020), we will focus specifically on areas of increased deprivation – the urban centres of Lowestoft and Ipswich:

- Lowestoft will be our centre for CYP work.
- Ipswich will be our centre for work with vulnerable adults.

CPD for the on-site professionals, in order to achieve long-term impact, will be baked into the programmes.

Robust evaluation and evidence-based decision-making will be a key tenet of all our creative writing in the community.

By March 2026:

- Creative writing in schools: working closely with Suffolk County Council, we will have established Story Worlds as an effective intervention in LA maintained primary education, seeking to bridge the literacy gap in targeted schools. In this period we will focus the work in and near Lowestoft.
- Creative writing for adults: we will have piloted My Story as an effective programme for boosting confidence, wellbeing and employability for targeted groups of vulnerable adults in Ipswich.

KPIs: Creative Writing in the Community

Measurable Action	Who	Timeline	ACE IP
<p>Story Worlds ACE Outcome: Creative People Within ACE NPO funding? No (NB. Creative People outcome not in original 23-26 funding agreement.)</p>			
Pilot year in 1-3 targeted schools in Lowestoft is funded and delivered, in partnership with SCC	AD, ED, EM, DM	Jan 2024	A&Q Dyna I&R

<p>Pilot year evaluation is completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher, student and parent feedback is positive, particularly measuring • Marked improvements between pre- and post-project confidence in writing; creativity and self-expression are recorded. • Learnings implemented and reported to wider staff and Board 	EM	May 2024	A&Q Dyna I&R
Year 2 - repeated in Lowestoft, in partnership with SCC	AD, EM, DM	Jan 2025	A&Q Dyna I&R
<p>Year 2 evaluation is completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher, student and parent feedback is positive. • Marked improvements between pre- and post-project confidence in writing; creativity and self-expression are recorded. 	EM	May 2025	A&Q Dyna I&R
Year 3 - deepened in Lowestoft, in partnership with SCC	AD, EM, DM	Jan 2026	A&Q Dyna I&R
<p>Year 3 evaluation is completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher, student and parent feedback is positive. • Marked improvements between pre- and post-project confidence in writing; creativity and self-expression are recorded. 	EM	May 2026	A&Q Dyna I&R
<p><u>2030 Horizon – Story Worlds:</u> Story Worlds is a celebrated, tried and tested, HighTide-led intervention supporting literacy attainment in primary schools in Suffolk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term evaluation proves that our early literacy intervention supports the children in their SATs, GCSEs and A Levels (in confidence, creativity and attainment). • The first young participants from Story Worlds sign up to Playwrights East • We receive local authority funding to support this valued activity 	AD, EM	Dec 2030	A&Q Dyna I&R

My Story ACE Outcomes: Creative People and Cultural Communities Within ACE NPO funding? Yes			
Pilot year in Ipswich is funded and delivered during <i>Ghost Stories, v.3</i> tour, in partnership with a local community organisation working with vulnerable adults	AD, EM, DM	Nov 2025	A&Q Dyna I&R
Pilot year evaluation is completed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner and participant feedback is positive. Marked improvements in creativity, wellbeing, confidence and employability are recorded. 10% of participants sign up to Playwrights East for further development 	EM	Jan 2026	A&Q Dyna I&R
<u>2030 Horizon – My Story:</u> My Story is a well-loved, effective programme for targeted groups of vulnerable adults across Suffolk: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long-term evaluation proves that our intervention boosts confidence, wellbeing and employability for vulnerable adults and combats social isolation, especially those with low educational attainment histories, who are long-term unemployed and/or who are suffering from rural isolation. 3 participants from My Story have gone on to join our HighTide Writers Group or other professional development programmes in the region. We receive local authority funding to support this valued activity 	AD, EM	Dec 2030	A&Q Dyna I&R

B. Writer Development

By 2030, the East of England will be a recognised seedbed of exceptional, diverse and thriving playwriting talent.

In this period, our writer development work will reach across all four counties of the East of England.

By March 2026:

- Playwrights East will be an established and active development network for aspiring and established East of England playwrights.
 - The core programme will be free-to-access workshops (in person and online), alongside peer-to-peer support, networking and career resilience surgeries.
 - The programme will also include specialist sessions to support under-represented writers, seeking to give equity of creative opportunity.
 - We will trial a paid workshop model too, generating modest income.
- We will openly recruit for a paid Playwrights Council, who will all be playwrights in or from the East of England. They will primarily co-design the Playwrights East programme with us, and secondarily have a broader eye on our organisational planning to ensure that we remain a truly writer-centred company. This initiative aims to see artist-led organisational development (as opposed to organisation-led artist development).
- Our HighTide Writers Group will be a celebrated programme, recognised in our industry as developing the most exciting new playwriting talent.
 - The moment in the 12-month programme where we share their work with audiences - *HighTide Rising* - will be a highlight in the creative calendar.

KPIs: Writer Development

Measurable Action	Who	Timeline	ACE IP
Playwrights East ACE Outcome: Creative and Cultural Country Within ACE NPO funding? Yes			
Host region-wide Playwrights Gatherings to scope initial remit of Playwrights East. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 50 participants attend • In conjunction with a regional partner 	AD	March 2023	A&Q I&R
Launch first programme of workshops.	AD, EM	Sept 2023	A&Q I&R
End of 23/24: 3 regional partners contributed to the workshop programme, as hosts or guests, ensuring Playwrights East bridges between playwrights and other organisations.	AD, EM	March 2024	A&Q I&R
End of 23/24: Playwrights East has 100 members. They identify as, at	AD, EM	March	I&R

<p>least:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% female-identifying • 10% disabled or neurodivergent • 30% from working-class origins • 6% from the global majority • 2% from the LGBTQ+ community 		2024	
<p>End of 23/24: Workshops in the f/y have 80 participants in total. They identify as, at least:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% female-identifying • 10% disabled or neurodivergent • 30% from working-class origins • 6% from the global majority • 2% from the LGBTQ+ community 	AD, EM	March 2024	I&R
<p>End of 24/25: 4 regional partners contributed to the workshop programme, as hosts or guests, ensuring Playwrights East bridges between playwrights and other organisations.</p>	AD, EM	March 2025	A&Q I&R
<p>End of 24/25: At least 2 members of Playwrights East become members of 25/26 HT Writers Group.</p>	AD, EM	March 2025	A&Q I&R
<p>End of 24/25: Playwrights East has 250 members. They identify as, at least:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% female-identifying • 12% disabled or neurodivergent • 32% from working-class origins • 7% from the global majority • 3% from the LGBTQ+ community 	AD, EM	March 2025	I&R
<p>End of 24/25: Workshops in the f/y have 160 participants in total. They identify as, at least:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% female-identifying • 12% disabled or neurodivergent • 32% from working-class origins • 7% from the global majority • 3% from the LGBTQ+ community 	AD, EM	March 2025	I&R
<p>End of 24/25: A digital Playwrights East workshop archive is launched.</p>	AD, EM	March 2025	A&Q I&R

Extend the paid writing workshop model, earning small (£750) profit	AD, EM	June 2025	Dyna
End of 25/26: 5 regional partners contributed to the workshop programme, as hosts or guests, ensuring Playwrights East bridges between playwrights and other organisations.	AD, EM	March 2026	A&Q I&R
End of 25/26: At least 4 members of Playwrights East become members of 25/26 HT Writers Group.	AD, EM	March 2026	A&Q I&R
End of 25/26: Playwrights East has 350 members. They identify as, at least: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% female-identifying • 15% disabled or neurodivergent • 35% from working-class origins • 8% from the global majority • 3% from the LGBTQ+ community 	AD, EM	March 2026	I&R
End of 25/26: Workshops in the f/y have 200 participants in total. They identify as, at least: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% female • 15% disabled or neurodivergent • 35% from working-class origins • 8% from the global majority • 3% from the LGBTQ+ community 	AD, EM	March 2026	I&R
End of 25/26: Digital archive has a total of 320 watches, doubling our participants and stretching us nationally and internationally.	AD, EM	March 2026	A&Q I&R
<u>2030 Horizon – Playwrights East:</u> Our partners in the East use Playwrights East as a quality source for new writers to commission and produce. Evaluation proves that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playwrights East members report that the programme has given them the tools and opportunities for a sustainable career • Playwrights East has played a meaningful part in making the East of England a recognised seedbed of great playwriting. 	AD, EM	March 2030	A&Q I&R Dyna
Playwrights Council ACE Outcome: Creative and Cultural Country Within ACE NPO funding? Yes			

<p>Openly recruit first Playwrights Council (24-month tenure). At least 4 members. Group identifies as, at least:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% in or from the East of England • 50% female-identifying • 25% disabled or neurodivergent • 50% from working-class origins • 25% from the global majority • 25% from the LGBTQ+ community 	AD, EM	March 2024	A&Q I&R
Playwrights Council integrated in staff and Board away days	AD, ED	Feb 2025	A&Q I&R
<p>Evaluation from first Playwrights Council sees at least 75% 'agree' or 'highly agree' to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "My contributions have felt valued" • "HighTide lives its values as an inclusive writer-centred company" • "HighTide and Playwrights East are improving the opportunities for playwrights in the east" • "My work as a playwright and/or my leadership/influencing skills have developed as a result of sitting on the Playwrights Council" 	AD, EM	March 2026	A&Q Dyna
<p><u>2030 Horizon – Playwrights Council:</u> Previous Playwrights Council members now enact leadership roles or behaviours within the industry</p>	AD, EM	March 2030	A&Q I&R
<p>HighTide Writers Group and HighTide Rising ACE Outcome: Creative and Cultural Country Within ACE NPO funding? Yes</p>			
<p>Pilot <i>HighTide Rising</i> as a model, combining writer development, playwright networking and donor cultivation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 new East of England playwrights • Audience 100 • Individual Giving event at festival to consolidate annual giving scheme, plus sponsorship target of £10,000 <p>At least 70% 'agree' or 'highly agree' to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The extracts showcase quality playwriting" • "HighTide and HTWG are improving the opportunities for playwrights in the east" 	AD, AP	May 2023	A&Q I&R Dyna

