

**BIDEFORD  
CULTURAL  
STRATEGY  
CASE FOR INVESTMENT**

**FINAL REPORT  
MAY 2024**



# FOREWORD

## CLLR CHERYL COTTLE-HUNKIN

LEAD MEMBER FOR CULTURE AND COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT

TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL



“ I’m pleased to introduce a new cultural investment plan for Bideford - the first of what we hope will be a set of three plans for Torrridge - one for each of our market towns of Bideford, Great Torrington and Holsworthy.

Towns are where we come together to live and work, eat and drink, learn, converse and play. They’re vital cultural and creative centres, generating ideas and opportunities that ripple out into surrounding rural areas.

But we’re realistic about the challenges they face: the changing nature of high streets; the difficulties constraining local young people; and the economic and educational barriers affecting residents.

Culture is just one of the ways we can find a path forward, for everyone who loves to take part, to create, to innovate and have fun.

Bideford and Torrridge are already home to a huge number of creatives, providing a strong foundation to build from. From gaming to football, fashion to film, pilates to pottery, skateboarding to music, we want local people to decide what culture means to them.

Bideford is at a crossroads. With the Appledore Maritime Innovation Centre two miles downstream, new investment in clean offshore energy and greener food production, this historic waterfront town is on the way to becoming a centre for creative thinking, future skills and entrepreneurship. Bideford was also this year granted Heritage Harbour status- one of just 12 ports across the country. This combination provides an exciting opportunity: recognising the strong sense of maritime heritage and identity, while attracting new investment for skills and jobs to help us thrive into the future. It’s important that we plan now for the upcoming opportunities. By talking with our communities and thinking about the long term,

we can ensure that when new openings arise we have a clear sense of who we are as a town, where we are going and the most efficient and impactful options for getting there.

Most important of all, we want the regeneration of Bideford to be for everyone. We have used two different agencies: Rising Arts Agency’s fresh approach invigorates and characterises the plan and their engagement with local young people leads this report. Rising Arts worked with Counterculture LLP, who brought a more traditional perspective, alongside national data and insight. We are grateful to both agencies for producing this distinctive plan.

We look forward to continuing to work with our communities, cultural players and partners to bring the contents of this report to fruition, and to writing Bideford’s next chapter together.

”

**CLLR Cheryl Cottle-Hunkin**



<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>03</b>
<b>STRATEGIC CONTEXT</b>	<b>04</b>
<b>BIDEFORD CONTEXT</b>	<b>08</b>
<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>VISION FOR CULTURAL INVESTMENT</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>ACTION PLANS</b>	<b>49</b>

In 2023 Torridge District Council commissioned Rising Arts Agency and Counterculture Partnership LLP to develop a cultural investment plan for Bideford.

This report sets out the findings gathered over six months of consultation and research to develop an investment basis for culture in Bideford.

It brings together the on-the-ground experiences of people who live, work and are growing

up in the town with the needs of local businesses, Torridge District Council, Bideford Town Council and existing cultural and heritage stakeholders like the Burton Art Gallery and Museum, within the context of regional and national strategies, policies and data.

The recommendations in this report have been shaped by the communities of Bideford, and reflect their experiences, thoughts and aspirations for their town.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Bideford is a beautiful waterfront town with a rich maritime history and thriving artist community in need of investment into creative and cultural activity that benefits all the local people and visitors that love it.**

**With an exciting future as a hub of green innovation and increasing regional investment initiatives such as the UK government's Levelling Up strategy, this is the time to invest and nurture a thriving cultural scene that supports the life cycle of all citizens and visitors of Bideford to stay, study and create meaningful careers and lives – providing both joy and jobs.**

## OUR DEFINITION OF CULTURE

**We use the shorthand of 'culture' throughout this report to encompass it in the widest sense – meaning arts, heritage, sport, food and anything else that contributes to the cultural richness of life in Bideford.**

# STRATEGIC CONTEXT NATIONALLY

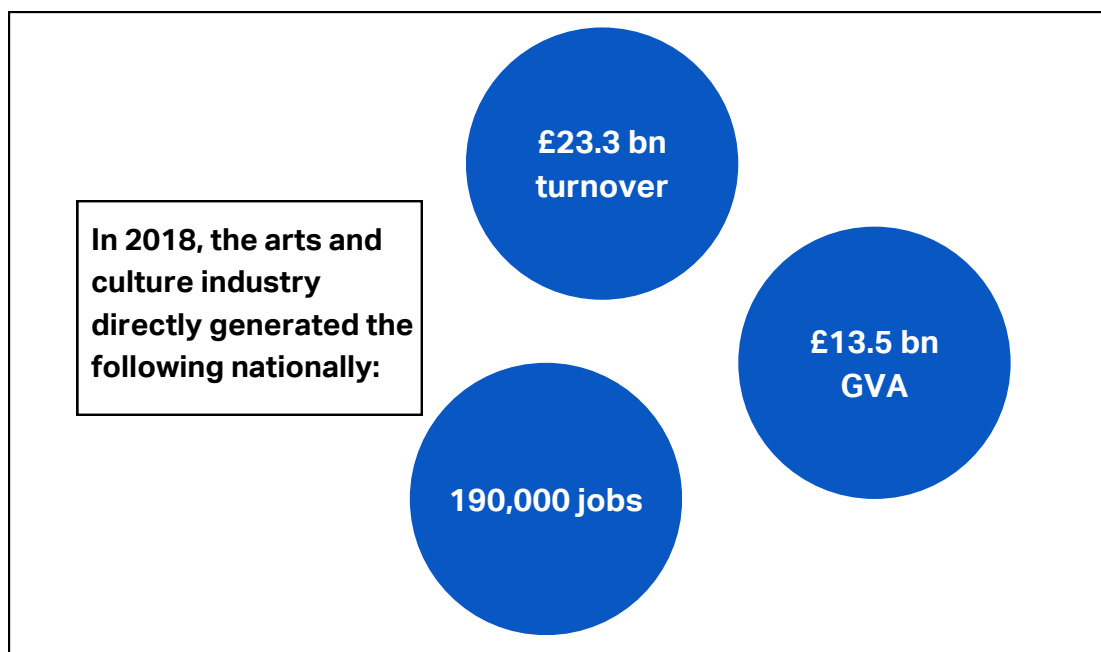
*"It's easy to think about investment in terms of pounds and pence, but when you look at any [town] across the world, places will either thrive or not depending on the cultural or sporting legacies that underpin them."*

**– John Cummins, Future Cities 2019**

## **A Strong Case for Culture**

Culture and creativity have long been recognised as signifiers of thriving communities. From the traditional crafts of our past to the technical innovations of our future, culture plays a vital role in society.

Within the local authority strategies of Torridge and North Devon and of national bodies such as Arts Council England, English Heritage and many more, culture is recognised as playing a vital role in developing cohesive, healthy and sustainable communities and local economies.

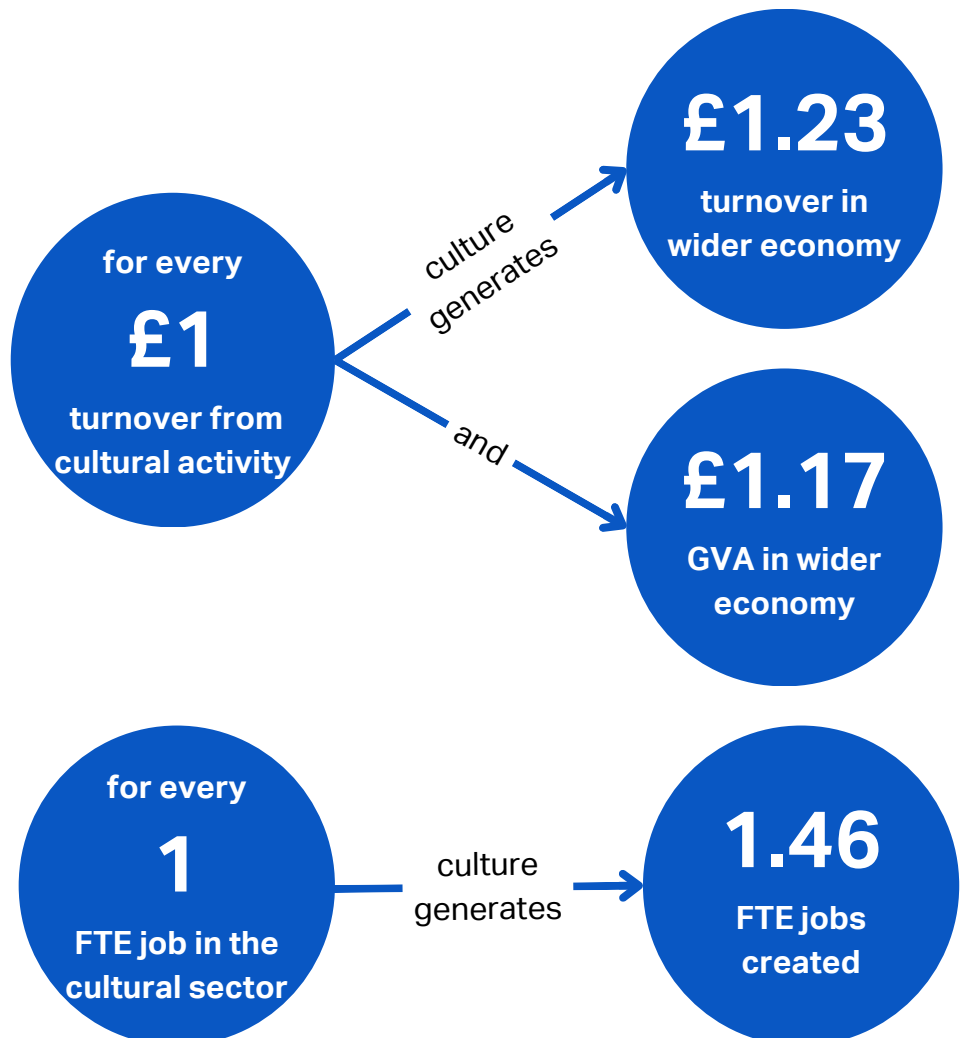


# STRATEGIC CONTEXT NATIONALLY

Indirectly culture also provides jobs through the many industries that provide goods and services to cultural organisations and audiences, as well through audiences and employees of the cultural sector who go on to spend in the local area. The CEBR report on the contribution of the arts and culture industry to the UK economy (2020) takes this full impact into account

and documents the broad economic impact and value that cultural activity provides.

Investment in culture is a multiplier in how it contributes economically and socially to the benefit of local communities, raising aspirations and quality of life whilst providing considerable financial benefit to a place.