Engage 2 leading playwrights as co-facilitators of the group, with connections to the East and/or experience of non-London-based career development.	AD, EM	August 2023	A&Q
Employ a diverse pool of script readers inc majority from, or in, EoE.	EM	October 2023	I&R
Openly recruit for inaugural HighTide Writers Group, seeing 75 samples submitted, with applications from playwrights who identify as, at least: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% female-identifying • 10% disabled or neurodivergent • 30% from working-class origins • 6% from the global majority • 2% from the LGBTQ+ community 	EM	October 2023	A&Q I&R
Final selection of 6 East of England playwrights, who identify as, at least: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% female-identifying • 16% disabled or neurodivergent • 33% from working-class origins • 16% from the global majority • 16% from the LGBTQ+ community 	EM	Dec 2023	A&Q I&R
HTWG begins, for 12 month cycle of online and in person monthly sessions	EM	Feb 2024	A&Q
<i>HighTide Rising</i> shares extracts of the new drafts, performed by professional actors, with at least 100 audience members. At least 75% 'agree' or 'highly agree' to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The extracts showcase quality playwriting" • "HighTide and HTWG are improving the opportunities for playwrights in the east" 	EM	Nov 2024	A&Q Dyna
Evaluation from first HTWG sees at least 75% 'agree' or 'highly agree' to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "My writing and voice have felt valued" • "HighTide lives its values an inclusive writer-centred company" • "HighTide and Playwrights East are improving the opportunities for playwrights in the east" 	EM	Feb 2025	A&Q Dyna

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “My work as a playwright has developed as a result of the HTWG” 			
<p>Openly recruit for HTWG Yr 2, seeing 100 samples submitted, with applications from playwrights who identify as, at least:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% female-identifying • 12% disabled or neurodivergent • 32% from working-class origins • 7% from the global majority • 3% from the LGBTQ+ community 	EM	Jan 2025	A&Q I&R
<p>Final selection of 6 East of England playwrights for HTWG Yr 2, who identify as, at least:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% female-identifying • 33% disabled or neurodivergent • 33% from working-class origins • 33% from the global majority • 33% from the LGBTQ+ community 	EM	Feb 2025	A&Q I&R
<p>HTWG Yr 2 begins, for 12 month cycle of online and in person monthly sessions</p>	EM	April 2025	A&Q
<p><i>HighTide Rising</i> shares extracts of the new drafts, performed by professional actors, with at least 150 audience members. At least 80% ‘agree’ or ‘highly agree’ to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The extracts showcase quality playwriting” • “HighTide and HTWG are improving the opportunities for playwrights in the east” 	EM	Nov 2025	A&Q Dyna
<p>Evaluation from HTWG Yr 2 sees at least 80% ‘agree’ or ‘highly agree’ to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “My writing and voice have felt valued” • “HighTide lives its values an inclusive writer-centred company” • “HighTide and Playwrights East are improving the opportunities for playwrights in the east” • “My work as a playwright has developed as a result of the HTWG” 	EM	March 2026	A&Q Dyna
<p>Openly recruit for HTWG Yr 3, seeing 150 samples submitted, with applications from playwrights who identify as, at least:</p>	EM	Jan 2026	A&Q I&R

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% female-identifying • 15% disabled or neurodivergent • 35% from working-class origins • 8% from the global majority • 3% from the LGBTQ+ community 			
<p>Final selection of 6 East of England playwrights for HTWG Yr 3, who identify as, at least:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% female-identifying • 48% disabled or neurodivergent • 48% from working-class origins • 33% from the global majority • 33% from the LGBTQ+ community 	EM	Feb 2026	A&Q I&R
HTWG Yr 3 begins, for 12 month cycle of online and in person monthly sessions	EM	April 2026	A&Q
<p><u>2030 Horizon – HTWG and HighTide Rising:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of HighTide commissionees now come up through the HTWG. • Producing companies in the East, nationally and internationally recognise HTWG as a stamp of quality, and look to our cohorts for playwrights to commission. • HTWG alumni have had significant industry attention, their work now being enjoyed by wider, national audiences. • Evaluation proves that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ HTWG participants report that the programme has given them the tools and opportunities for a sustainable career ○ HTWG has played a meaningful part in making the East of England a recognised seedbed of great playwriting. 	AD, EM	March 2026	A&Q I&R Dyna

C. Productions

By 2030, HighTide will be a nationally celebrated new writing company, led by our values and with strong financial resilience

As a theatre company, producing new plays by East of England playwrights is our central purpose. We think of our Creative Writing in the Community and Writer Development strands as crucial parts of our pipeline all, ultimately, leading towards our production activity.

In the period 2023-26, having visibly moved away from the festival model for which we were previously known, we will re-establish ourselves as a leading new writing company, inspiring audiences in our home region and beyond.

By March 2026:

- We will have solidified a financial model enabling two HighTide produced shows a year, made in co-production with partners, launching brilliant new East Anglian playwrights towards industry recognition:
 - A: a tour of auditoria in established venues (in urban centres)
 - Spring 2024: *Bindweed* by Martha Loader, in co-production with Mercury Colchester and New Wolsey
 - Spring 2025: *Make Me* by Molly Naylor, in co-production with Norfolk and Norwich Festival, Norwich Theatres and New Wolsey
 - B: a mixed tour of established venues (in urban centres) and hyper-local, community spaces like pubs, museums and village halls (in market town, rural and coastal places)
 - Autumn 2023: *Ghost Stories by Candlelight* by Kelly Jones, Shamser Sinha and Nicola Werenowska, with music and songs composed by Georgia Shackleton. In association with Theatre Royal Bury St Edmunds, Harlow Playhouse and Shakespeare's Globe
 - Autumn 2024: *Ghost Stories by Candlelight: volume 2*. Building on the success of year one, with a new cohort of East Anglian writers.
 - Autumn 2025: *Ghost Stories by Candlelight: volume 3*. As above.
- We will have established a strong reputation with diverse audiences for our productions of new East Anglian plays:
 - with an ambition to be present across all four counties of our home region, with priority focus on:
 - In Norfolk: Norwich, Great Yarmouth*^, Breckland*^
 - In Suffolk: Ipswich, Lowestoft, East Suffolk coastal
 - In Cambridgeshire: Cambridge
 - In Essex: Colchester, Tendring*^
 - in London, to give our writers the most visible platform possible
 - across the UK, when the opportunity matches the story we're telling

* = ACE Priority Place

^ = DCMS Levelling up for Culture Place

- Deepened our relationships with past co-producing partners in the region, and established new relationships with partners at home and nationally.
- Created a new strand of ‘in association’ production activity, where we support small-scale, non-NPO East of England theatre companies and artists to produce new plays by writers from the region, in the region. We will offer dramaturgical support, production mentoring, climate-positive advice, and marketing input.
- We will continue to be an active member of the East Anglian Producing Consortium (EAPC), to produce mid-scale new plays from the region:
 - Spring 2025: EAPC touring new commission, *Radio Caroline*, by an East Anglian playwright, with dramaturgy led by HighTide.
- We will have produced one community participation production:
 - Summer 2023: *Herring Girls: greater than we are alone*, composed by Jessie Maryon Davies. Lyrics co-written by Essex-based Hannah Jane Walker with our 50 community choristers, aged 8-80, from the Lowestoft area. Performed as part of First Light Festival, in partnership with Britten Pears Arts, the Seagull Theatre and First Light.
- We will have produced at least two digital productions:
 - Spring 2024: a ‘audio tour’ of *Ghost Stories by Candlelight*
 - Summer 2025: staging an audio-installation of Cambridge-based Robert McFarlane’s prose poem *Ness*, in partnership with the National Trust. An in-person audio journey, experienced on-site at Orford Ness; accompanied by a remote, internationally accessible version triggered by sunset.
- Across our production output, we will champion lead artists (writer, director, designer) from diverse backgrounds. We want to rebalance leading creative opportunities for artists with historically underrepresented protected characteristics; so our lead artists across each year will, at minimum, reflect the demographics of the East of England.

KPIs: Productions

Measurable Action	Who	Timeline	ACE IP
HighTide Productions A – tours of auditoria in established venues (in urban centres)			

<p>ACE Outcome: Creative and Cultural Country</p> <p>Within ACE NPO funding? Yes. One tour a year included in 23-26 funding agreement.</p>			
<p><i>Bindweed</i> tours, with at least:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 public performances in the East • 1 London 'profile' venue • 256 Colchester (40% capacity); 160 Ipswich; (25% capacity) 840 London (70% capacity) • Co-produced with Mercury Theatre (lead), and New Wolvey • Delivered on budget • Tour planned in adherence to Anti-Racism Touring rider • Tour uses climate dramaturgy practice • We are not lead producer, but we will use our influence to try and achieve: Green Touring rider and TGB Baseline standard • Positive critical reviews and audience feedback • Positive reflective practice responses from artists 	AD, P, EM	July 2024	A&Q I&R Dyna ER
<p><i>Make Me</i> tours, (HighTide lead produced), with at least:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 public performances in the East • 1 London 'profile' venue • 300 in region; 1,000 London • Co-produced with regional partners • Delivered on budget • Tour planned in adherence to Anti-Racism Touring rider • Tour uses climate dramaturgy practice Green Touring rider and achieves TGB Intermediary standard • Positive critical reviews and audience feedback • Positive reflective practice responses from artists 	AD, P, EM	June 2025	A&Q I&R Dyna ER
<p><u>2030 Horizon – HighTide Productions A – tours of established venues</u> HighTide's productions are nationally celebrated, regularly winning accolades for our writers, us and our creative teams</p>	AD, ED, GM, EM, DM, AP	March 2030	A&Q I&R Dyna ER
<p>HighTide Productions B – a mixed tour of established venues (in urban centres) and hyper-local, community spaces (in market town, rural and coastal places)</p> <p>ACE Outcome: Creative and Cultural Country</p> <p>Within ACE NPO funding? No. This second production, in a mixed model, is not included in 23-26 funding agreement.</p>			