# STRATEGIC CONTEXT REGIONALLY

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*"In the next five years, northern Devon will be locally, nationally, and internationally recognised as a place where creativity thrives in unison with its landscape and communities."*

**– Northern Devon  
Cultural Strategy**

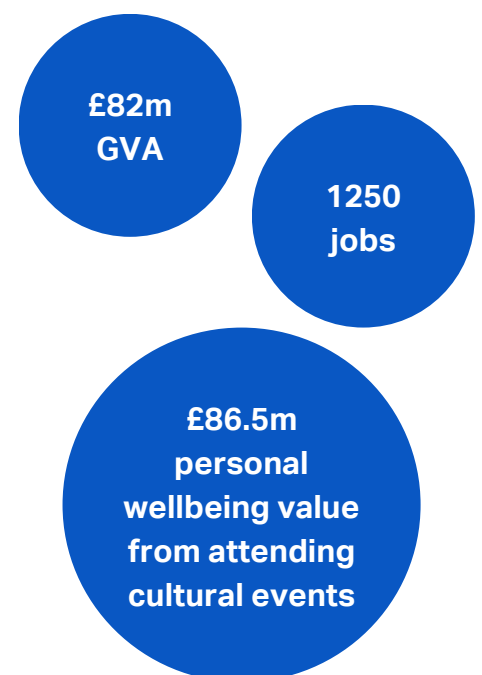
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The South West is home to 117 Arts Council England funded National Portfolio Organisations and between 2023-26, they will receive a combined investment of more than £111 million from the Arts Council alone.

In addition, there are many more artists, creative practitioners, and cultural organisations funded through the Arts Council's National Lottery Project Grants and Development funds and through Heritage bodies, trusts and foundations, such as South West Museum Development, hosted by Bristol City Council, which was recently awarded £1,276,800 in grant funding by Arts Council England to continue the regional museum development programme. It

includes training and skills development, a programme of grant investment and a framework of local Museum Development Officers across the South West Area.

**In Northern Devon, the cultural industries contributes:**



# STRATEGIC CONTEXT BENEFITS

Within Bideford, culture has the potential to deliver against many of the key priorities for the area, including those of Bideford Town Council and Torridge District Council by:

## NEW INDUSTRIES



- Playing a key role in developing emerging sectors and technologies;

## ECONOMIC GROWTH



- Contributing to a thriving economy, and a diverse and confident workforce, through training, vocational and skills development, creative education and apprenticeships;

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING



- Improving physical and mental health outcomes through participation;

## ACTIVE LIFESTYLES



- Promoting active, culturally enriched and healthy lifestyles.

**A key challenge for many local authorities in nurturing the right environments in which their local communities can thrive, is often the need to balance shrinking budgets with increased demands. In addition to statutory services, cultural provision can seem like a luxury, rather than part of the solution.**

**This report aims to develop the case for investment in culture in Bideford and to support a road map to delivery.**

**274  
creative  
businesses**

**288  
jobs in  
cultural and  
creative  
industries**

# BIDEFORD CONTEXT

**Bideford is embarking on a period of significant change as it seeks to grow and develop its cultural, creative and heritage sectors. There is a clear desire and a need to maximise economic and social impact to deliver on local priorities including education, employment, quality of life, and health and wellbeing, among other things.**

Collaboration will be vital, and Torridge District Council is already working to develop and foster the necessary infrastructure, partnerships and shared resources regionally (North Devon) and nationally (Arts Council England) but more must be done.

On a policy level, the cultural ambitions and actions for Torridge District Council align with wider investment strategies at both regional and national level. The Covid-19 pandemic had a devastating impact on the sector and whilst there have been strong signs of recovery, more recently, the

cost-of-living crisis has presented immense challenges around work opportunities and audience behaviours for instance reduction in attendance and local spending.

The Government's support packages for the cultural sector have been significant (e.g., Cultural Recovery Fund, Cultural Development Fund), but public funding remains tight. Local authorities have faced significant financial pressures in recent years, and this is will have a direct impact on councils' ability to directly fund the culture sector, in addition to other resourcing such as dedicated culture personnel and political pressures.

**Bideford, like many other places in the UK, now requires a long-term investment plan with short, medium and long-term interventions to attract diverse income streams and avoid an over dependence on the local authority.**



# BIDEFORD CONTEXT

**The following sets out overarching strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in relation to the cultural offer in Bideford as found through our stakeholder engagement and data from the Northern Devon Economic Baseline Document 2019 - 2023:**

## STRENGTHS

- Strong sense of community among residents;
- Good festival programme in the summer enjoyed by tourists and locals
- Close connection to nature – both blue and green;
- A high concentration of independent shops, artists and makers with 1 in 4 economically active residents in Torridge self-employed, well in excess of the county (15.6%) and national (9.5%) averages;
- Storied maritime history and abundance of heritage to celebrate, particularly following the Heritage Harbour status for the River Torridge;
- £15.6m of investment up the road for Appledore Clean Maritime Innovation Centre.

**23% of the economically active population are self-employed**

**Torridge has one of the lowest rates of Level 4 or above qualifications in the country at 26.2%**

## WEAKNESSES

- Lack of visible cultural offer makes promotion harder with just 2 Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisations in Torridge, 1 in Bideford and 4 across North Devon despite receiving the 3rd highest uplift in the last portfolio;
- Spread-out town centre and empty shop fronts on high street add to feeling of being 'left behind' with an issue of absentee landlords;
- Minimal further and higher education offer with lower attainment of Maths and English GCSEs than the Devon and England averages and Torridge one of the lowest rates of Level 4 or above qualifications in the country at 26.2%;
- Lack of transport links from/to surrounding areas district, with travel times more than twice the national average to access the nearest Secondary School, Higher Education Institution and hospital; and more than 75% longer to reach the nearest employment centre.

# BIDEFORD CONTEXT

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Chance to build on popular festivals programme with better publicity and more regular events;
- Brunswick North development has potential for shop fronts and a new museum to bring more activity to waterfront;
- Town Council Building, Methodist Church and Pannier Market have potential as more active community spaces, mixed-use spaces and cultural hubs;
- Using online spaces to collaborate across Northern Devon and create a new 'rural model for culture' as piloted by ArtMarkers;
- 8% population growth from 2011-2020, the 4th highest of market towns in North Devon, though mainly those aged 65+.

20-24 year olds  
are 3rd the  
lowest % of the  
population

The working age  
of population  
forecast to be  
almost static  
(+2%) by 2043

## THREATS

- Lack of opportunity means lots of young people leave at 18 for further education or careers elsewhere;
- Whilst northern Devon's population is expected to have grown by 13% by 2043, the working age population is forecast to be almost static (+2%), whilst older age groups (65+) are forecast to grow by 43% and for children (0-15) to fall by 1%. The generational imbalances are expected to widen in the future;
- Scepticism of change and poor reputation of culture as a positive influence;
- Professional occupations are underrepresented, with Food and Beverage providing the most jobs in Torridge in 2023 with an average wage of £16k against the District wide average of £28.9k;
- Cost of living crisis and severe lack of affordable housing driving out local residents, creatives and younger people with the average rent £775 per month in Bideford.
- Since 2023, work has been done through the STF funded Cultural Development post but this is short-term and needs to be embedded long term

# METHODOLOGY

**"We need to do something to bring people in that's not just like 'we've got a few good independent shops' because, you know, you'd go elsewhere over Bideford really. It's starting to be great, but it's not great yet."**

**– Young Entrepreneur,  
Mill Street**

In commissioning this research, Torrington District Council was keen to hear from a range of voices to ensure that the community of Bideford were at the heart of any cultural development for the town. Particular emphasis was placed on incorporating the voices of young people who are often left out of these conversations and who were highlighted as a priority group in the Northern Devon Cultural Strategy.

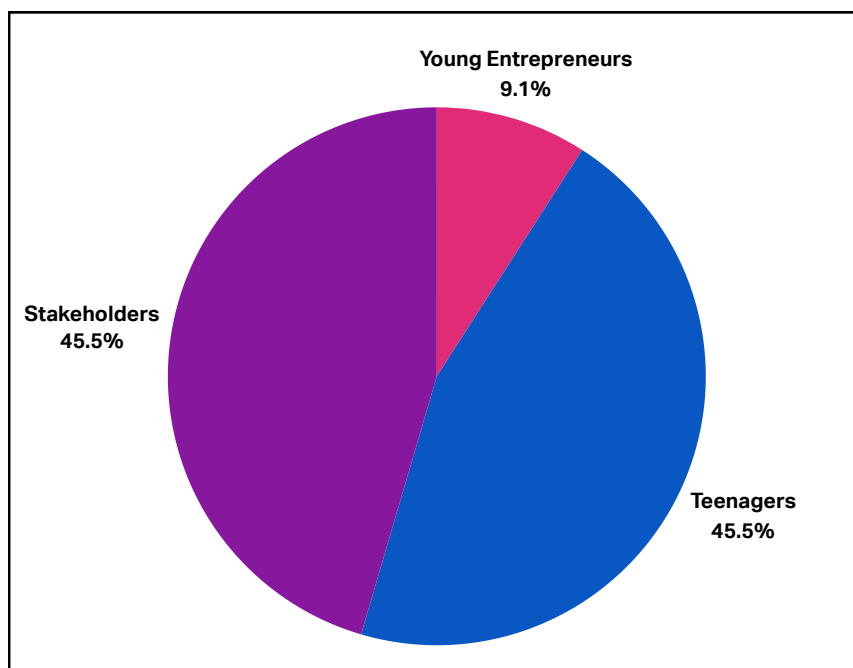
Our approach was a collaboration between creative agency Rising Arts Agency who led on stakeholder engagement and context-setting and consultancy firm, Counterculture Partnership LLP, who focused on the wider regional and national context, including opportunities for investment and funding. This two-pronged approach has enabled us to engage audiences that would not usually be reached by this type of consultancy and ensure that our recommendations are necessary, needed and viable.



# METHODOLOGY

## WHO WAS CONSULTED

- 15** key stakeholders from across the culture, heritage, local government and the artist community of Bideford
- 3** young entrepreneurs running creative retail businesses on Mill Street
- 15** teenagers who came to a drop in at Space Youth Services



We also engaged with the Bideford Regeneration Board's Culture, Heritage & Arts Sub Group by reviewing minutes and through updates from Torridge District Council.

# VISION FOR CULTURAL INVESTMENT

**We've created an ambitious and robust vision for cultural investment in Bideford, pulling together case studies and identifying alternative funding and partnership opportunities to address the urgent needs of the town.**

**We've combined Bideford's unique strengths and opportunities to explore, leverage and unlock potential investment and visibility to the town.**

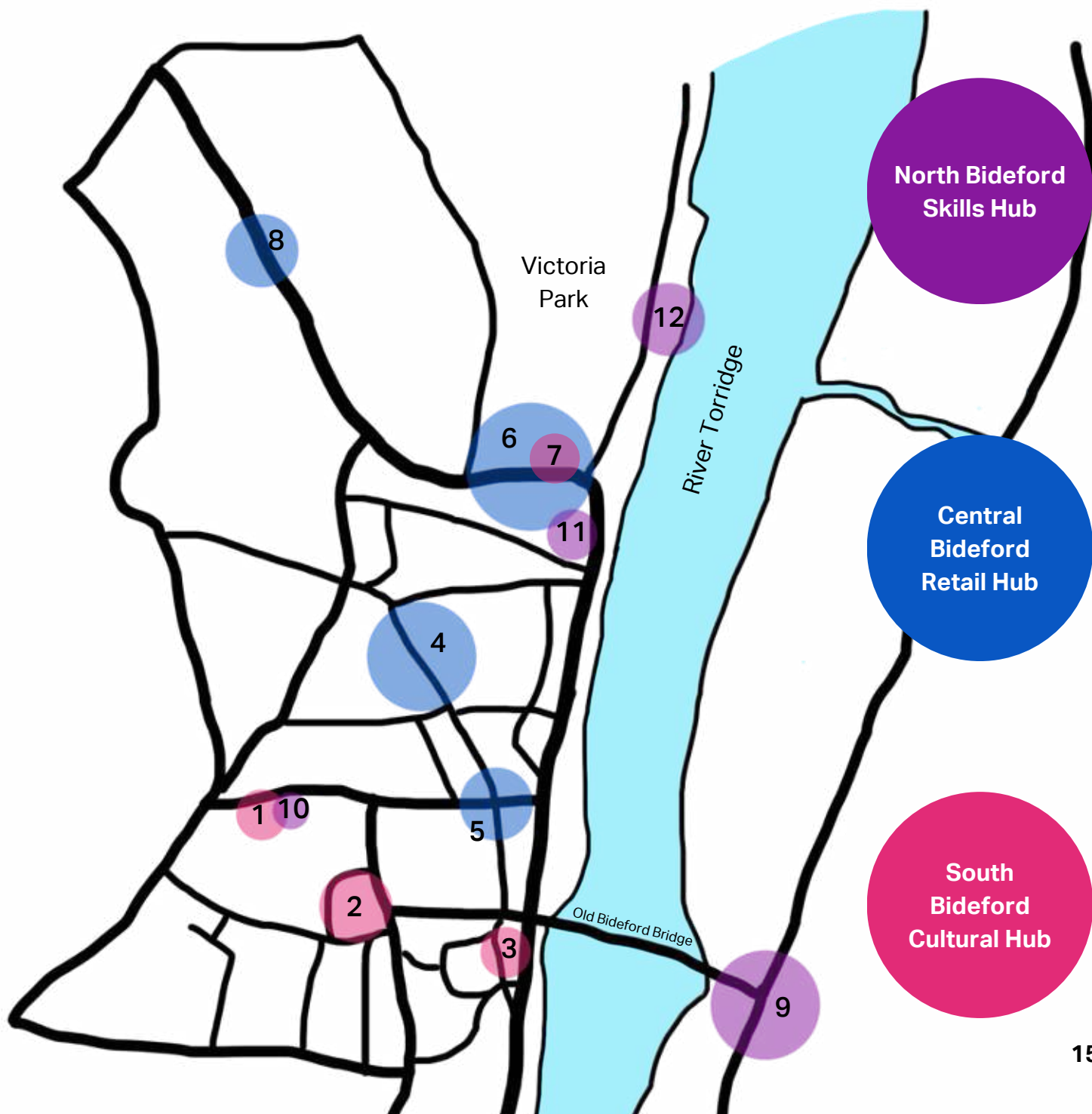
On the map opposite we have identified places of existing and potential cultural activity in the town that align with the three key themes set out in the rest of the report (pink for cultural spaces, blue for pride in place and purple for ambition, skills and innovation).

From this you can see the existing hubs of Victoria Park, the Burton, Ropewalk (where The Space and Library are) and North Mill Street where the young entrepreneurs we spoke to are concentrated in the North and centre of the town.

This coupled with the new development potential South of the town centre - at the Methodist Church, Pannier Market, Town Hall and Museum Site - together would create focused clusters for a range of cultural activity, business and skills development across the town to create a thriving ecology.

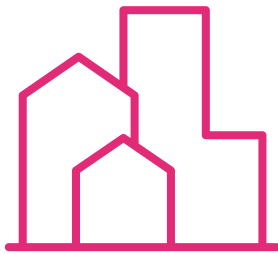
# MAPPING POTENTIAL

- 1 - Methodist Church
- 2 - Pannier Market
- 3 - Bideford Town Hall
- 4 - North Mill Street
- 5 - Cross roads of Mill Street and High Street
- 6 - Victoria Park and Ropewalk
- 7 - The Burton
- 8 - Bideford Courts Plaza Skatepark
- 9 - Potential Museum Development Site
- 10 - Potential site for HE centre
- 11 - Learn Devon, Bideford Arts Centre
- 12 - Steamship Freshspring



# KEY THEMES & VALUES

For simplicity, we have split the recommendations into three key themes. These are areas of need and potential that are the best first steps to gaining investment and putting Bideford on the cultural map.



## **Cultural Spaces**

The need for space for creatives to meet, develop skills and showcase their work as well as for the whole community of Bideford to see, participate in and celebrate culture



## **Pride in Place**

The need for the local community in Bideford to be proud of where they live, balancing the rich heritage of the town with a promising future that works for everyone

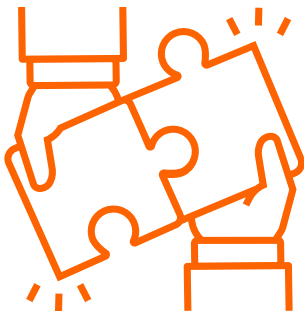


## **Ambition, Skills and Innovation**

The need for the local community in Bideford to be proud of where they live, balancing the rich heritage of the town with it's prosperous future for everyone

# KEY THEMES & VALUES

**These themes inevitably overlap and some of our recommendations support multiple or all of the themes simultaneously. Importantly they are all underpinned by two key values.**



## **Collaboration**

There is so much great work already being done in Bideford but there's currently a lack of a unified, joined-up approach. To truly resource the cultural future of the town, strategic and embedded collaboration needs to be at the forefront to make things happen.



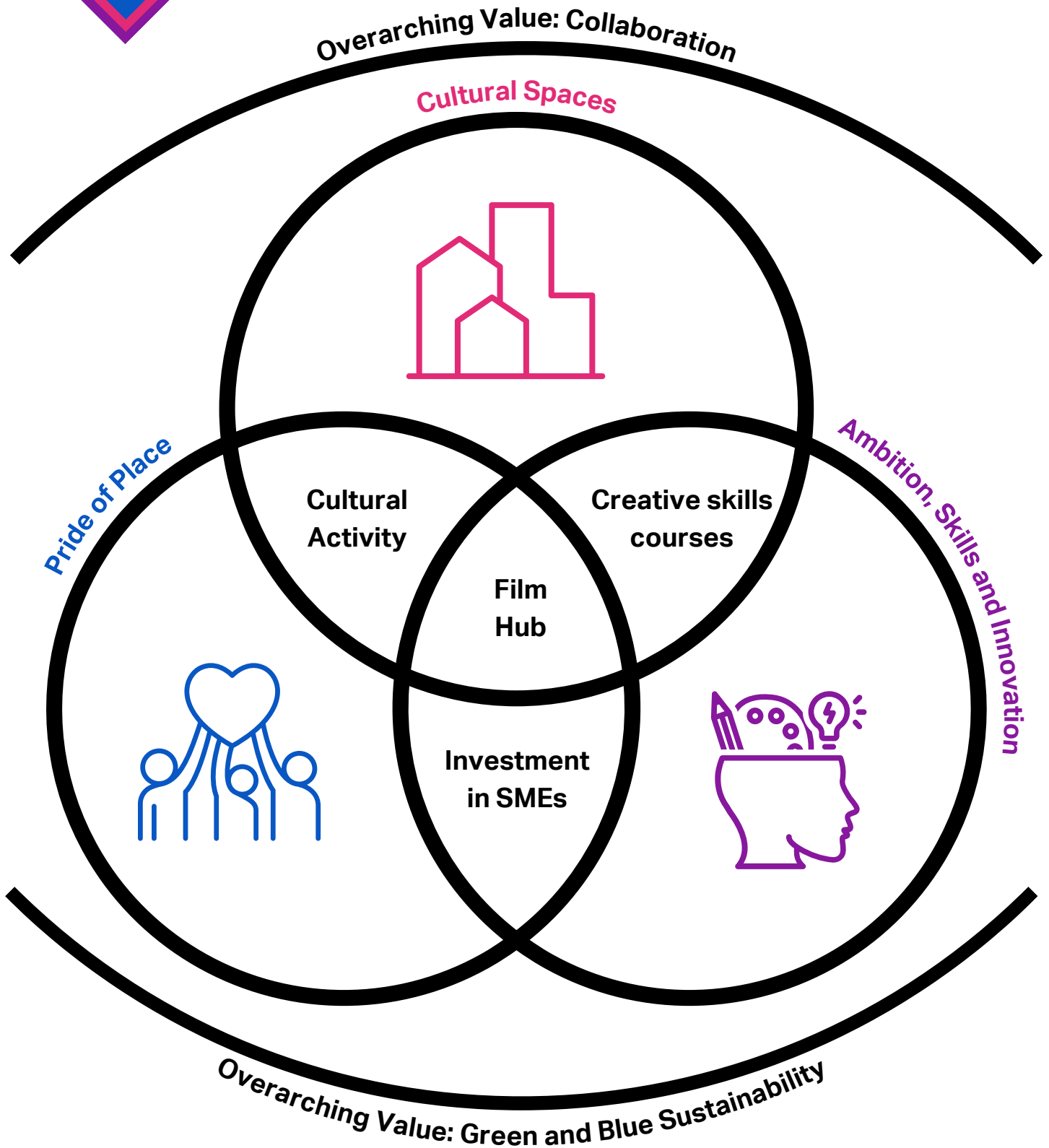
## **Blue and Green Sustainability**

As a future hub of clean innovation it's vital that any and all investment and development in Bideford is ecologically mindful and enhances the existing blue and green architecture that is unique to Bideford.

With these values in mind, we have put together recommendations under each theme (Cultural space, Pride in Place and Ambition, Skills and Innovation) that will support the future investment for Bideford, where the resource could come from and relevant case studies where this work has been done before.

The Action Plan from page 49 further sets out the steps to reaching the long term vision where Bideford is a thriving cultural centre for North Devon.

# KEY THEMES & VALUES



# VISION FOR CULTURAL INVESTMENT

**When envisioning a diverse approach to income generation, in addition to funding, we have considered ways in which the local cultural ecology may be able to work smarter, by pooling resources, building partnerships both within the creative, cultural and heritage sectors and externally to create a joined-up approach.**

**Here are the five key income streams we've considered to support this work:**

## **1. Public Funding:**

individual, business, charity and local bids for regional and national funding and incentives for targeted initiatives. There will need to be clear evidence of need and expected outcome. Arts Council England may play a key role here.

## **2. Public-Private Partnerships:**

collaboration between the Council and other public stakeholders and private companies to create an environment conducive to cultural activities. This can involve joint funding initiatives, sharing risks and responsibilities, and leveraging the expertise of both sectors to develop successful projects.

## **3. Corporate Fundraising and Partnerships:**

sponsorship or in-kind (e.g. expertise in marketing, fundraising, project management), contributing partly or wholly to a project.

## **4. Charitable Trusts & Foundations:**

for individuals and charitable organisations, as only some trusts and foundations will consider applications from organisations without charitable status and from statutory bodies.