<p><i>Ghost Stories by Candlelight</i> tours (HighTide lead produced), with at least:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 public performances in the East, trialling new mixed model of theatre venues and non-traditional community spaces • £250 BO target / 30 attendees, on average, per venue • 1 London 'profile' performance • 'In association' partners involved • Delivered on budget • Tour planned in adherence to Anti-Racism Touring rider • Tour trialling new climate dramaturgy practice and Green Touring rider • Positive critical reviews and audience feedback • 1 national press review • 5 features in local press 	AD, ED, GM, EM, AP	Nov 2023	A&Q I&R Dyna ER
<p><i>Ghost Stories v.2</i> tours, (HighTide lead produced), with at least:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 performances in the East, using new mixed model of theatre venues and non-traditional community spaces • £350 BO target / 50 attendees, on average, per venue • 1 London 'profile' performance • 50% repeat bookers; 50% first time bookers • 'In association' partners involved • Delivered on budget • Tour planned in adherence to Anti-Racism Touring rider • Tour uses climate dramaturgy practice, Green Touring rider and achieves TGB Baseline standard • Positive critical reviews and audience feedback • Positive reflective practice from artists involved 	AD, P, EM	Nov 2024	A&Q I&R Dyna ER
<p><i>Ghost Stories v.3</i> tours, (HighTide lead produced), with at least:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 performances in the East, using new mixed model of theatre venues and non-traditional community spaces • £400 BO target / 55 attendees, on average, per venue • 1 London 'profile' performance • 50% repeat bookers, 50% first time bookers • 'In association' partners involved • Delivered on budget • Tour planned in adherence to Anti-Racism Touring rider • Tour uses climate dramaturgy practice, Green Touring rider 	AD, P, EM	Nov 2025	A&Q I&R Dyna ER

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> and achieves TGB Intermediary standard • Positive critical reviews and audience feedback • Positive reflective practice from artists involved 			
<u>2030 Horizon – HighTide Productions B – a mixed tour</u> HighTide’s productions are established in rural and coastal communities, as well as urban centres, and are celebrated as a hallmark of quality and entertainment.	AD, P, EM	March 2030	A&Q I&R Dyna ER
Strong reputation with diverse audiences ACE Outcome: Creative and Cultural Country Within ACE NPO funding? Yes			
See Audiences section of this Strategic Plan for KPIs.			
Co-Producing Partners ACE Outcome: Creative and Cultural Country Within ACE NPO funding? Yes			
At least once a year, co-producing with 1 regional partner, each sharing financial contributions/risks.	AD	Every f/y	A&Q
At least once a year, co-producing or ‘in association’ with 1 London or national partner, to raise profile for our playwrights and HighTide	AD	Every f/y	A&Q
<u>2030 Horizon – Co-Producing Partners</u> Major co-producing partners seek us out as a company with an exceptional reputation for producing the best new writing.	AD	March 2030	A&Q
‘In association’ Strand ACE Outcome: Creative and Cultural Country Within ACE NPO funding? No.			
1 ‘in association’ production has benefited from HighTide support in 24/25: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produced in the East • Written by an East Anglian playwright • Made with climate dramaturgy principles and to Theatre Green Book baseline standards 	AD	March 2025	A&Q I&R ER
2 ‘in association’ productions have benefited from HighTide support in 25/26:	AD	March 2026	A&Q I&R

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produced in the East Written by an East Anglian playwright Made with climate dramaturgy principles and to Theatre Green Book baseline standards 			ER
<u>2030 Horizon – 'In association' Strand</u> HighTide has helped enable a wider and deeper new writing ecology in the East of England, supporting 10 smaller companies to flourish	AD	March 2030	A&Q I&R ER
East Anglian Producing Consortium ACE Outcome: Creative and Cultural Country Within ACE NPO funding? Yes, for organisational shared learnings; but not for producing and financial contributions (which would have been included in an 23-26 funding uplift)			
Begin commission process for inaugural EAPC mid-scale production	AD	Oct 2023	A&Q
1st new mid-scale tour, in co-production with the EAPC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dramaturgy by HighTide Climate dramaturgy led by HighTide, inc TGB 'baseline' standard production Uses Anti Racism touring rider HighTide reaches a significantly larger audience than our own tours allow (to at least 4 regional venues): 2,500 	AD	June 2025	A&Q I&R ER
<u>2030 Horizon – EAPC</u> The EAPC has developed a national reputation for developing and touring excellent, popular new writing which brings younger (25-40yr) audiences into venues	AD	March 2030	A&Q
Community Participation production ACE Outcome: Cultural Communities and Creative People Within ACE NPO funding? Yes.			
<i>Herring Girls</i> produced at First Light Festival, in partnership with EoE organisations - Britten Pears Arts, Seagull Theatre and First Light: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75 community participants from at least 4 community singing groups from East Suffolk 1 EoE playwright working as librettist 1 EoE Climate Dramaturg provoking creative innovation Ethical Manager contracts in place with creative team 	AD, ED, GM	June 2023	A&Q I&R ER Dyna

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance planned in adherence to the Theatre Green Book and Anti Racism Touring Rider • Letter of Agreement to support partnership with Britten Pears Arts and confirm their financial contribution • Evidence of positive impact on participants through surveys • Project delivered within budget 			
<u>2030 Horizon – Community Participation Production</u> Organisational and financial capacity have grown to enable 1 large-scale, intergenerational community participation production every other year, positively impacting lives in our region.	AD	March 2030	A&Q I&R
Digital Productions ACE Outcome: Creative and Cultural Country Within ACE NPO funding? No.			
Produce an ‘audio tour’ of <i>Ghost Stories</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaching digital audiences of 750 in first year • 10% of listeners are international 	AD, P, EM	June 2024	A&Q
Produce audio-installation, <i>Ness</i> , on National Trust site of Orford Ness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional funding found • 1 leading East of England writer, Robert McFarlane • 1 directed by East of England director/dramaturg, HighTide Associate, Zoë Svendsen • 1,000 in-person listeners across the season • 500 remote-digital listeners during ‘sunset’ remote sharings • Accolades for digital and storytelling innovation 	AD, P, GM	Sept 2025	A&Q
<u>2030 Horizon – Digital Productions</u> Opportunities for both born-digital and digital-capture of HighTide productions are always sought and regularly funded, to further the reach of our playwrights.	AD	March 2030	A&Q
Diversity of Lead Artists ACE Outcome: Creative and Cultural Country Within ACE NPO funding? Yes.			
Average across production activity 23/24, writers, directors and designers identify as, at least: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% female-identifying 	AD, P	March 2024	I&R

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10% disabled or neurodivergent • 30% from working-class origins • 10% from the global majority • 10% from the LGBTQ+ community 			
<p>Average across production activity 24/25, writers, directors and designers identify as, at least:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% female-identifying • 20% disabled or neurodivergent • 35% from working-class origins • 15% from the global majority • 15% from the LGBTQ+ community 	AD, P	March 2025	I&R
<p>Average across production activity 25/26, writers, directors and designers identify as, at least:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% female-identifying • 25% disabled or neurodivergent • 35% from working-class origins • 15% from the global majority • 15% from the LGBTQ+ community 	AD, P	March 2026	I&R
<p><u>2030 Horizon – Diversity of Lead Artists</u></p> <p>The artists who lead our productions represent, at a minimum, the full diversity of our home region - ensuring that HighTide’s stories offer a rich plurality of perspectives and lived experiences.</p>	AD	2030	I&R

D. Company Impact on Climate-Positive Theatre-Making

By 2030, HighTide will have shown that it is not only possible, but creatively exhilarating, to become a Net Zero theatre company.

The climate crisis is the story of our time. HighTide holds the climate crisis in our name; a daily reminder of our responsibility to act now – with imagination and creativity.

There is an indisputable urgency for every nation, business, charity and individual to make big and lasting changes to how we live and operate, in order to avoid planetary collapse. The period this Strategic Plan covers, 2023–26, and then looking ahead to 2030, is the crucial window of change for us all. We’re excited about the positive possibilities.

Our vision is to show that it is not only possible, but creatively exhilarating, to become a Net Zero company by 2030. Our Decarbonisation Action Plan will be our pathway for achieving this, reducing our carbon harms as much as is practically possible. We will aim for Zero Carbon, but we acknowledge that we face limitations: we are a touring company resident in buildings beyond our full control; our activity requires an amount of travel to bring together artists and audiences; and we all, for now, face restrictions on consumer choices. So a degree of Gold Standard offsetting must remain a key part of our Net Zero plan.

But, more than that, we pledge to tell truths openly; to work in coalition with others for positive change; and to imaginatively adapt to our new realities whilst helping others to do the same. We see climate and social justice as inextricably linked and are restless in our belief that theatre can help rehearse a better future for us all.

This climate-positive action will run, sometimes visibly, and sometimes invisibly, through everything that we do.

By March 2026:

- We will have embedded the artistic practice of climate dramaturgy into all of our work. It will have inspired our:
 - creative writing in the community, writer development, commissioning and producing models to be low-carbon and high-inspiration
 - freelancers to be agents of positive change with us, and in their work beyond HighTide
 - audiences and participants to recognise visions of a positive future and feel empowered to help make it a reality
 - sector to see that climate-positive change can be embraced as an artistic practice, enabling us all to make better theatre than ever before.

- We will have written our Decarbonisation Action Plan and be 2 proactive years into its commitments. This will be an ever-evolving document, built on our climate dramaturgy work and how that supports the adoption of Theatre Green Book framework. This DAP aims to:
 - radically reduce our carbon harms and responsibly off-set the remainder
 - inspire positive changes in our partners; we see advocacy as a major pillar of the decarbonisation work at HighTide
 - enable our staff and Board to make bold and positive choices about how HighTide lives our climate conscious values at an operational level

KPIs: Company impact on climate-positive theatre-making

Measurable Action	Who	Timeline	ACE IP
<p>Climate Dramaturgy ACE Outcome: A Creative and Cultural Country Within ACE NPO funding? Yes.</p>			
Employ p/t EoE Associate Artist/Climate Dramaturg. Evaluation of artists' experience at end of year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "My voice have felt valued" • "HighTide lives its values as an environmental action champion" • "My work as a climate dramaturg has developed as a result of being Associate Artist at HighTide" 	AD	March 2023	A&Q ER Dyna
Speak at National Theatre's annual sustainability/Theatre Green Book conference about climate dramaturgy. At least 100 attendees.	AD	Sept 2023	A&Q ER
Trial different models of climate dramaturgy on <i>Herring Girls</i> and <i>Ghost Stories</i> and assess qualitative data evaluation from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artists and production staff - did it positively impact their choices on this project; might it positively impact their choices on future projects? • Audiences - did it inspire them to make positive climate choices in the future? • Production partners and venues - did our work inspire them to make positive climate choices in the future? 	AD	Nov 2023	A&Q ER Dyna
On <i>Ghost Stories</i> , assess quantitative data evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did we achieve Theatre Green Book 'Baseline' standard? • Set a new baseline for CO2e for HT mixed-model, community touring 	AD, GM	Nov 2023	A&Q ER Dyna
On <i>Bindweed</i> - whilst not lead producer - use our influence to lead the climate dramaturgy and aim to see: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • positive impacts, as above: • achieve TGB 'Baseline' standard • set a new baseline for CO2e for studio theatre touring 	AD, P	July 2024	A&Q ER Dyna
Run Climate Dramaturgy Knowledge Exchange (funded by Uni of	AD, P	Sept	A&Q

Cambridge). Evaluation sees positive impacts on freelance artists and EoE producing partners.		2024	ER Dyna
<p><i>On Ghost Stories vol 2, see:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased positive impacts in qualitative evaluation achieve TGB Baseline standard make 5% carbon savings, using 2023 mixed-model baseline 	AD, P	Dec 2024	A&Q ER Dyna
Have successfully integrated our climate dramaturgy practices into our Community and Writer Development strands too. In evaluation, participants report positive impacts on their sense of agency for making climate-conscious personal, professional and social changes.	AD, EM	March 2025	A&Q I&R ER Dyna
Lead the climate dramaturgy on EAPC mid-scale tour, seeing positive impacts as above, inc TGB baseline standard.	AD	Sept 2025	A&Q ER Dyna
<p><i>On Make Me and autumn tour, see:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> increase positive impacts in qualitative evaluation maintain TGB 'Intermediary' standard make 5% carbon savings on previous shows' baselines (varied, depending on the touring model) 	AD, P	Dec 2025	A&Q ER Dyna
In our Community and Writer Development strands, see increased positive impacts in qualitative participant evaluation, as above.	AD, EM	March 2026	A&Q I&R ER Dyna
<p><u>2030 Horizon - Climate Dramaturgy</u></p> <p>Climate Dramaturgy is now a wide-spread artistic practice, adopted by all scales of theatre organisation, to enable artistically-led, climate-positive theatre (as measured by Theatre Green Book standards).</p>	AD, P	March 2030	A&Q ER
<p>Decarbonisation Action Plan</p> <p>ACE Outcome: A Creative and Cultural Country</p> <p>Within ACE NPO funding? Yes.</p>			
<p>First draft of DAP assessed by the Board and industry peers, including frameworks for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring ongoing decarbonising of our community, writer 	AD, P, DM, EM	June 2024	ER

<p>development and production models</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assessing and reducing our digital carbon footprint • working more closely with our producing and operational partners to decarbonise together, inc green energy suppliers • inspiring our audiences to reduce the carbon impact of their travel (Scope 3 emissions) • integrating our EDI and climate justice practices • strengthening our ethical policy (inc ethical fundraising) • moving to ethical banking and pension schemes 			
DAP signed off by the Board.	AD, P	Sept 2024	ER
First year of DAP monitoring and evaluation sees we're on track for Net Zero by 2030.	AD, P	March 2025	ER
Second year of DAP monitoring and evaluation sees we're on track for Net Zero by 2030.	AD, P	March 2026	ER
<p><u>2030 Horizon - Decarbonisation Action Plan</u></p> <p>HighTide has proved that it is not only possible, but creatively exhilarating to become a Net Zero company, radically decarbonising our activities and responsibly, Gold Standard off-setting the remainder. Our efforts, even if imperfect, have inspired other companies to follow suit.</p>	AD, ED, GM, DM, EM	March 2030	A&Q ER

Audiences: People and Place

Our Place

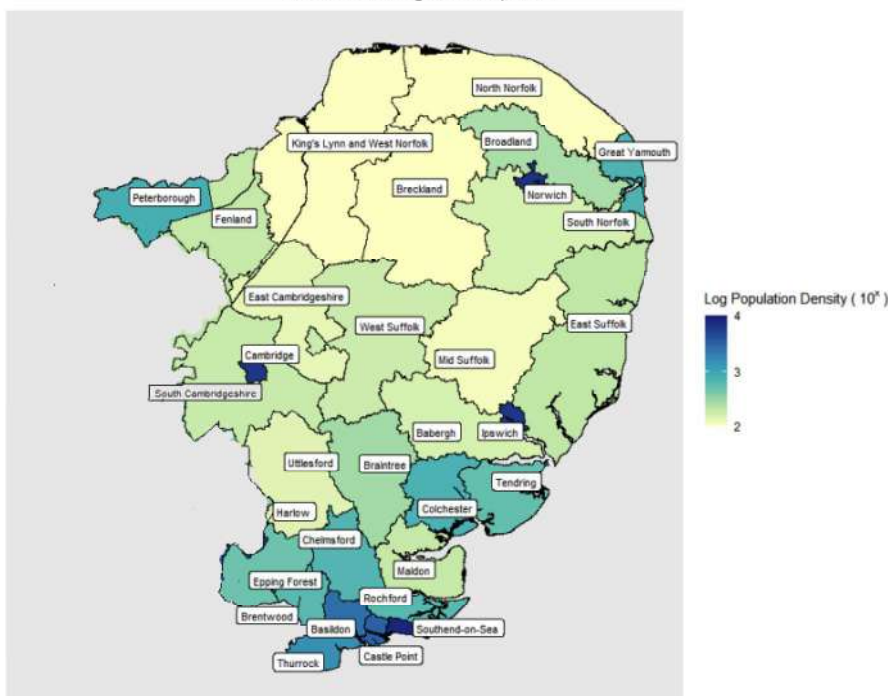
Prior to 2023, HighTide’s audiences were primarily in, from or closely connected to Suffolk. However, the period 2023-26, sees the company refocusing its area to also include Norfolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire.

This is a large area with a population of over 4 million people, consisting:

Suffolk: 758,556 Norfolk: 916,200 Cambs: 678,600 Essex: 1,832,752

This area - HighTide’s definition of the East of England - has within it many and widely varying demographics. Some areas are densely populated (mostly Essex) while others (Norfolk) have a population density of a third of that.

Population density (number of usual residents per square kilometre) within East of England by local authority district, 2021



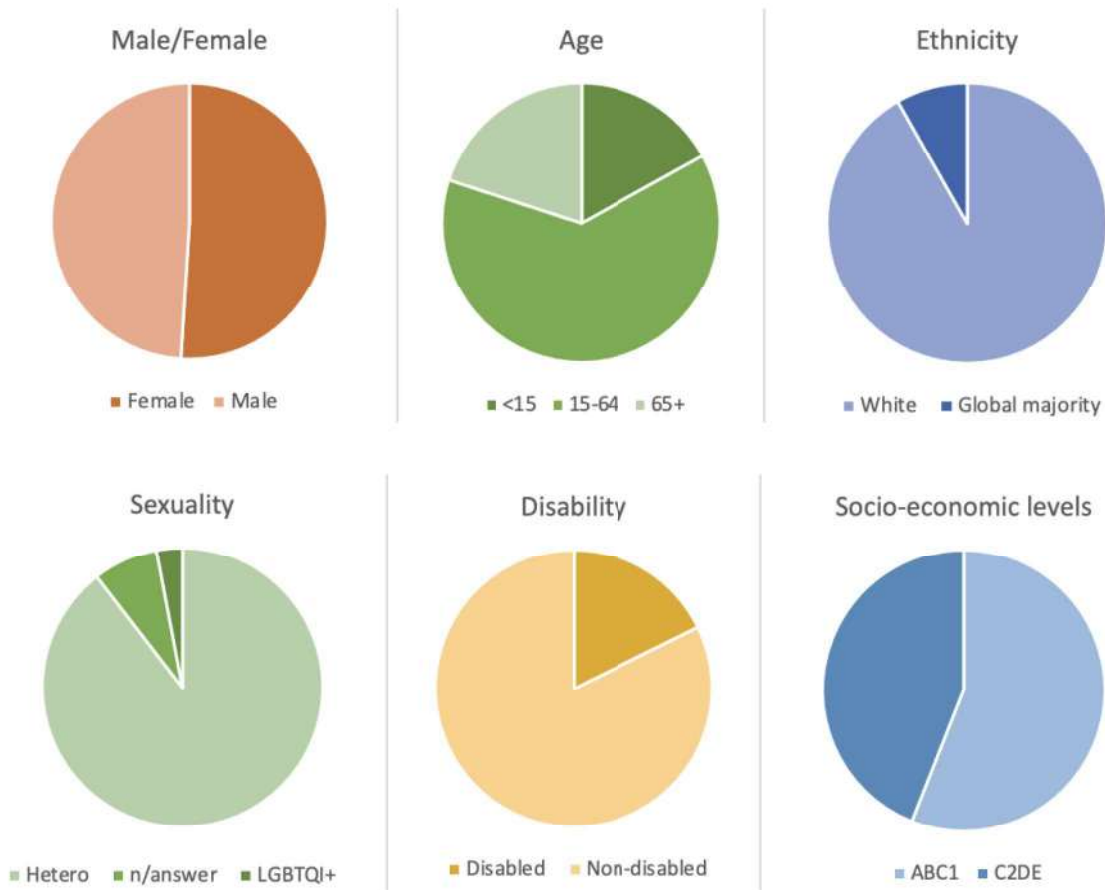
Source: Population density, Census 2021

As well as seeing the largest population increase at the last census in 2021 at 8.3%, it is an area of sharp contrasts in terms of wealth and deprivation. In the majority of the area, incomes are 3-10% lower than the UK average. The population is less ethnically diverse and generally older on average than the rest of England.

Although average life expectancy is almost 80 years for men and 84 for women across the region, the life expectancy difference between most deprived and least deprived area is over 8 years for men and over 6 years for women.

The most deprived communities are in the urban areas of Great Yarmouth, Lowestoft, King's Lynn, Norwich and Thetford, as well as areas in Tendring in Essex.