## **5. Philanthropy:**

long-term giving or one-off donations whether time, expertise or monetary. This could support meaningful change for a given issue/project.

Following our research and consultation we have set out an Action Plan for moving towards a well-resourced, innovative and sustainable cultural future for Bideford. This plan is underpinned by the principle that Torridge District Council needs to deploy finite public resources to seed, partner and sustain this cultural regeneration in the most effective and necessary ways.



 **triskel**  
15 / 16

THE  
**SAGE APOTHECARY**

**TREVS SHED**  
WOODWORKER & TURNER  
02475 511111

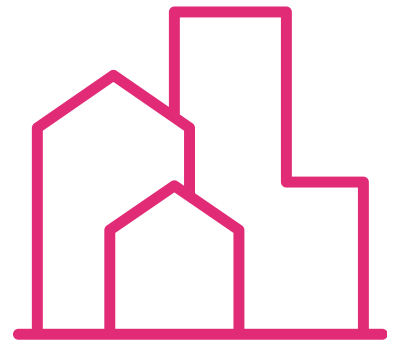
**STAINED GLASS  
WORKSHOP**  
COURSES - RESTORATION - COMMISSIONS  
01237 479823 or 07988700230  
13 / 14

*Row  
Butchers*



**THEMES &  
RECOMMENDATIONS**

# CULTURAL SPACES



## BACKGROUND

From our engagement we have identified a split narrative about cultural spaces in Bideford. On one hand, there is the success of the Burton – bringing National exhibitions to the town – and a thriving independent artist community, and on the other there is a lack of resourcing for those wanting to enter into cultural and creative careers or for anyone to consume culture regularly.

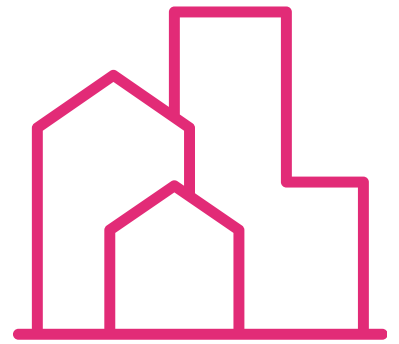
One of the biggest challenges to this is accessible space for development (of creative outputs, skills and communities) and a visible hub for this activity. Yet there are also lots of opportunities for underused spaces in the town. There was an overall feeling that a bit of resourcing and energy could make a real difference to people, show that there was somewhere to 'be' in Bideford and foster better community relationships.

The young people we spoke to in their 20s talked about the lack of culture-based lifestyle options in Bideford and that they often travelled to nearby towns just to go to a gig or the cinema. Even with Bideford Cinema at Kingsley School or Devon Hall at Bideford College on the edge of town – there was a feeling that there was nowhere visible to hang out or consume culture in the heart of Bideford where they wanted to be.

Many of our stakeholders struggled to name spaces of culture in the town apart from the Burton and a few summer festivals. Yet when a theatre company made of artists living in the town put on a street performance event, publicity and support was lacking because there isn't necessarily a formalised network or space to bring the community together to celebrate culture.

**117**  
creative  
businesses in  
Bideford

# CULTURAL SPACES



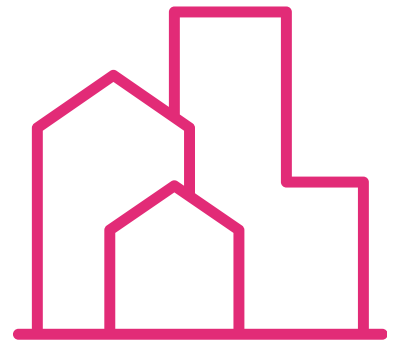
Creative Hubs create enabling environments where creative entrepreneurs and communities can thrive. There is estimated to be 1.2m people working from creative hubs globally. These communities generally consist of micro-SMEs and freelancers, who now represent 85% of global employment, 3.3m people in the UK and 23.3% of the workers in Torridge.

The British Council and Nesta have developed and supported creative hubs around the world and view their existence as integral to the sustainability and growth of the creative economy.

In their report on the value of creative hubs Nesta found that "Being part of a hub makes micro-SMEs and freelancers feel part of a larger picture, without it necessarily meaning that they have to be part of an organisation. Those who would normally work from home, are able to connect, collaborate and share with other like-minded people. This increases confidence, experimentation, collaboration and growth. Together, they can pitch for work, access resources and tools, inspire one another, and attract investment"



# CULTURAL SPACES



## RECOMMENDATION: A CULTURAL HUB FOR BIDEFORD

A cultural hub would support the visibility of the cultural activity in Bideford, encourage the community to come together and create clear career pathways for young people to stay and create in Bideford. The new Bideford library, run by Libraries Unlimited, in Bideford Arts Centre is a good example of multi-use space that offers room hire, a Fab Lab and business support but this is not something that artists and creatives can make use of in the same way as it's not flexible for their needs and doesn't provide working or workshopping space for freelancers.

Any hub created must be multi-use so that it could support a theatre group to develop a piece of work one night and a night of performances the next. It should have its own artistic programme and gallery or a regular cinema night. Having a kitchen or cafe space there

would give people a reason to visit, but also offer local people opportunities to gather, spend money or start businesses there. There could be dedicated studio and office space to develop a community amongst the independent artists and homeworkers in Bideford who could financially support some of the running costs of the building.

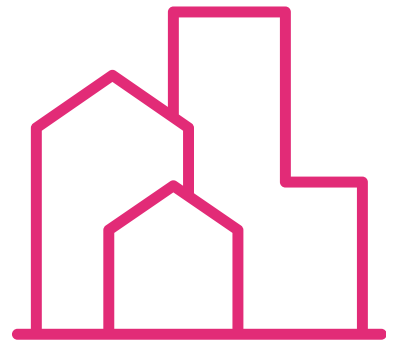
***"I mean, obviously we love going to the park. But in terms of like, drinking and eating out, I struggle with that. Because that's a big part of what I like to do. And I feel like I don't do that in North Devon because there just isn't the places that I'd want to spend my money". - young Entrepreneur***

These are all things that people in Bideford have mentioned as key needs for them to develop and consume culture in the town.

### Summary

- **Need for a multi use space for cultural activity, development and skills provision in a visible and accessible part of the town**
- **Recruit / resource a Cultural Investment lead role to spearhead cultural investment**

# CULTURAL SPACES



## POTENTIAL SITES FOR A CULTURAL HUB

**We have identified two possible sites for this activity and recommend investment into the feasibility study of at least one, as well as deeper consultation on the specific needs of each building and community who would use it.**

### **Site 1 – Town Hall**

Right on the Quay this building is already owned by Bideford Town Council and therefore could expedite any purchase barriers. Spread over several floors and needing some work to be more accessible and visible, this could be developed into a thriving cultural hub for Bideford that visibly centres culture in the town itself.

### **Site 2 – Methodist Church**

An underutilised building that could be used as rehearsal space, converted into artist studios and/or become a cultural hub for the town. Conversations with Further Education / Higher Education / Skills providers are recommended as part of a mixed-use solution.

It has good parking provisions though is a vast building that would need capital investment to develop and to be made a real 'destination'.

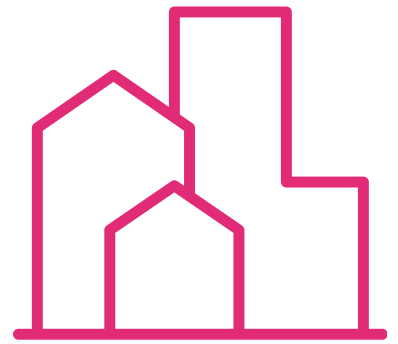
### **Short term experiment - The Pannier Market**

One short-term experiment could also be more creative and cultural use of the Pannier market which is owned by Bideford Town Council on a 99 year lease. Whilst markets there have been difficult to promote, one-off cultural events could be more feasible. For example the Luke Jerram "Museum of the Moon" installation that happened in Barnstaple's Pannier Market, or a temporary cinema. This would build up appetite for more cultural activity in existing buildings, bring the community and visitors to Bideford together and generate income for local businesses and the council through ticket sales and indirect purchases.

### **Summary**

- **Identify best site for the development of a cultural hub**
- **Meanwhile use of existing spaces for cultural activity**

# CULTURAL SPACES



## CASE STUDIES

### Snapshot

**Total funding:**  
£7,200,000

**Timeline:**  
Eight years

**Main funder:**  
Government's Coastal  
Community Fund

**Owner of the land:**  
West Sussex County  
Council

**Operator of the  
building:**  
Onion Collective CIC

**Business model:**  
Social Enterprise

**Cultural Hubs have been used in similar contexts to Bideford to bring communities together and create a point of focus for cultural activity, here are some comparable success stories.**

### East Quay Watchet

*"East Quay was built as an example of holistic community regeneration showing that communities can come together to build their own future. It is a social enterprise with connection, imagination, and culture at its heart... East Quay is an example of how towns can reimagine a future they want to be part of."*

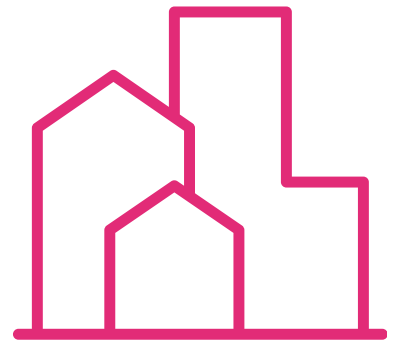
Watchet is a small harbour town in Somerset, with an under-used quayside. In 2012 when plans for a major development of flats on the marina quayside in Watchet had just fallen through, a group of locals formed Onion Collective CIC. Rather than witness more commercial development that had no community benefit, they decided to pool their skills

and resources to help empower their community to make the decisions about what developments take place themselves. Asking the community: 'What does Watchet need for a stronger future?'

After a few smaller projects, in 2014 they received £7.2 million towards the East Quay development of mixed housing, artist studios, community space and a gallery to revitalise the local economy and create jobs as well as a home for arts, culture and the community. At the time of development, they estimated that the development would bring £6.7m in additional tourism spend to the area, create 37 new jobs, safeguard a further 17 and indirectly support 109.



# CULTURAL SPACES



## CASE STUDIES

### Penryn Methodist Church

"This Church was recently taken over by local Penryn non-profit arts organisation Grays Wharf with plans to transform the School Room into a new art centre for the region in addition to their current successful gallery and workspace in the area.

They secured £494,000 investment from Cornwall Council through the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund as well as £37,000 from The Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF) towards the refurbishment and development of the church. This development is in the early stages but shows that there is appetite from funders to support the transformation of underused buildings (like some churches) into community spaces that are of benefit to the local community.