A broad-brush demographic summary, taken from the 2021 Census is as follows:



In addition, with approximately 45% of the population living in rural areas, it is worth noting the transport issues faced by a significant percentage of the population



Our Audiences

HighTide has regularly worked with the Audience Agency, the leading service provider in supporting arts organisations in England, to analyse audience make-up and benchmark data for many years. We use their industry-standard Audience Spectrum (and previously Audience Insight) segmentation tool to inform our marketing, audience development and programming plans. We will continue to use the Illuminate segmentation tools devised by PWC.

Our audiences are drawn from across the region, from Harlow to King's Lynn, Lowestoft to Cambridge and Felixstowe to Peterborough.

Using the Audience Agency's profiles, the region's key segments are:

Trips and Treats

Mainstream arts and popular culture fans influenced by children, family and friends:

- Modern young families, building a future

- Settled families with established lifestyles

Principal cultural likes: musicals, pantomimes, light drama (adaptations of known titles), live music, local stories.

Home and Heritage

Rural and small town pensioners attracted to daytime activities and historical content:

- Settled suburban seniors.

- Affluent residents of rural idylls.

Principal cultural likes: classical music, opera, ballet, jazz, amateur dramatics, light drama (known title adaptations), pantomime, opportunities to socialise.

Dormitory Dependables

Suburbanites and small towners interested in heritage activities and mainstream arts:

- Commuter-town families, investing for the future

- Settled, comfortable residents, enjoying regional life

Principal cultural likes: musicals, pantomime, light drama (known title adaptations) live music.

HighTide's key audience segments in 2022-23, making up 58%, were:

- Trips and Treats: 28%

- Home and Heritage: 13%

Another 28% of the audience consisted of less represented segments:

- Commuterland CultureBuffs: 17%

- Affluent, professional and suburbanite keen consumers of traditional culture:

Prosperous families, living in the commuter-belt of major urban centres.

Wealthy empty-nesters with comfortable lifestyles in more rural areas.

Experience Seekers: 11%

Highly active, diverse, social and ambitious regular and eclectic arts engagers:

Socially minded mid-life professionals with varied artistic tastes

Students and graduates with adventurous attitudes in diverse urban areas.

Audiences: 2023–26 focus

Our demographic data shows that, over the 10-year period April 2013–March 2023, 11 of HighTide's top 20 customer postcodes were in London and 9 in the East of England. Much of the work in this period was at HighTide's Suffolk festivals and occasional London and Edinburgh venues. In 22/23, HighTide sold 280 tickets to regional performances and 1,252 tickets to performances in London. With the shift of artistic mission and geographical focus, in the period 23–26, our aim is to increase our percentage of East-based customers so that at least 12 of our top 20 postcodes are in the East of England.

We want to become better known within the region, and to this end look towards intentional repetition in our touring programming, ideally visiting at least twice within three years where we can.

Whilst protecting the ability to be flexible and responsive to the work and its best performance context, and having regard to the most effective use of resources, we plan the following focus points for our performance work:

- Urban: Ipswich, Norwich, Cambridge, Colchester
- Rural: Breckland, East Suffolk
- Coastal: Lowestoft, Great Yarmouth, Tendring coastal towns

This intersects our touring programming on Priority Places and Levelling Up for Culture places, as defined by the Arts Council in 2021. (See pg. 25)

Our Community Engagement work, however, will focus more tightly within Suffolk with participants from Ipswich and Lowestoft. (See pg. 14.)

HighTide has a loyal audience built over many years. During this period we need to maintain and build relationships with these loyalists, making sure they have regular chances to see our work in venues they are familiar with – and also in places they don't know.

However, just as important to us are people who don't know our work. In order to engage with them we will visit venues across HighTide's East of England region, traditional theatres, community venues and even pubs, which are perhaps more accessible/welcoming to more of the population.

The East is also characterised by huge differences in socio-economic status. As well as having less disposable income for theatre visits, it may not even occur as an option. In order to address this where possible we will:

- ensure some tickets at some venues have lower price points
- take work into communities, taking the responsibility for travel upon us instead

We will use all available marketing avenues/methods and work closely with venues and community partners to ensure the widest possible reach. We will also employ a marketing specialist with a broad experience of East of England performance marketing.

Measurable Action	Who	Timeline	ACE IP
Audience Development			
Increase EoE audience base (% of top 20 postcodes in EoE). Measure through Culture Counts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10/20 EoE postcodes • 11/20 EoE postcodes • 12/20 EoE postcodes 	AD, EM	Q4 23/24 Q4 24/25 Q4 25/26	A&Q Dyna I&R
Increase Priority Places and Levelling-Up for Culture Places on our regular tour circuit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 • 3 • 4 	AD, P	Q4 23/24 Q4 24/25 Q4 25/26	I&R
Increase number of attendees who may face socio-economic barriers. Measure through Culture Counts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20% • 30% • 40% 	EM	Q4 23/24 Q4 24/25 Q4 25/26	I&R
Increase number of attendees who may face barriers due to a disability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15% 	EM	Q4 23/24	I&R

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17% • 20% 		Q4 24/25 Q4 25/26	
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Growth of Audience recognition and sales

In 2022/23, HighTide...

- Presented 32 public performances
- Visited 4 public performance venues
- Welcomed over 1,532 public audience numbers: 280 in the region, 1,252 in London
- 7 online events, 48 participants

Over the period 2023-26, we want to grow our annual audience numbers in the East of England and beyond, with a target of 3,500 people to be engaged annually by the end of this period.

Through our programming decisions, our venue and partner choices and our marketing and comms strategy and activity, we will develop a segment of new and socio-economically diverse audiences for theatre in the East of England.

We will ensure access to our work for the most vulnerable audiences and those that require accessibility support, increasing access also through digital platforms and online work.

Measurable Action	Who	Timeline	ACE IP
Growth of Audience			
Increase overall number of tickets sold: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,800 • 2,500 • 3,500 	AD, EM	Q4 23/24 Q4 24/25 Q4 25/26	A&Q Dyn
Ensure access to our work through digital platforms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio production of <i>Ghost Stories by Candlelight</i>, 750 listeners • Sound installation of <i>Ness</i>, remote-digital audience, 500 • Playwrights East online archive: 320 views NB: This digital work sits outside of NPO agreement; and requires funds additional to our NPO-funded work	AD, P, EM	Q4 24/25 Q3 25/26 Q4 25/26	Dyn I&R

Monitoring and Evaluating Audience Data

Relationship Management and Data Collection

Critical to the delivery of our relationships with our audiences and participants and for delivering on our fundraising ambitions is the careful maintenance of our relationships moving forward - with audiences, participants, stakeholders, supporters, donors and funders.

Essential to the effective management of these relationships is the efficient and comprehensive use of Opportunities, the relational fundraising database system linked to our Spektrix box office system. This enables us to manage our wider audience development data capture whilst supporting the delivery of our fundraising activities, all in accordance with GDPR-compliant best practice.

Equally important in helping us gather information so we can learn more about their interests alongside personal information and capacities to give will be the regular surveying of those on our database. This will allow us to keep up with reactions to shifts in programme, and maintain high levels of goodwill. The establishment of new and rigorous surveying and evaluative data systems will inform all our activities in 23-26.

More rigorous and in-depth data will be held on our existing and potential audiences, artists, participants and workforce using improved data capture and surveying mechanisms, making use of Spektrix, the ACE Culture Counts Impact and Insight Toolkit and Illuminate.

We want to know our audiences better, so we will develop audience, staff and peer surveys for each year, aiming for consistency to enable sensible and useful comparison.

Measurable Action	Who	Timeline	ACE IP
Monitoring, analysing and evaluating data to inform programming and strategic planning			
Recruitment of p/t Development Manager, experienced in CRM	ED, AD	July '23	Dyn
Recruitment of p/t Engagement Manager, experienced in Spektrix	ED, AD	July '23	A&Q Dyn
Training for relevant staff on Spektrix/Opportunities system	AD, DM	Q1 24/25	Dyn
Clean up, de-dupe and clear up data on Spektrix <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan 	EM, DM	Q4 23/24	A&Q Dyn

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Execute 40% cleaned, retagged/segmented 80% cleaned, retagged/segmented 		Q4 24/25 Q4 25/26	
Set up account with Culture Counts, ACE survey tool	ED, EM	Q1 23/24	Dyn
Culture Counts/Illuminate surveys set up and sent out for all productions/projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to all who buy tx through HighTide work with partners to survey our audiences in their venues or share their (anonymised) data 	EM	pre/post-show as appropriate	A&Q Dyn I&R
Set up account on Illuminate, ACE data collection platform	ED	Sept '23	A&Q Dyn
Download, analyse and report on CC and Illuminate data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> at the end of each project quarterly 	EM	as appro. Qly	A&Q Dyn
Upload and submit event and audience data to Illuminate	EM, GM	Quarterly	A&Q Dyn

Strengthening our Marketing and Communications

Developing our brand identity and visibility

In 2022/23, HighTide had:

- an average of over 1,600 visits to website per month
- 27,200 followers on Twitter
- 2,400 people follow us on Facebook
- 2,044 followers on Instagram

Having refocused our work, our mission and our region, and following a period with less public HighTide activity due to Covid, we will be working hard in this period to strengthen our profile and marketing and communications in every area.

Following substantial research and review, we launched our new updated website at the start of 23/24. We will develop our digital marketing channels more widely to engage more widely with potential audiences in our sub-region,

We will appoint an experienced, marketing specialist with a broad experience of East of England performance marketing to manage our marketing and comms, aiming to lessen our reliance on London-based consultants. With this person, we will:

- Use all available marketing avenues/methods and work closely with venues and community partners to ensure the widest possible reach. Strong partnership planning with venues will assist with marketing and audience development.
- Develop supportive reciprocal relationships with other companies who embody our ambitions to share good news stories
- Re-examine and re-segment/tag our Spektrix database, ensuring improved use of Spektrix's reporting functions, also reducing the need to pay for additional data analysis.
- Using the Culture Counts and Illuminate platforms, we will survey our audiences and collect data, making analysis key to our thinking and decision-making.

We will work as effectively as possible with regional and local media outlets, generating viable local interest stories around productions, performances and engagement activities. In addition, we will generate content-led marketing, including website blogs, behind-the-scenes info, cast Insta takeovers and core staff, cast/creative team interviews.

In order to help make this work possible, we will seek to ensure we build elements of marketing spend into funding applications.

Over the life of this plan, HighTide will deliver a fundamental brand shift to accompany the Dynaic refocusing for the company and increase the national profile of the HighTide brand. We will engage further and deeper with our audiences and with organisations across our region and beyond, developing a HighTide 'voice' that is personable and chatty.

Positioning HighTide's values front and centre, we will ensure our brand identity is well understood by all staff, trustees etc. This will help how our stakeholders perceive us and have an impact on how we are seen in the wider ecology of culture within the East of England. We will include info on climate-careful practices in our marketing mix, inspiring others to enact positive change too.

We will own and celebrate HighTide's past successes/alumni on our website, in our socials and in newsletters to remind people of what we've done and our excellent track record. This and the excellent standard of our work will garner great reviews and media coverage, further extending awareness of HighTide and our work in culture conversations.

We will capitalise on word-of-mouth opportunities through our existing audience members, supporters and participants by establishing on-going campaigns to talk up our work and programmes with their friends and peers. Our ELT will also seek to place regular opinion pieces in leading industry publications, leading on and engaging with cultural debate.

This work to re-energise HighTide’s position in the industry and in our region as a leading new writing company, will improve HighTide’s standing within the East of England and ensure our voice has a region-wide impact. We will always look for a place at the table to help in shaping conversations about theatre writing and cultural growth.

In order to boost our profile, we will develop structured campaigns for e-newsletters to supporters and on website/socials publicising current work in an engaging manner. We know that stories about the people involved are more engaging than posts that just shout buy-a-ticket!

Our digital and online work will expand our reach, increasing the audiences able to see our work, embedding accessibility into work.

Measurable Action	Who	Timeline	ACE IP
Strengthening our Marketing and Communications and developing brand identity			
Launch new website		Q1 23/24	A&Q Dyn I&R
Appoint MarComms specialist with EoE experience	ED, AD	Q2 23/24	A&Q Dyn I&R
Spektrix training	EM	Q4 23/24	Dyn
National/industry press:: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 pieces, reviews or commentaries • 3 pieces, reviews or commentaries • 5 pieces, reviews or commentaries 	EM	23/24 24/25 25/26	A&Q Dyn
Regional press coverage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 pieces, reviews or commentaries • 6 pieces, reviews or commentaries 	EM	23/24 24/25	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 8 pieces, reviews or commentaries 		25/26	
<p>Increase in social media followers by 5%:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Twitter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 27,170 followers ○ 27,885 followers ○ 28,600 followers ● Facebook <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2,470 followers ○ 2,535 followers ○ 2,600 followers ● Instagram <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2,042 followerson ○ 2,096 followers on Instagram ○ 2,150 followers 	EM	by Q4 2324 Q4 2425 Q4 2526 Q4 2324 Q4 2425 Q4 2526 Q4 2324 Q4 2425 Q4 2526	A&Q Dyn I&R
<p>Increase annual website visits by 5%:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Website visits to HighTide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 19,000 visits ○ 19,500 visits ○ 20,000 visits 	EM	by Q4 2324 Q4 2425 Q4 2526	A&Q Dyn I&R
Two HighTide speakers at industry events and award nominations	AD, ED, EM, Prod, DM	Annually	A&Q

Organisational

By 2030, HighTide will be a nationally celebrated new writing company, led by our values and with strong financial resilience.

At HighTide, our values are not just words on a page. We live them every day and try to enact them in all areas of our work.

- We work in a spirit of constant evaluation, reflection and improvement.
- We are flexible where we can be and fleet of foot where necessary
- We have a strong appetite for artistic risk; prudent appetite for financial risk
- We have a strong ethical policy that ties closely to climate careful values.

During the life of this plan:

- HighTide will be re-established as a leading voice in new writing in the UK, synonymous with the Royal Court, the Bush and Paines Plough
- HighTide AD/CEO will have a firm place in the artistic leadership of the region, a valued part of the decision and direction making
- HighTide will be a significant voice in national conversations about:
 - **touring**, attending ITC and UK Theatre events and joining touring networks including NRTF
 - **environmental action** in theatre, including climate dramaturgy, speaking at conferences, giving lectures and making resources freely available
 - **new writing**, including sharing opinion pieces, and promoting best practice in working with writers.
- Systems and processes will continue to be in place to support excellent financial management, project management and reporting
- a comprehensive raft of organisational policies will remain in place and be reviewed regularly
- The highest standards of governance will continue to be upheld, with an informed, confident and robust Board of Trustees

Staff

This plan outlines a fundamental shift in HighTide's model. We recognise that to deliver on these ambitions, our staffing structure had to shift accordingly, allowing us to invest our finite resources into delivering amazing work, greater audience numbers and additional revenues from the private sector as well as reaching out to and engaging with new partners effectively.

As the result of an organisational review by the Executive team in 23/24, it was decided that with a staff of just five people, it isn't viable - or the best economic approach - to have a two-person Executive of two Joint CEOs and that a staff restructure was needed to serve the company and to make best use of resources.

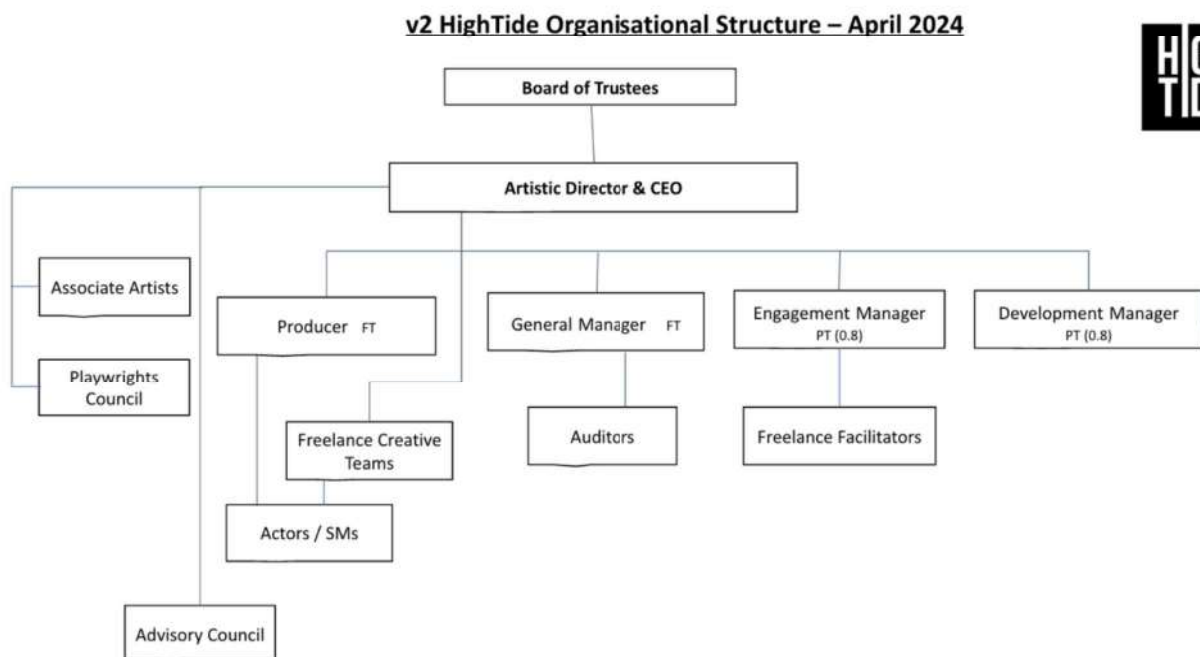
Under the new more effective structure, the Artistic Director, who has over 15 years of arts leadership and who is well-regarded within the sector and the region, will be sole CEO with overall responsibility for delivering the operations of the charity, under the strategy agreed by the Board, and supported by the Trustees.

The role of Executive Director will disappear and the staff team will consist of:

- Artistic Director & CEO (f/t)
- General Manager (with enhanced responsibilities especially in relation to finance and ACE reporting (f/t)
- Producer (new role, f/t)
- Development Manager (f/t)
- Engagement Manager (p/t: 0.8)

This provides an appropriate structure to support the Strategic Plan.

This diagram shows the changes from April 2024:



HighTide has a highly skilled, dedicated and inspired staff team of theatre industry professionals with significant experience of successful project delivery within their respective fields. The team now comprises a mix of people based in the East of England and London; this much better represents the ambitions of the company. The staff structure has been refined to match the growing programme of work and, while not overloading staffers, aims to be ambitious and to stretch individuals.

We try to balance our staffing between full- and part-time roles. 20% of the staff are currently part-time, aiming to balance our needs and ambitions with our capacities and finances.

Whether full or part-time, HighTide staff should feel respected, stretched and able to be creative within their roles and the wider company. We believe that people should be able to bring their whole selves to work, with an attitude of flexibility from both employee and company.

HighTide can be a brilliant training ground for early/mid-career arts professionals, building skills and experience in exchange for open-hearted commitment to our work. We recognise that we are an excellent stepping-stone to the next job and we work hard to develop robust CPD plans for everyone. There is an Annual Away Day for staff for reflection, review and forward planning.

Structured staff meetings ensure information sharing and robust planning, vital especially with part-time staff to feel integral to the team. The core staff are supported by a larger body of freelance professionals, including Associate Artists, PR specialists and professional accountancy and insurance firms. In order to realise the work in this plan, the staff structure and balance may need to flex, change and grow. For example, this may include:

- Increased proportion of EoE based staff
- Annual Away Days for staff for reflection, review and forward planning
- Annual review of staffing resources versus needs and ambitions
- Increased diversity in HighTide staff body
- Increased focus on fundraising, increase p/t Development Manager to f/t
- Increased writer development (commercial and subsidised), marketing/communications and community/schools work, increase p/t Engagement Manager to f/t

Measurable Action	Who	Timeline	ACE IP
Staff			
At least 20% of HighTide core staff will be based in the East of England	AD	Q4 23/24	I&R

Increase diversity of staff, aiming for at least: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% female-identifying • 20% LGBTQI+ • 20% staff from the global majority • 20% identifying as having a disability 	AD	ongoing	I&R
Annual review of staffing resources versus needs and ambitions	AD	Annually Q4	Dyn I&R
Annual Away Days for staff for reflection, review and forward planning	AD, GM	Annually Q3	Dyn I&R

Board and Governance

HighTide is constituted as a Company Limited by Guarantee and a registered Charity and governed by a robust, proactive and experienced Board of Trustees who serve for a term of five years, with an optional additional term of up to 3 years. The Trustees appoint the CEO, who in turn leads the organisation.