#### Snapshot

**Total funding:**  
*£531,000*

**Timeline:**  
*1 year for  
meanwhile use*

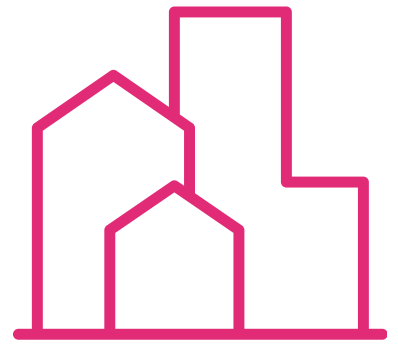
**Main funder:**  
*Government's UK  
Shared Prosperity  
Fund*

**Owner of the land:**  
*Trustees for  
Methodist Church  
Purposes*

**Operator of the  
building:**  
*Grays Wharf CIC*

**Business model:**  
*Social Enterprise*

# CULTURAL SPACES



## CASE STUDIES

### Krowji

Creative Kernow was established in 1984 by a group of arts activists to develop a programme of small-scale performing arts events (mostly contemporary theatre and dance) in the Truro/Falmouth area and to campaign for a proper arts venue in Cornwall. Their core mission is: "To enrich and energise creative communities through the production, distribution and promotion of artistic work"

In 2005, they refurbished a redundant school in Redruth, bought from Cornwall County Council, and converted it into studios and workspaces for creative businesses. Named Krowji (meaning workshop or shed), it is home to painters, jewellers, furniture makers, ceramicists, textile artists, web designers, theatre companies and musicians as well as organisations from the Creative Kernow group.

Creative Kernow has developed multiple income streams over time. Most of its funding has come from the European Structural Funds (replaced with the UK government 'Shared Prosperity Fund') including for the Cultivator Business Development Programme (2016-2019). They have also received funding from Cornwall Council, Arts Council England (as a National Portfolio Organisation), earned income, rent and property income.

#### Snapshot

**Total funding:**  
*£5,700,000*

**Timeline:**  
*Four years from initial investment to end of Phase 2*

**Main funder:**  
*UK Shared Prosperity Fund (redevelopment)*

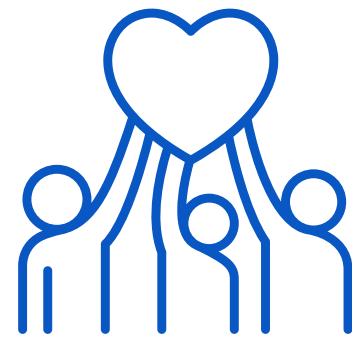
**Owner of the land:**  
*Cornwall County Council*

**Operator of the building:**  
*Creative kernow*

**Business model:**  
*Charitable*



# PRIDE IN PLACE



## REBUILDING PRIDE

***“One of the things that strikes me about going to these little village centres is they are a community magnet. You know they get people out and they get people who potentially are lonely, isolated and it's somewhere for people to go and I think that's one of the issues around Bideford in particular is that [lack] of community feel”.***

**Member of SS Freshspring Trust.**

Culture has a unique ability to foster joy and connection to a place and community. The Levelling Up agenda has a particular focus on the regeneration of high streets and town centres and the ACE High Street Renaissance report from 2021 found that 62% of UK adults agree that cultural experiences on the high street give them a sense of pride about their local area and 50% would like to see more cultural experiences on their high streets.

Investment in place-shaping through culture has never been higher and with Torridge being identified as a Levelling Up for Culture Place, this is an optimal time for Bideford to invest in visible cultural activity in the town to make creativity and culture more accessible for everyone.

For culture to support this pride in place there's a pressing need to address the dominant narrative from our stakeholder interviews that young people leave Bideford at 18 and only return in their 30s or 40s having 'made it' elsewhere and started a family. The feeling among local residents that young people have to leave the town to do something meaningful was evident.

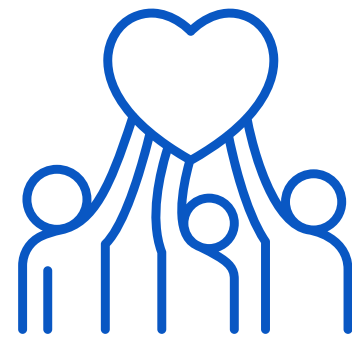
***“I spend a lot of time trying to go away. I've grown up here, so you have to get out. It's very like, small town mentality.”***

**- Young Entrepreneur**

**62%**

**of UK adults say experiencing culture gives them a sense of pride in their local area**

# PRIDE IN PLACE



There is not a strong story about the good things about being from and living in Bideford or a sense of pride in either the heritage of the town or the imminent economic regeneration from our interviews.

Even if young people want to stay, several people we spoke to talked about the difficulties of finding anywhere to live, which has been worsened by second home purchasers during Covid and the feeling that 'luxury development' is being prioritised over affordable housing for current citizens of Bideford. Private rents rose to an average of £772 in February 2024, an annual increase of 7.3% from £719 in February 2023. This was higher than the rise in the South West (6.9%) over the year. This adds to the feeling that Bideford is a tourist town and that outsiders are prioritised. Even one 13 year old we spoke to was aware of this issue "I heard that it's going to cost £150K for a one bed flat in the new development, which is ridiculous".

This demand for property shows how attractive Bideford and North Devon are as places to be and this should be capitalised on. In particular, the town's connection to nature and the unique landscape is something that everyone we spoke to emphasised. People might not know about Bideford's Heritage Harbour status but they do feel a kinship with the River Torridge and young people talked positively about the closeness and access to nature from the town (e.g. the nature reserves and the coast) as something they love about living here. There is a clear need for 'out of season' activity to happen year-round when access to nature is dampened by the weather that could be supported by culture.

Linked to that is the culture around sports, whether that's surfing across North Devon, the boxing club in Pollyfield or the active skateboarding community centred around Grind Supply Co and the

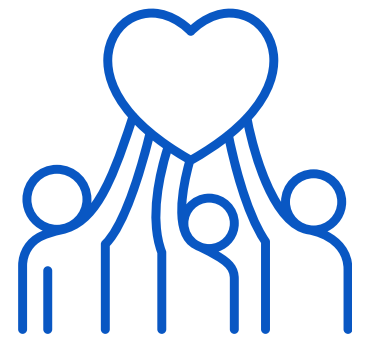
**£772**

average private rent in Bideford

**24%**

adults take part in sport, the 2nd highest in Devon

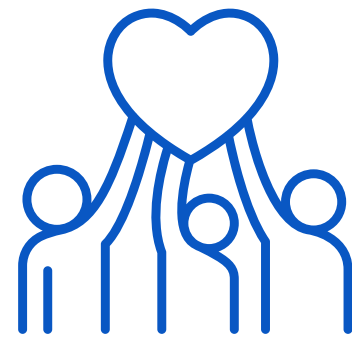
# PRIDE IN PLACE



Bideford Courts Plaza skatepark. Investing in activity that expands the town's definitions of culture to bring visibility to these active communities and encourage the creative skills that thrive around them is key. For example, skateboarders need videographers to produce content, or muralists to decorate the skatepark – these creative skills could be nurtured as well as more tangible support for the core sport communities themselves.

It is important to develop the capacity (understanding, skills, competency, competitiveness) of creative individuals, organisations and places to support a sustainable sector and to create maximum impact. Unlike business and growth interventions, this takes a broader approach with far-reaching social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts. The need must be firmly rooted in the needs of Bideford specifically and how to do things differently here to increase pride in place.





## RECOMMENDATION: VISIBILITY THROUGH CREATIVITY

To combat some of the negative stereotypes and build aspirations there needs to be a strong narrative about why it's different here, what's unique about it and why you would want to come, live and create here.

We have broken this down into 5 steps that will create points of celebration through cultural activity for the community of Bideford.

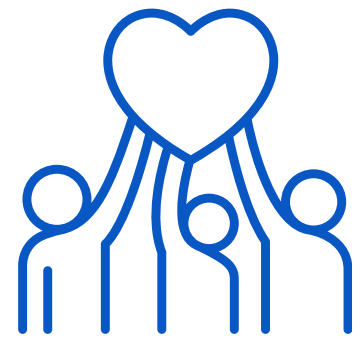
Step one would be to expand on the recent Discover Bideford branding to develop something more dynamic and inclusive to the multiple communities and aspirations of the town - particularly with younger people and investment prospects. Whilst the premise to have one space to share what's on in the town is great – it needs to be more visible and future-focused to reflect and increase aspirations in the town to build pride in the activity that happens here.

Building on this step two would be to continue giving agency to local residents by offering support for a more varied and year-round festivals programme. Many of the stakeholders talked positively about what happens now but also noted the need for people to be supported to produce their own festivals for a more regular calendar of activity led by local people.

The young entrepreneurs spoke about wanting to host a curated market outside their shops on Mill Street but weren't sure whether this was something the council would support or how to deal with the delivery vans that still drive down the pedestrianised street. Being vocal about supporting and promoting this activity, as well as gaining seed investment for these events, would help encourage more activity led by locals.

### Summary

- **Development of town branding**
- **Widen festivals programme with support for local residents to put on more events independently**



## RECOMMENDATION: VISIBILITY THROUGH CREATIVITY

### Summary

- **Improved signage and way finding for local landmarks and cultural activity**
- **Public art programme**
- **Development of a film hub for Bideford and Northern Devon**

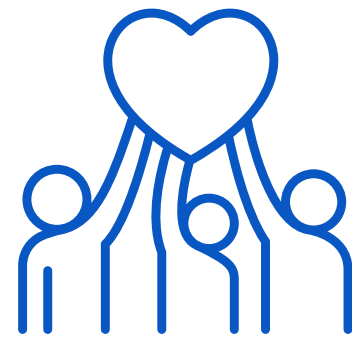
Step 3 would be to commission better signage that creatively highlights landmarks and guides locals and visitors alike to cultural activity and places of interest. Imagine the impact of painting Torridge Bridge - one of the main entrances to the town - bright yellow and then following bright yellow signs to the Burton or Mill Street as you enter the town.

Celebrating key landmarks would help support the communities that are thriving in these areas already but also welcome people to Bideford in a way that's unique in Northern Devon and shows that culture is something that is important and visible here.

Step 4 would take this one step further with the development of a dedicated public art programme, initially to design the signs, but longer term for locally-based artists

and those from further afield to be supported to deliver visual artwork and sculptures that enhance the town and brings local people into the cultural development. Community engagement would be key to ensuring there's buy in from the whole town for this work.

And finally, step 5 would be to leverage the benefits of the new screen agency, Screen Devon, into Bideford and Torridge. This will create and maintain the infrastructure for film crews and producers to see Bideford as an attractive filming location that in turn creates pride of place among local residents, bring in new visitors that boost the local economy and start to change the image of those who live, work and visit the town.



## CASE STUDIES

**Building pride in a place through culture has been done in towns and cities all over the UK - bringing attention to previously overlooked communities from creatives all over the world and simultaneously, funders and investors.**

### Culturally Chard

Like Bideford, Chard is a historic market town. Located in rural South Somerset the town centre was architecturally attractive, but many of the buildings and shop fronts were in a poor state of repair which was off-putting for both shoppers and prospective businesses. It was not pedestrian-friendly, with heavy traffic, poor pavements and a general lack of well-signposted routes to help people find their way around.

Therefore in 2020 the High Street Heritage Action Zone was set up by Somerset Council and Historic England who both committed just over £1 million each into regenerating the town centre. In the second year of this ambitious 4 year project a

consortium of local creative and community organisations also secured additional funding specifically towards community engagement.

*“Culture, creativity and heritage play a key role in making the town centre a more attractive and vibrant place. Through a range of new activities and events our programme promotes and brings to life the town centre’s unique story, its past and present. Energising a sense of pride and responsibility with Chard businesses, community groups and residents of all ages and backgrounds, drawing in visitors to celebrate the diversity of our town across the generations, ethnicities, genders and values.”*

– Chard HSHAZ consortium



### Snapshot

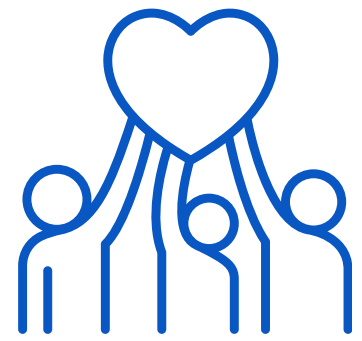
**Total funding:**  
£2,484,235

**Timeline:**  
Four years

**Main funder:**  
Historic England,  
Somerset Council  
and Chard Town  
Council

**Owner of the land:**  
Mixed commercial,  
cultural and public

**Business model:**  
Charitable



## CASE STUDIES

### Screen Cornwall



Following a report by industry advisors Saffery's exploring the potential for economic development in Cornwall's screen industry, Cornwall Council and the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership decided to invest in a screen agency as a single point of contact for location marketing and talent development in film, TV, games and interactive.

Founded in 2019, Screen Cornwall has drawn national and international location enquires through joining Film Offices UK and the Creative England Filming Partnership and in September 2023 secured an additional £400k from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to promote Cornish-language media and extend outreach and talent development programmes after their research showed that film and TV production was worth more than £5million to the Cornish economy in 2022.

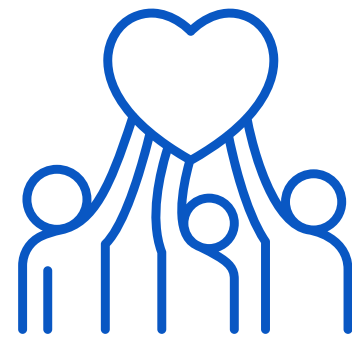
#### Snapshot

**Initial funding:**  
£25,000

**Main funder:**  
*Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership*

**Business model:**  
*Commercial*

# PRIDE IN PLACE



## CASE STUDIES

### Renewington

Newington Estate on the edge of Ramsgate, a seaside town in Kent with a population of around 5,000 received £1 million in 2014 from the lottery's Big Local fund, putting residents in control of how the money was spent without council involvement.

Previously considered "forgotten" and "underfunded" the community invested in initiatives including credit unions and community gardens and also decided to bring design studio Lantern on board at a discounted rate to create branding for a new website, marketing materials, a local newspaper and a poster campaign encouraging more people to get involved with community matters.

*"The concept behind the brand was embracing that there is no shying away from this being an estate but positioning it as an 'estate of enablers' and harnessing that positive underdog spirit the community has"*

– Ryan Tym, founder and director at studio Lantern

The investment has revitalised the area and the community centre at the heart of the community has just received another £500k from the Levelling Up fund to create a new training kitchen and build on the legacy work that the Big Local funding and new branding started for the area.



#### Snapshot

**Total funding:**  
£1,000,000

**Timeline:**  
Eight Years

**Main funder:**  
Creative Civic Change

**Business model:**  
Charitable

# AMBITION, SKILLS & INNOVATION



## BACKGROUND

With the Innovation Centre development in Appledore and the online community of artists developed by ArtMakers there is clear potential for Bideford to be a leader in innovating radical and sustainable models for culture that work for towns and coastal areas. Simply transferring metropolitan models into these contexts doesn't work. The challenges of accessibility, resource and low economic activity cannot be ignored and so innovation is needed to create a truly equitable arts, culture and heritage offer across the UK.

As highlighted in the Inclusive Growth Network's recent report, culture and creative industries are catalysts for inclusive growth. This can include social prescribing (health and wellbeing), community co-creation and Equality Diversity and Inclusion initiatives. Actions range from cultural programming and new cultural spaces, to supporting infrastructure (transport, physical accessibility etc.), effective

marketing and opportunities for co-creation and collaboration. Currently, the main employment sectors in Bideford are retail and hospitality which are often low paid, insecure and seasonal with the tourist trade. This leads to a lack of possibilities for young and local people who have ambitions of more, as referenced in the last theme.

Developing skills for cultural, creative and digital sectors in secondary and higher education (including apprenticeships) is key for giving people more resilient careers that mean they can stay and thrive in Bideford. These education reforms are supported by the upcoming governmental Cultural Education Plan and the commitments within the Government's 2023 Creative Industries Sector Vision. It's important to note that it's not just about training new talent but also (re)training and upskilling existing members of the workforce into better paying more sustainable jobs.

Source: Inclusive Growth Network; 'A Catalyst for Inclusive Growth' Report, 2024

Source: DCMS, 'Creative Industries Sector Vision', 2023

# AMBITION, SKILLS & INNOVATION



***“Our interest in the cultural offer is threefold; it’s what is available for students who choose to stay here, activities they can go to in evenings - things that they can do and engage with from a leisure perspective and the cultural offer of a study - what courses really help build that cultural capital that they can engage with what’s going on in the locality. And then finally it’s the job and what employment is there associated with the cultural offer.” - Representative from University Centre for Northern Devon***

Despite a low level of participation of state school pupils in higher education in Bideford at 26.5% compared to the regional average of 32.3% there are high levels of skilled trade occupations across Torridge reflecting the need for self-sufficiency in an area distanced from the main urban centres in the south of the county. With more than half of working residents in Torridge working within 40 km of home and 1 in 4 mainly working from home in 2021

the employment is relatively local and self-contained. One key opportunity for investment is to build on and celebrate this through the visibility of these trades and linking into the heritage skills that Bideford is known for, such as shipbuilding and ceramics.

There is also a perception to overcome that there simply aren't young people in Bideford.

***“I’d like to get more young people involved but as soon as they hit 18 and if they’re a certain type of young person, then they’re going to leave. They’re gonna go to university. They’re gonna go to Bristol, London, wherever, right? and then they might be gone until they’re in the mid 30s. So 20-somethings are quite thin on the ground. And I was having a conversation with a young girl on our team here about how she doesn’t really see how her future can be here. She doesn’t get paid enough... I think if you want to be a creative person here, it’s really difficult to start off” - Local Gallery Worker***

**26.5%**

state school pupils  
in higher education

**1 in 4**

working mainly  
from home

# AMBITION, SKILLS & INNOVATION



The independent artist community in Bideford is dominated by older people with home studios making and selling work for the seasonal visitors to the town. Following the COVID-19 pandemic there has also been an increase in remote workers moving or returning to the area, with Bideford having the 4th highest population increase of market towns across North Devon. With this community and the new roles created in Appledore there is an influx of more affluent people of working-age to the area. It's therefore even more important that young people in Bideford are able to also feel the benefits of this new level of aspiration and investment to avoid a 'them and us' mentality. Particularly

with Bideford having the 2nd lowest average household income (£35,309), 3rd highest percentage of those receiving housing benefit (10.3%) and highest percentage of people receiving universal credit (22%) in North Devon.

Being situated in Northern Devon, with a reputation for successful collaboration across the region (eg gaining Heritage Harbour status), and within a micro-cluster of cultural activity (as identified in the PEC's 2020 Creative Industries Radar report), Bideford can capitalise on the demands from central government for devolvement and distribution of funding and innovation to create and pilot models that work.

**2nd**  
lowest average  
household income  
in Northern  
Devon



# AMBITION, SKILLS & INNOVATION



## RECOMMENDATION: COLLABORATION FOR INNOVATION

Our recommendation is two-fold to increase the ambition of people in Bideford, develop new skills for the future and become a hub of innovation.

Firstly to build on the current informal networks of independent artists, cultural organisations and heritage experts in Bideford our recommendation is to develop the infrastructure that could leverage this into further investment for the town.

Resourcing a specific role with business and funding expertise with a remit to bring these networks together and deliver large and small scale interventions that positions Bideford as a cultural hub that embraces its green and blue architecture.

This role would bring together the recommendations from

across our themes and embody the value of collaboration to drive investment and innovation in Bideford for the long term.

The second recommendation is to pursue the development of a visible College or University presence in the town. This would help retain young people and attract educational professionals who are looking for work and opportunities.

Having a further education and higher education hub - that could be linked with the cultural hub - will enable the town to leverage partnership opportunities and attract investment for international exchanges and programmes; and skills development where young people and local people in Bideford are able to learn new skills and bring them back into the town.

### Summary

- **A new role focused on collaboration and finding new investment long term**
- **A higher education presence in the town based in the cultural hub**

# AMBITION, SKILLS & INNOVATION



## RECOMMENDATION: COLLABORATION FOR INNOVATION

Working towards the ambition of having a visible College or University presence in Bideford would help retain developing new pathways of employment. From education to vocational learning, apprenticeships, peer mentoring, flexible models of working, and adopting accessible recruitment strategies there are many ways in which Bideford can help create a thriving cultural ecology which nurtures and retains local talent. Taking advantage of existing national and international relationships such as Twinning Towns and funds from the British Council and the Turing Scheme to support international work and study programmes would also help broker new relationships and skills.

To underpin this work a working group should be established with a focus on

building better provision, access and progression routes for people of all ages and backgrounds into creative training, education and employment. This should include representation from local schools, FE and HE providers drawn from the region, as well as private sector training, workspace providers and creative and cultural sector employers.

There's also potential longer term for Bideford to become a Real Living Wage Place and address the widespread low paid industries head on. Making this statement on a National stage as the first town to do so would bring widespread publicity and attract new value-led businesses to the area. This would in turn create more job opportunities and raise ambitions for everyone in Bideford.

### Summary

- **A working group of key stakeholders to support the collaborative work**
- **Consider potential for Bideford to become the first Real Living Wage town**

# AMBITION, SKILLS & INNOVATION



## CASE STUDIES

**Rethinking skills development and cultural collaboration so that the fastest growing industries' needs are met by young people wanting to work in them is a delicate balance but one that can be met through rethinking how to invest in a town.**

### Gloucester Culture Trust

In March 2016, Gloucester City Council signed off an ambitious ten-year strategy for the city. To deliver the strategy, Gloucester City Council made a distinctive move to devolve the strategic decision-making power for culture to an independent body which became Gloucester Culture Trust (GCT).

8 years on GCT has just announced an award of £1.5 million from Arts Council England's National Lottery Place Partnerships Fund, Gloucester Council and other partners for 'Together Gloucester' – a three-year cultural arts programme for the city that includes the formation of a Citizens Panel to decide how the money will be spent, with a particular focus on events, young people, health and wellbeing.

Becoming an independent charity (CIO) enabled GCT to develop dedicated programmes and secure independent investment for the cultural activity of the city of Gloucester. It has created multiple opportunities for independent artists, employees and brought new visitors to Gloucester.