Currently, HighTide's Board of Trustees has eight members, who collectively provide a wealth of support, including specialist industry insight, regional East of England knowledge and experience, as well as perspectives from other professional sectors.

Tim Clark has been the Chair since November 2016. A former trustee of the National Theatre for eight years, sitting on its Nominations and Finance and Audit committees, Tim chairs four board meetings a year, an Away Day strategy meeting, and additional meetings as required.

HighTide aims to further diversify the Board including a commitment to 50% EoE representation, whilst retaining expertise as the Chair of Trustees and Chair of Finance and Audit remain in their roles.

A Finance and Audit Sub-committee (F&A) meets four times a year. The Executive presents budget, cashflow and fundraising updates, alongside future planning. Trustee Liz Fosbury, Chief Operating Officer of the National Theatre, has chaired the F&A since November 2016.

The Board annually reviews the skill sets represented amongst the Trustees. The skills required on the Board reflect HighTide's Equality Action Plan and it applies these guidelines when recruiting new

Trustees. A Nominations committee of three Trustees make recommendations to the whole Board for their approval.

The Chair and Deputy Chair of the Board of Trustees and the Chair of the FandA committee all end their terms in 2024. These are significant appointments and the recruitment process will begin in early 2024.

Following a Trustee skills audit, recruitment for new trustees and a new Chair will take place in Q4 23/24 and Q1 24/25, with a focus on these areas:

- legal
- arts/charitable finance
- education policy
- governance and strategic oversight
- literary contracting

HighTide’s Equality Action Plan guidelines will be followed when recruiting for all new Trustees.

Risk is assessed by the AD and GM quarterly and mitigating actions applied using a finance risk analysis as part of the organisational Risk Register Analysis, reviewed quarterly by the Trustees. To ensure truly independent oversight, Trustees are required to declare any conflict of interest at the start of each quarterly Board meeting.

The Arts Council’s *Let’s Create* Investment Principles are a standing agenda item at quarterly Board meetings. Each Investment Principle has an allocated Board champion who liaises with a nominated staff member, reviews activity and reports at quarterly Board meetings on progress for ‘their’ Investment Principle. The IPs are a focus of a significant part of the annual Board Away Day to increase and embed awareness.

In addition to the Board of Trustees, HighTide has a committed and productive Advisory Council, made up of influential people who are well-connected across the region and the industry. They help us shape our artistic programme and, very importantly, our fundraising strategy and activities.

Measurable Action	Who	Timeline	ACE IP
Board and Governance			
Recruitment of new Board Chair	Trustees, AD	Q1 24/25	Dyn I&R

Recruitment of new Finance and Audit Chair	Trustees, AD	Q4 23/24	Dyn I&R
Recruit new Board members with strategic expertise	Trustees, AD	Q4 23/24	A&Q Dyn I&R
Appoint Board Champions for ACE Let's Create Investment Principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Responsibility • Inclusivity and Relevance • Ambition and Quality • Dynamism 	Chair	Q3 23/24	A&Q Dyn I&R ER
IP Champions report to the wider Board on a quarterly basis	Trustees	Quarterly	A&Q Dyn I&R ER
Ensure significant EoE representation at Board level. After recruitment period, see at least 50% of Trustees live in, or come from, the region	Chair	Q2 24/25	Dyn I&R
Ensure diversity of Trustees, to at least: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% female-identifying • 15% LGBTQI+ • 25% trustees of/with global majority ethnic heritage • 20% trustees identifying as having a disability 	Chair	by Q4 25/26	Dyn I&R
Two-yearly Board skills audit	Chair, GM	Q2 23/24 Q2 25/26	A&Q Dyn I&R
Two-yearly Trustee appraisals	Chair	Q2 23/24 Q2 25/26	A&Q Dyn
Annual 360 degree Chair review	Trustees AD	Q2 annually	A&Q Dyn

Our Partners

Partnership working is key to HighTide's life and ambitions and the company has developed a diverse range and ever-increasing number of partnerships which help the organisation deliver quality artistic product and access and engage previously under-represented communities, addressing barriers to participation, whether they be social, geographic or economic. We have created an organisational culture which places these partnerships at the heart of our ways of working.

Arts Council England

ACE is our principal partner and funder and we are proud and grateful to be a National Portfolio Organisation again for 2023-26, helping them to deliver their Let's Create Strategy. We maintain regular information-sharing contact with our ACE Relationship manager as well as a range of other officers from a range of departments. As an NPO, we report to ACE quarterly on both activities and finances, measuring our activities against their Investment Principles and Activity Outcomes.

As well as our NPO grant, HighTide was given permission to apply for a National Lottery Project Grant in order to extend our autumn 2023 tour deeper into the region. This recognises the value and significance of this developing element of our touring work.

Lansons | Team Farner

The relationship with our principal corporate partner, started as an offer of desk space by Lansons co-founder Clare Parsons and has developed into an ongoing 14-year partnership. The long term partnership which is both unique in the arts, and award-winning, with 24 awards won including 'Best Corporate Partnership' (Social Impact Awards 2014), and a special mention in the *Evening Standard* and *The Guardian* as an example of innovative collaboration between a business and an arts charity.

As well as an invaluable office base in London, Lansons give us advice and support on a wide range of aspects of our work from PR and online strategy to audio-visual expertise and meeting rooms. Auditions, rehearsals and play readings have all happened at Lansons, further animating an already vibrant building. Lansons clients are brought to HighTide performances and wrap-around events.

Local Authorities

A supportive partnership with Suffolk County Council Arts Team underpins all HighTide's work, unlocking potential new projects and stakeholders as the company grows and diversifies. We regularly consult with both SCC and East Suffolk Council about our plans and their priorities. ESC

has a long-standing relationship with HighTide from the earliest festival days in Halesworth right up to their support for both performance and creative writing workshops in key areas for the first *Ghost Stories by Candlelight* tour.

Others in our region

We play a significant role in the arts ecology of the East, partnering with:

- New Wolsey Theatre
- Theatre Royal Bury St Edmunds
- Mercury Theatre, Colchester
- Harlow Playhouse
- Ipswich, Colchester and Norfolk Museums
- Suffolk Libraries
- National Centre for Writing
- First Light Festival
- Latitude Festival
- Norfolk and Norwich Festival
- Norwich Theatres
- Eastern Angles
- Lowestoft Rising Cultural Education Partnership
- Marina Theatre, Lowestoft
- Seagull Theatre, Lowestoft
- Aspire Black Suffolk
- Britten Pears Arts
- The Hive, Ipswich
- Future Female Society
- UEA
- University of Suffolk
- University of Essex
- University of Cambridge
- Queens Theatre Hornchurch
- Menagerie
- Ink Festival
- Cambridge Junction

HighTide is also an associate member of the newly-formed East Anglian Producing Consortium, a place-based collaboration between Eastern Angles, HighTide, Landmark Theatres (Peterborough), Mercury Colchester, New Wolsey Ipswich, Theatre Royal Bury St Edmunds and Norwich Theatres. The consortium aims to ensure that audiences across East Anglia have access to high-quality theatre which speaks to the passions and interests of people living in the region. The consortium plans to co-produce one newly-commissioned, mid-scale production each year which will then tour to consortium venues.

As our new, wider 'home area of impact' grows in this period, we recognise the need to widen our partnerships into new areas, working to build relationships with Norfolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire County Councils and with delivery partners in those areas.

Beyond the East

HighTide will always pursue co-producing partnerships with organisations outside of the region too. We are part of the Touring Companies Network, a regular meeting of 35 touring companies making work of the highest quality for and with audiences across the UK and internationally. The network is committed to exploring collaborative working and collective actions to improve conditions within

the sector, and representation of the needs and impact of the touring ecology. Collective conversations are driven by a commitment to access, diversity and inclusion and to making working models sustainable and environmentally responsible.

Measurable Action	Who	Timeline	ACE IP
Partnerships			
<u>ACE:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly update emails and inclusion in newsletter e-lists • Invite to see all work • Annual NPO progress meeting 	AD, Chair, GM	Ongoing	A&Q Dyn I&R ER
<u>County and district councils beyond Suffolk and East Suffolk</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange meetings with relevant officers in Norfolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire • Inclusion in newsletter e-lists 	AD	Ongoing	A&Q I&R
<u>Lansons Team Farner management and staff</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular update emails/meetings with senior management • Inclusion in newsletter e-lists • Invitation to host client events at London performances 	AD, GM, DM	Ongoing	A&Q Dyn I&R

Financial

HighTide Budget 23-26

HighTide Budget 23-26

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
INCOME			
PRODUCED	£63,146	£70,333	£98,018
WRITER DEVELOPMENT	£ 21	£1,720	£2,600
ARTIST DEVELOPMENT	£ -	£11,525	£0
ENGAGEMENT	£ 311	£0	£0
COMMERCIAL	£ 12,140	£100	£100
FUNDRAISING	£ 399,140	£435,933	£471,708
TOTAL INCOME	£ 474,758	£ 519,611	£ 572,426
EXPENDITURE			
STAFF: Salaries, fees & wages	£ 185,898	£218,585	£220,554
PRODUCED WORK	£ 112,790	£99,906	£137,799
ARTIST DEVELOPMENT	£ 27,578	£21,205	£22,132
WRITER DEVELOPMENT		£28,890	£30,101
ENGAGEMENT		£10,520	£11,047
COMMERCIAL	£ 1,489	£0	£0
GENERAL ADMIN	£ 118,047	£120,278	£117,515
MARKETING (Core) - MAR	£ 17,551	£18,250	£17,080
DEVELOPMENT	£ -	£4,400	£4,620
ACCESS	<i>in other lines</i>	£3,100	£3,155
CLIMATE POSITIVE CONTINGENCY & OFFSETTING	<i>in other lines</i>	£2,075	£3,350
CONTINGENCY	£ 5,000	£5,000	£5,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£ 501,434	£ 532,209	£ 572,353
OPERATING NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	£ (26,676)	£(12,598)	£73
Board approved use of reserves to support artistic	£ 26,676	£15,000	
YE	£ -		

(Detailed budget: Appendix 1)

Following the appointment of Clare Slater as Artistic Director and the refocusing of HighTide's artistic mission, the Board of Trustees recognised the need to launch the company's new activities. Following discussions with the Executive, a release of reserves was agreed to enable a wide range of artistic activity and output over a limited two-year period. This enables the company to re-establish itself as a producing company in the East of England and in London, as well as creating writer development programmes and deepening its community engagement in Lowestoft and beyond. By the final year of this plan, the company is able to break even again, having strengthened its income generation model.