### Snapshot

**Total funding:**  
*£1,500,000*

**Timeline:**  
*Three Years*

**Main funder:**  
*Arts Council  
England*

**Business model:**  
*Charitable*

# AMBITION, SKILLS & INNOVATION



## CASE STUDIES

### Bristol and Bath Regional Capital - City Funds

Bristol & Bath Regional Capital (BBRC) is a Community Interest Company (CIC) working with investors, local projects, enterprises, and the community to offer bespoke investment opportunities providing both financial and social returns and supporting local projects. Founded in 2015, BBRC has evolved into a proven leader in place-based impact investment, with over £50m invested, leveraged and brokered into deals across the broad areas of housing, community and wellbeing, and net zero.

BBRC acts as Investment Adviser to the Bristol City Funds, a £10m impact investment fund with associated grant from the Access Foundation which launched in 2019. The idea was seeded by the Mayor of Bristol, originally planning to aggregate the charitable contributions of businesses into a fund which would

contribute towards shared efforts to reduce inequality and improve public spaces.

BBRC worked with Big Society Capital to secure a £5m investment into the City Funds, contingent on match funding from Bristol City Council. The £1m Access Foundation was provided later. BBRC is owned and supported by a range of local stakeholders and can invest in national or global organisations, but they must be locally based and have significant local impact.

Along with bringing investment into the region they have enabled a £9m project to build a new purpose-built community centre in an area that ranks among the 10% most deprived nationally and invested in a £6m, 4.2 MW community-owned wind turbine that will provide clean energy for about 3,000 homes.

#### Snapshot

**Total fund:**  
£10,000,000

**Main funder:**  
*Access  
Foundation and  
independent  
investors*

**Business model:**  
*Commercial*

# AMBITION, SKILLS & INNOVATION



## CASE STUDIES

### Game Changer

Real Ideas work across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly on a range of projects that support positive social impact. From 2018 to 2021 they received £2.6million from the European Social Fund (ESF) and The National Lottery Community Fund to deliver Game Changer.

Game Changer employed personal 'navigators' to work with young people aged 15 to 24 to find a career they feel passionate about and signpost them to support and training they need to get there. With a particular focus on the nature, community, digital, immersive technology, arts, culture and making sectors.

Working with a network of industry partners meant participants were offered taster days, placements, training courses and work experience to help them discover a career path. Game Changer engaged with 1805 people, receiving direct support from the project to gain formal, nationally-recognised qualifications.

### Snapshot

**Total funding:**  
*£2,600,000*

**Timeline:**  
*Four Years*

**Main funder:**  
*European Social Fund and The National Lottery Community Fund*

**Business model:**  
*Social Enterprise*

# CROSS CUTTING CASE STUDY

## Snapshot

**Initial funding:**  
90 refurbished  
buildings from the  
Roger De Haan  
Charitable Trust

**Finances now:**  
Charitable funds  
£2.63m; £41K  
Donations and  
Legacies; Trading  
£118.9K;  
Investments  
£5.27K

**Business model:**  
Charitable

## Creative Folkestone

Creative Folkestone is a cultural and regeneration charity which since its inception in 2002 has transformed the coastal town of Folkestone in Kent. Established by initial funding from the Roger De Haan Charitable Trust it encompasses: Folkestone Artworks, Folkestone Book Festival, Creative Quarter, Folkestone Triennial and Quarterhouse.

The charity has driven the regeneration of the town, creating jobs, building a sense of local pride and ambition, connecting communities, attracting funding and investment, increasing visitor numbers, and helping to grow a diverse sustainable economy. It has helped significantly to create a thriving town where people actively want to stay and contribute to its success.

*"In 2002, when Creative Folkestone started, the town was a skeleton. The bones were there of the Harbour, the views to France, The Leas, the picturesque nature of the town, but the flesh was gone. The tourism trade had gone, industry had left, the ferries had moved to Dover. We had a town that was quite divided. Tontine Street is on the Pent Stream, the river that made Folkestone, and it was the most rundown part of town.*

*Creative industries, for the past 20 years, have been the fastest-growing part of the UK economy. They are not geographically bound by resources of coal or the sea. You also don't need one major employer in your town as these companies tend to employ small amounts of people.*

*So Sir Roger De Haan decided to grow that part of the economy, and in so doing bring back a new economic*

# CROSS CUTTING CASE STUDY

*engine to Folkestone. The RDHCT bought 90 properties and started slowly doing them up. CF was then established and started to think about how you regenerate a town through art. CF took on those properties and rented them to people for creative purposes.*

*You are enticing creative people in and giving them the space to start working. As a result you build a hub, you get a critical mass of creatives, not just painters, but potters, makers, and design companies. These grow into bigger creative industries and then you start getting an industry. That in itself is not enough to develop the town though."*

*Alastair Upton, Chief Executive, Creative Folkestone*

The project is hugely ambitious with an annual budget of £2,793,414 from a range of sources including donations and legacies, charitable funding, trading activities and investments and encompasses:

- Creative Quarter - an urban village of designers, filmmakers, musicians, web developers and artists. The charity restored 90 buildings and look after around 80 flats, 115 studios and offices and over 50 shops, making it a hive of activity.
- Quarterhouse - a performing arts venue that also runs festivals and workshops, hosts community events, helps artists develop new work and make local initiatives happen.

As well as three festivals and a programme of activity for young people, families and adult learners.

*"Making change takes time, it's not done by running a festival, showing a few films and running some clubs. It's done by many people who say 'this is how I want my town to look'. Everyone has a hand in it, everyone who wants to be involved and says 'I want better for my town, I want better than what it is now.'"*

# CONCLUSION

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**This report has set out to identify and establish a strong investment case for culture in Bideford led by key stakeholder engagement, case studies and a literature review.**

Through this consultation, led by Rising Arts Agency and supported by Counterculture LLP, we have presented three key investment areas for the town to revitalise Bideford through culture, underpinned by collaboration and sustainability;

- Cultural Spaces – the need for space for creatives to meet, develop skills and showcase their work as well as for the whole community of Bideford to see, participate in and celebrate culture
- Pride in Place – the need for the local community in Bideford to be proud of where they live, balancing the rich heritage of the town with its prosperous future for everyone

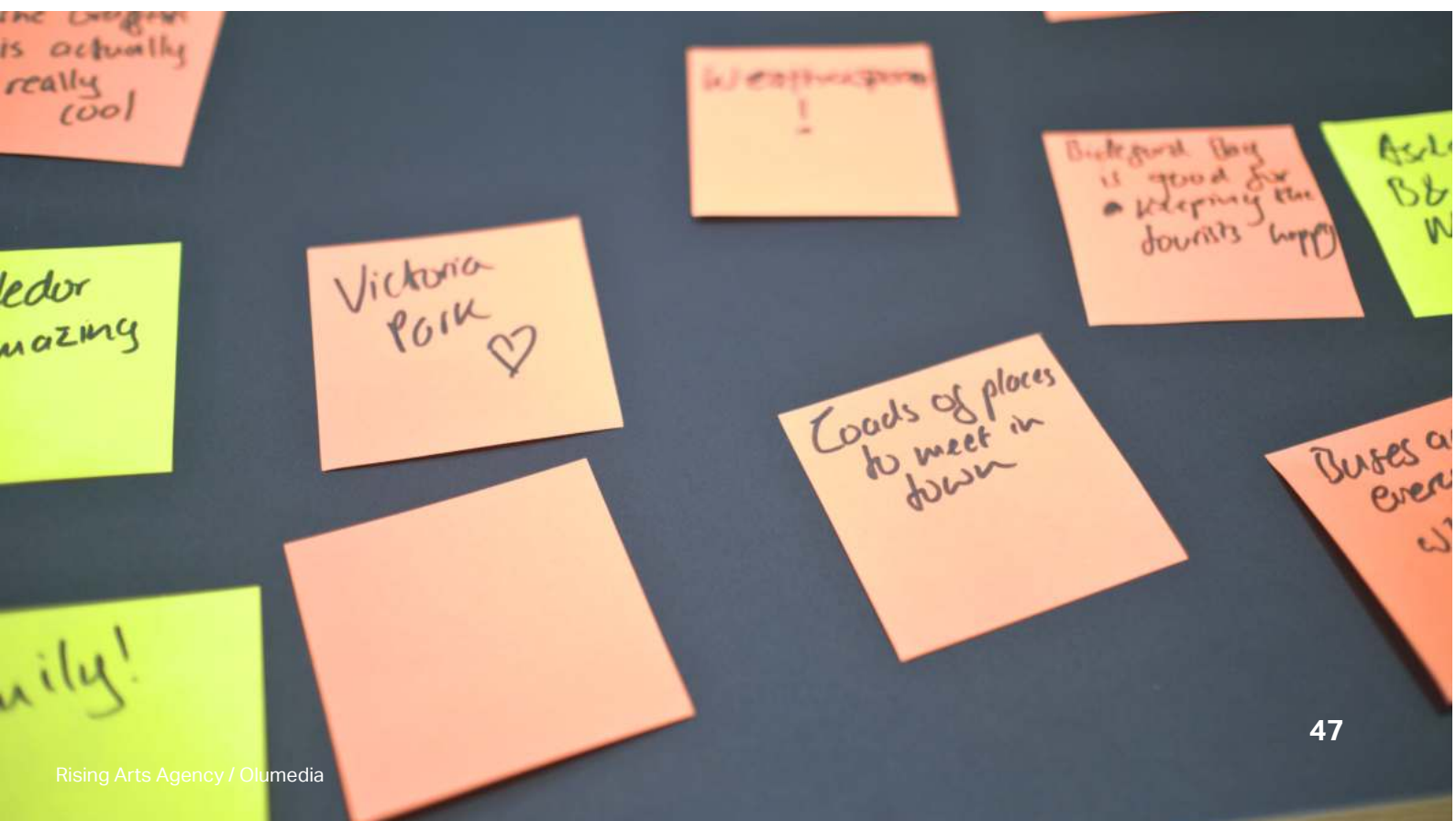
- Ambition, Skills and Innovation – the need for opportunities to develop successful careers right here in Bideford and innovate ways of doing this that work within the local context

Through this consultation, it is evident that Bideford's residents and stakeholders welcome culture and cultural activity as a key vehicle to driving inclusive regeneration, jobs and a greater sense of belonging in the town. Buy-in for culture across Torridge District Council, Bideford Town Council and the local community is essential for the success of this development. Joining up the great work already being done by groups like the Heritage Harbour campaign, ArtMarkers and the Burton to create a unique offer to investors that can create new opportunities for the young entrepreneurs, artists and creatives in the town is key and will benefit everyone who lives in and visits Bideford.

# CONCLUSION

The next 5 - 10 years will be pivotal and will be an opportunity to build on Bideford's unique assets and the pockets of cultural activity already happening to guide new redevelopment and generation. The town's rich maritime heritage combined with the innovation happening in surrounding areas, presents a chance to reimagine the town's reputation and model how rural living and working can be attractive to younger people, creatives and social investment.