Financial Management

Excellent financial management is a key part of HighTide's management and governance. Budgets are regularly reviewed and reforecast with quarterly management accounts scrutinised by the Board's Finance and Audit committee before being presented to the full Board at quarterly meetings.

In addition to these processes and controls, we also build in contingencies as standard. The use of which is discussed, rather than automatically assumed.

Especially following the Covid-19 pandemic, we aim to increase resilience and financial security by building towards a 6-month reserves position.

It should be noted that Theatre Tax Relief, the increased percentage of which has been such a boon to theatre companies in recent post-pandemic years, will return to pre-pandemic levels of TTR in 2025.

Fundraising

HighTide is incredibly grateful to Arts Council England for its National Portfolio Organisation status and funding for this period 2023-26. However, in order to deliver on our artistic plans and ambitions, we need to secure additional core organisational funding through fundraising and earned income, helping to reduce our dependency on statutory funding. Our fundraising must seek to generate unrestricted support as far as possible while giving our donors and funders a clear sense of the value and long-term impact their support will have.

Our revenue model is strongly reliant on contributed income from statutory bodies, individual donors, trusts and foundations and corporate partnerships, so our relationships with these are critical to our success. We recognise the need to continue to invest strongly in these relationships over the lifetime of this Plan and for us to share with them our vision and goals for this period as they are integral to their delivery.

We believe in open communication in order to forge relationships which work for all parties and we remain committed to reaffirming this as the cornerstone of our relationships. Our philosophy towards developing this area of our work must be to create a valued community in which everyone is invited to play a part and enjoy the arts.

In order to increase our contributed income, we recognise the need to further develop our fundraising infrastructure. A solid fundraising Case for Support will form the cornerstone of all of our fundraising communications moving forward both online and offline.

Individual Giving

In this period and as a result of rescoping our mission, HighTide will re-shape our Individual Giving strategy, renewing donor cultivation efforts following the move away from the festival format. Effectively managed stewardship of this programme is essential and HighTide’s Advisory Council will help develop a robust strategy, looking to show a significant upturn in individual fundraising. This will include:

- Secure and consistent network of regular donors to support growth
- Incorporate fundraising into every corner of HighTide’s life
- Broaden network of HighTide ‘friends’, share creative vision and attract further support

Measurable Action	Who	Timeline	ACE IP
Individual Giving			
Secure and consistent network of regular individual donors to support growth: Friends level (£200+): 25 Good Friend (£1,200): 3 Major Donors (£3,000+): 5	AD, DM	Q4 23/24	A&Q Dyn
Friends level (£240+): 25 Good Friend (£600+): 5 Best Friends (£1,200+): 5		Q4 24/25	

Writers Circle+ (£5,000+): 5 Friends level (£240+): 31 Good Friend (£600+): 10 Best Friends: (£1,200+): 8 Writers Circle+ (£5,000+): 6		Q4 25/26	
Secure core organisational funding from Individual Giving (including Gift Aid): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £40,000 £54,000 £69,000 	AD, DM	Q4 23/24 Q4 24/25 Q4 25/26	A&Q Dyn
Increase number of Advisory Council members, with focus on 1. in-region business networks and 2. Networks in Norwich/N. Norfolk and Cambridge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 Advisory Council members 9 Advisory Council members 9 Advisory Council members 	AD, DM	Q4 23/24 Q4 24/25 Q4 25/26	A&Q Dyn

Trusts and Foundations

HighTide has an excellent track record of raising funds from charitable trusts and foundations, but acknowledges that competition for funding is fierce with trusts receiving many more requests than they can support. Past success is no guarantee of future funding, and in some cases actively precludes HighTide from applying. HighTide must work hard to build strategic relationships with new trusts and foundations.

Measurable Action	Who	Timeline	ACE IP
Trust and Foundations			
Secure core organisational funding from trusts and foundations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £60,000 £85,000 £105,000 	AD, DM	Q4 23/24 Q4 24/25 Q4 25/26	A&Q Dyn
Create T&F Sub-Committee of Advisory Council	AC	Q3 23/24	A&Q Dyn

Corporate Partnership

HighTide’s Principle Partner is Lansons | Team Farner. Their long-term, generous and open-spirited support, including in-kind London office space and operational backing (casting space; meeting rooms, office facilities), as well as exposing their client base to our productions, continues to be a backbone for HighTide.

As the High Tide brand continues to strengthen in the wider East of England, we also believe that there are opportunities to build a range of relationships with the business community in-region (including professional services organisations), through affinity partnerships, commercial sponsorships and corporate social responsibility grant-making.

However, whilst this new income line is important, it must be noted that the limited scale of the business sector in the East of England means that we will monitor our inputs vs outputs in corporate giving, and continue to prioritise trusts and individuals.

Measurable Action	Who	Timeline	ACE IP
Corporate Partnership			
Maintain and develop excellent relationship with Lansons Team Farner	AD, Chair, GM and all staff	Ongoing	A&Q Dyn
Create Corporate Sub-Committee of Advisory Council	AC	Q3 23/24	A&Q Dyn
Secure corporate sponsor/s: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 corporate partner (£10k) • 2 corporate partners (totalling £10k) • 3 corporate partners (totalling £15k) 	AD, DM	Q4 23/24 Q4 24/25 Q4 25/26	A&Q Dyn

For a more detailed outline of our Fundraising activity, see our Fundraising Action Plan 23-26 (Appendix 2).

Earned Income

Our revenue model is strongly reliant on contributed income and, to date, HighTide has relied on a limited range of earned income streams. We recognise the need to expand these over the lifetime of this plan in order to provide for organisational growth and to manage-out risk.

We plan to do this through:

- Increased Box Office income.
 - Every effort will be made to maximise BO income wherever possible.
 - We will look to balance smaller and/or priority-place/development tour venues with larger capacity venues in urban areas.
 - We will look to price our tickets both affordably, and also with a view to income generation and perceptions of quality.
- Inviting co-producer income.
 - We will seek co-producers and 'in association' partners for all HighTide projects, productions and tours. Just as HighTide does not have a venue, other organisations do not have the capacity/resources to develop work.
 - First priority will be for cash contribution co-producers, but this is increasingly challenging. Second priority will be inviting budget-allievitating, in-kind 'in association' partners.
- Theatre Production Tax Relief (TTR).
 - We are pleased that TTR levels have increased in recent years; they have formed a crucial backbone for the whole industry; but we prudently note that levels are set to reduce back to pre-pandemic levels in 2025. We will budget accordingly; and continue to lobby for this income stream.
- Monetising our expertise.
 - We are seeing an interest in paying for Climate Dramaturgy consultation from the Higher Education sector and the wider theatre industry. We will research how to best share this knowledge, monetising it where it feels right and responsible to do so.
 - If we don't raise the funds to provide a free-to-access Playwrights East model, we will implement a paid membership model, with bursary places available.
 - Occasionally clients seek out dramaturgical input from our Artistic Director. When she has capacity, we charge a day rate which comes back to HighTide

Measurable Action	Who	Timeline	ACE IP
Earned Income			
Box Office: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £8,000 • £31,339 • £41,378 	AD, EM	Q4 23/24 Q4 24/25 Q4 25/26	Dyna
Co-Production income: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £0 • £3,000 • £15,000 	AD, P	Q4 23/24 Q4 24/25 Q4 25/26	Dyna
Theatre Production Tax Relief: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £35,161 • £35,594 • £41,640 	AD, P	Q4 23/24 Q4 24/25 Q4 25/26	Dyna
Monetising our in-house expertise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1,100 • £11,525 	AD	Q4 23/24 Q4 24/25	Dyna

Ethics

HighTide upholds the highest ethical standards in all aspects of its work, clearly articulating the foundations in our values.

This ethical approach applies practically to:

- A strong commitment to diversity and equity of opportunity
- Maintaining good ethical practices across all aspects of the organisation – governance, teaching, creation, research, presenting, touring and partnerships
- Using ethical contracts and sustainable and mutually beneficial business practices
- Utilising climate-careful and low-carbon options whenever available
- Paying our staff, artists, practitioners and freelancers for their work well, promptly and without difficulty
- Supporting our artists with timely travel and safe accommodation
- Providing a safe environment when working with artists and participants
- Robust training and support for practitioners when working with vulnerable participants of any age

In 24/25 we will revisit our Ethical Policy and align it with our new Decarbonisation Action Plan.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Strategic Plan

This plan will be a living document that accompanies everything we do.

Quarterly:

- The staff team will RAG monitor all the KPIs quarterly, ensuring ongoing reflection and evaluation.
- The Board will RAG monitor the headline KPIs quarterly (**those in blue**), ensuring ongoing evaluation of the key, business critical and ACE Investment Principle areas.
- ACE will receive an update on HighTide's agreed Activity Plans and Investment Principles, of which our KPIs form the backbone.

Annually:

- The staff team will evaluate all the KPIs: celebrating successes and how they came about; analysing missed targets and candidly discussing the challenges; and collectively refreshing KPIs for the year(s) ahead.
- The Board will assess the staff's annual KPI report and make additional recommendations for the year(s) ahead (remembering the horizon of 2030) to the AD/CEO and team.
- The Risk Register will be updated with any relevant KPI impacts.
- Our annual ACE monitoring meeting will include reflections on our KPIs and, therefore, our agreed Activity Plans and Investment Principles.

Crucially, a missed target might not be a failure – it might be an indication of pursuing the wrong thing. Our KPI assessments will always be shaped as constructive and forward-looking.

Appendices

Appdx 1 3-year Budget detail - to follow after March Board meeting

Appdx 2 Fundraising Action Plan - to follow after Advisory Council Away Day, 26th Jan