Despite the challenges that Bideford currently faces, it is at a critical moment of potential rejuvenation as a cultural epicentre for Northern Devon. Investing in cultural activity now – from local authority seed funding, to larger cultural development and corporate investment – will ensure Bideford can capitalise on this moment and lead a new town-based model for the South West - one where innovation, sustainability and creativity are embedded and everyone can live joyfully with secure employment.



# CREDITS

**This report was written and designed by Euella Jackson and Jess Bunyan from Rising Arts Agency, in collaboration with Sharon Armstrong-Williams and Tara Tank from Counterculture LLP.**

**With special thanks to Claire Gulliver at Torridge District Council and Space Youth Services.**

**We would also like to thank everyone we spoke to as part of our stakeholder interviews:**

## **List of Consultees**

Philip Butterworth - Arts Council England

Paschale Straiton - street arts practitioner and Culture, Heritage and Arts Sub-Group of Bideford Regeneration Board

Carole Evans - Burton at Bideford

Dr Caroline Chipperfield - Petroc

Adrian Avery - Torridge District Council

Hilary Beecroft - Art Makers CIC and Culture, Heritage and Arts Sub-Group of Bideford Regeneration Board

Phil Parker - Art Makers CIC and Culture, Heritage and Arts Sub-Group of Bideford Regeneration Board

Benjamin Lyon-Ross - Landmark Theatres

Michael Teare - Bideford and River Torridge Heritage Harbour and Culture, Heritage and Arts Sub-Group of Bideford Regeneration Board

John Puddy - SS Freshspring Trust and Culture, Heritage and Arts Sub-Group of Bideford Regeneration Board

Llinos Gale - London House Studio and Gallery

Andy Branston - Senior Youth Worker, DYS Space Ltd.

Amy Warburton - Jewellery Maker and Retailer

Phoebe Wade - Naked Salon and Studio

India Snow - Sunshine and Snow

Rupert Butcher - Grind Supply Co

and all the young people at the Space drop in session.





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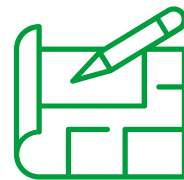
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**SAGE APOTHECARY**

**TREV'S SHED**  
WOODWORKER & TURNER  
01237 479823

**STAINED GLASS  
WORKSHOP**  
COURSES - RESTORATION - COMMISSIONS  
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# ACTION PLANS

# ACTION PLAN: COLLABORATION AND DELIVERY COORDINATION



N o.	Recommendation	Timeline	Lead	Resources
1	Building of alliances with other departments and key stakeholders to enable a joined up approach to capital investment and development.	Short Term next 6 months	Cultural Development Officer (CDO)	Cultural Development Officer 0.5FTE until March 2025 – Sustainable Development Fund
2	Establish a Cultural Compact / Joint Working Group / Town Team for culture (key stakeholders (e.g planning officers, cultural workers e.g Artmakers, members of the council) to drive change, ensure a cohesive approach to development, oversee actions and recommendations and seek future investment	Short Term next 6 months	CDO	As above
3	Explore options for future resourcing and leadership of cultural development beyond March 2025, consider: Role of Cultural Compact / Joint Working Group / Town Team for culture Relationship to N Devon & Torridge Cultural Partnership	Short term – next 12 months	CDO	As above

# ACTION PLAN: CULTURAL SPACES



N o.	Recommendation	Timeline	Lead	Resources
1	<p>Building of alliances with other departments and key stakeholders to enable a joined up approach to capital investment and development.</p>	<p>Short Term next 6 months</p>	<p>CDO</p>	<p>Sustainable Development Fund – until March 2025</p>
2	<p>Audit of Capital Infrastructure owned by the local authority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Riverbank House (Torridge District Council offices)</li> <li>• Bideford Town Hall</li> <li>• Bideford Quay</li> <li>• Small office on Jubilee Sq.</li> <li>• Pannier Market (on 99-year lease to Bideford Town Council).</li> </ul>	<p>Medium Term year 1 (under way)</p>	<p>CDO</p>	<p>Internal / External Contracts – Sustainable Development Fund – until March 2025</p>
3	<p>Audit of wider Capital Infrastructure owned external to the Council and which may be available for long term lease, partnership, purchase etc. consider sharing simplified version / map with the community about available spaces for social leasing.</p>	<p>Short term – next 12 months</p>	<p>CDO</p>	<p>As above</p>
4	<p>Seek investment for and recruit a Cultural Investment Lead role - could be managed by the compact / Town Team and/or lead the Compact / Town Team</p>	<p>Medium Term year 2</p>	<p>Cultural Compact / Town Team for Culture</p>	<p>Internal</p>

5	Based on results of the audits - consider creation of a capital development fund or advice/signposting to funding sources for small discrete capital projects	Medium Term year 2	Cultural Investment Lead	<p><b><u>Section 106</u></b></p> <p><b>Arts Council Project Grants (Place Partnership Scheme)</b></p> <p><b><u>Community Infrastructure Levy</u></b></p> <p><b><u>ACE Cultural Investment Fund</u></b></p> <p><b><u>ACE Capital Investment Programme (</u></b></p> <p><b><u>The Garfield Weston Foundation</u></b></p>
6	Feasibility study for development of a Cultural Hub	Medium Term year 2	Cultural Investment Lead	<p><b><u>Architectural Heritage Fund</u></b></p> <p><b><u>The Garfield Weston Foundation</u></b></p>
7	Fundraising for Cultural Hub development	Medium Term year 3	Cultural Investment Lead / Town Team	<p><b>Arts Council England and The Garfield Weston Foundation as above plus:</b></p> <p><b><u>UK Community Ownership Fund</u></b></p> <p><b><u>UK Infrastructure Bank</u></b></p>
8	Development of Cultural Hub, with smaller spaces for leasing and hire for creative businesses, entrepreneurs and community groups. Decision to made about whether managed by the Compact or by the Council	Long Term Years 4 and 5	Cultural Investment Lead	<p><b><u>Arts and Culture Impact Fund - NESTA</u></b></p>

# ACTION PLAN: PRIDE IN PLACE



N o.	Recommendation	Timeline	Lead	Resources
1	Development of a dynamic and consistent culture brand which celebrates the vibrant culture of Bideford.	Medium Term Year 1.	CDO	Internal: Cross departmental working
2	Clear signposting and advice for local residents wishing to develop their own initiatives such as regular markets, festivals etc.	Short Term 6 months	CDO	Internal: Cross departmental working eg.: advice on health and safety; permissions needed etc
3	Seed funding and advice/mentoring for local festivals and projects for artists and creatives to develop and present work in Bideford.	Medium Term year 1	CDO	Internal and build into applications to:  <u>ACE National Lottery Project Grants</u>  <u>Grassroots Music Venues Fund</u>  <u>The Backstage Trust</u>  <u>Fidelio Charitable Trust</u>  <u>The Golsoncott Foundation</u>  <u>The Mackintosh Foundation</u>  <u>The Rayne Foundation</u>  <u>Sport England Small Grants Programme</u>

4	<p><b>Develop Creative Wayfinding initiative and/or partnership</b></p>	<p><b>Short to Medium Term</b></p>	<p><b>CDO</b></p>	<p><b>Internal and partnership with with LA departments, businesses, services, cultural players and the community</b>  <b>Arts Council Project Grants (Place Partnership Scheme)</b></p>
5	<p><b>Building on the 'Town Beautification Scheme' to develop strategic projects working alongside planning and developers to develop a creative approach to wayfinding in new developments.</b></p>	<p><b>Medium to Long Term</b>  <b>Years 1 and 2</b></p>	<p><b>CDO / Regeneration Board</b></p>	<p><b><u>Section 106</u></b>  <b>National Lottery Project Grants</b>  <b>Arts Council Project Grants (including Place Partnership Scheme)</b></p> <p><b><u>National Lottery Community Fund</u></b></p> <p><b><u>The Rayne Foundation</u></b></p>
6	<p><b>Develop a Public Arts Strategy</b></p>	<p><b>Short Term</b>  <b>Year 1</b></p>	<p><b>CDO / Regeneration Board</b></p>	<p><b>Internal</b></p>
7	<p><b>Create a pot of seed funding to enable creative approaches to wayfinding projects</b></p>	<p><b>Medium Term</b>  <b>Year 2</b></p>	<p><b>CDO Discover Bideford</b></p>	<p><b>Potential to include in larger funding submissions as above.</b></p>
8	<p><b>Work with Screen Devon to develop screen culture in Bideford and Torridge. Consider:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• film production prospectus promoting locations with incentivised licensing schemes in and around Bideford for film crews.</li> <li>• Explore options for a film and digital media hub in Bideford</li> <li>• a film fund incentivising film-making in the area to raise the profile of the town</li> <li>• Skills development and talent pipeline for homegrown screen and digital media talent</li> </ul>	<p><b>Medium Term</b>  <b>Years 2 &amp; 3</b></p>	<p><b>CDO</b></p>	<p><b>Partnership with BFI Film Hub South West, Devon Council and newly established Screen Devon.</b></p>

# ACTION PLAN: AMBITION, SKILLS & INNOVATION



N o.	Recommendation	Timeline	Lead	Resources
1	<p>Creation of a dedicated role with business and funding expertise as defined in Cultural Spaces point 5 to support the development of a Cultural Hub and provide expertise and support for those considering employment in the creative and cultural sector.</p>	<p>As in Cultural Spaces point 4</p>	<p>As in Cultural Spaces point 4</p>	<p>As in Cultural Spaces point 4</p>
2	<p>Pursue Higher Education presence in Bideford, especially technology and creative subjects</p>	<p>Medium Term years 2 &amp; 3</p>	<p>Cultural Investment Lead</p>	<p>As in Cultural Spaces point 4</p> <p>Clore Duffield Foundation</p> <p>This could be bolstered by the <u>Lifelong Learning Entitlement</u>.</p> <p>Adult Education Budget</p>
3	<p>Establish a working group with a focus on building better provision, access and progression routes for people of all ages and backgrounds into creative training, education and employment and on-the-ground experience such as cultural retrofitting and ship restoration</p>	<p>Medium Term Year 2</p>	<p>CDO / Cultural Investment Lead</p>	<p>FE and HE providers drawn from across the region, as well as private sector training, workspace providers, creative and cultural sector employers and local young people</p>

4	<p>Developing a satellite partnership / micro-cluster of stakeholders and skills providers, to drive R&amp;D and attract social investment and innovation. Potential to base in cultural hub and / or Methodist Church.</p>	<p>Medium Term Year 2</p>	<p>Cultural Investment Lead</p>	<p>Internal.</p>
5	<p>Work towards becoming a Real Living Wage Place by embedding real living wage into own organisations, new development tenders, bids and procurement and collaborating with investors.</p>	<p>Medium to Long Term</p>	<p>Local Authority</p>	<p>Local Authority buy in and advocacy to becoming a <u>Real Living Wage place.</u></p>
6	<p>Working with planning, historic buildings and new developments to host digital skills hub or training offer specifically around marrying the future skills within a heritage context.</p>	<p>Medium Term - Long term</p>	<p>Cultural Investment Lead</p>	<p><u>Nesta Impact Ventures:</u> <u>Section 106</u></p>

**THANK YOU FOR READING**

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