



Barnstaple Coastal Community Team

***Riverfront Economic Plan***

January 2016

1. **Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to outline an economic plan for the development of the Riverfront economy within Barnstaple town centre to create new business and employment opportunities. In particular, the plan is focused on the heritage value of the area to encourage increased visits and expenditure within the town. This plan has been prepared by the Barnstaple Coastal Community Team (CCT) based upon local consultation, which had prioritised both the range of issues to be addressed and the key projects to tackle them.

1. **Context** 
   1. ***The local area***

Barnstaple is located on the north coast of Devon on the Bristol Channel within the district of North Devon. The town dates back around 1,000 years and was founded by the Saxons at the lowest crossing point of the River Taw. Geographically isolated from the main cities of Plymouth and Exeter to the south, and with limited transport connections (see Fig. 2.1), the Barnstaple is of great importance to the wider area. After Exeter, the Barnstaple Town Area is one of the largest in Devon (population 47,939 in 2012[[1]](#footnote-1)), similar in size to Exmouth and Newton Abbot. As a sub-regional centre, Barnstaple has a strategic role for the provision of key services (health, education, leisure, retail) and employment within northern Devon. Much of the area’s future development is expected to be concentrated within Barnstaple. The town has expanded rapidly over recent years, with population growth exceeding both district and county growth rates.

North Devon is an environmentally special area, with large sections of the coast designated as North Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and one third of Exmoor National Park falling within North Devon district. The North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, centred on the internationally important Braunton Burrows dune system is a unique selling point for the area. Not surprisingly therefore, North Devon is a popular tourism destination, much of it focused on the coast, within which Barnstaple plays a key role as a transport hub, for attractions and recreation, accommodation, food and drink and as a shopping centre.

The impressive Taw River is one of the defining features of the town, which has a rich mercantile history. North Devon’s wool was exported from the port and the town benefited greatly from growing international trade with America in the 16th and 17th centuries. Many of the town’s impressive buildings and monuments are the legacies of wealthy merchants – there are 234 listed buildings within the Town Centre Conservation Area and a Scheduled Ancient Monument; the remains of a medieval ‘Motte & Bailey’ castle at Castle Mound. Ship building has also been important to the town and in the C.16th Barnstaple contributed ships sent to fight the [Spanish Armada](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_Armada). Up until World War II, the river was key to the success of Barnstaple, with boatyards on the river finally disappearing in the 1960s.



***Figure 2.1* Geographical context**

However, the town has since ‘turned its back’ to the river, which is no longer the main economic focus with commercial and retail areas centred on the High Street and in out of town developments. The riverfront areas, within which the Museum of Barnstaple & North Devon and Barnstaple Heritage Centre are located, are today not fully connected or integrated into the town centre and have a forgotten feel to them; many of the listed buildings in the area do not have public access, and do not contribute to the town’s distinctiveness and identity, or to civic pride and well-being; and development sites, including Anchorwood Bank and Seven Brethren, present new residential and commercial opportunities with the risk of further reducing town centre footfall.

Yet, the river has great potential to become a significant asset to the town again. There are opportunities for Barnstaple to attract tourism and cultural spend by having a stronger maritime and mercantile heritage offer, by leveraging Barnstaple’s historic strengths, by attracting new sympathetic uses for historic buildings, and by opening up new river-based activities, building on current uses, including Barnstaple Gig Club.

This Plan is focused on such opportunities as a basis to generate wider economic and social benefits for the town and its residents. The Plan is centred on the Riverfront area, from the historic ‘Long Bridge’ to the Yeo River and extending into the town centre (see Fig. 2.2).

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**Barnstaple Heritage Centre**

Currently managed by Barnstaple Town Council within the Grade I and Grade II listed Queen Anne’s Walk Building, but due to be vacated at the end of March 2016.

**Civic Centre**

Vacated by North Devon Council in 2015, currently occupied by Devon County Council

**Castle Mound**

Ancient Monument

**Anchorwood Bank**

Key development site for mixed housing, food store, commercial and other retail (see Section 2.4)

**Oliver Buildings**

VacatedGrade II listed former cabinet-making factory and development site (see Section 2.4)

**Museum of Barnstaple & N. Devon**

Tells the story of Barnstaple and North Devon and houses important arts and ceramics collections

**Bridge Chambers**

Grade II Listed Building

**The Strand**

Pedestrianised area during the day (10am to 4pm), open to traffic and parking after hours

**Historic Quay**

From which Barnstaple’s wool was exported internationally

**The Long Bridge**

Constructed in the C.13th. Grade I listed building and a key entry point into the town

***Figure 2.2* Barnstaple Riverfront area – focus of the CCT**

* 1. ***Community context***

Barnstaple is very much a self-contained community arising from its isolation from main urban centres to the south and the geographical barriers of Exmoor and Dartmoor, which constrain transport and connections (see Fig. 2.1). Most of the town’s working age residents are employed within the town and, indeed, Barnstaple attracts many workers from the wider, mainly rural surrounding areas (see Section 5). Between 2001 and 2011, Barnstaple’s identifiable Travel to Work Area (TTWA) has increased significantly. However, the town’s status as a strategic sub-regional centre brings both benefits and issues.

Issues highlighted within a ‘Barnstaple Town Study’[[2]](#footnote-2), prepared to support community-focused consultation to inform the Joint North Devon and Torridge Core Strategy, and supplemented by CCT’s partners’ experience, included (see Section 5 for supporting evidence):

* A rising population, growing faster than other Devon towns, which will raise future issues around service delivery.
* Low household incomes and wide variations in income between the town’s different neighbourhoods.
* Pockets of high deprivation – areas within Barnstaple Central Town and Yeo Valley wards are amongst the five most deprived Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the county, with neighbourhoods within Barnstaple Central Town ward amongst the 10% most deprived in the country.
* Low overall crime, but pockets of higher crime rates within the context of the district.
* High levels of dependency on benefits (generally in work benefits). Unemployment rates in line with district and county averages, but masking wide variation across the town – the highest rates are within the most disadvantaged wards.
* House prices lower than average for the district, but high relative to incomes which raises affordability issues.
* Residents are generally in good health, slightly below the district and county averages.
* Limited capacity in some primary and in both secondary schools within the town.
* An extensive range of community facilities, reflecting the town’s role as a sub-regional centre.
* Poor national road and rail connectivity.
* Under-utilised Listed Buildings in the town centre.
* In common with other parts of Devon, the loss of 18-24 year olds in search of Higher Education and careers and outside of the district and the county.
  1. ***The local economy***

Whilst Barnstaple owes much of its history to the wool trade and its maritime links, today it hosts a mixed economy. Manufacturing is a key sector (11% of employment in 2011[[3]](#footnote-3)), with several large employers in and around the town, as well as retail (18%[[4]](#footnote-4)), health (14%) and education (9%), reflecting the town’s importance to the wider area for economic activity, public services and as a retail centre. Although isolated and peripheral within the county, Barnstaple is probably the most accessible of North Devon’s towns, albeit through a branch line rail connection and the de-trunked A361 North Devon Link Road, with the M5 motorway some 36 miles to the south east.

Tourism is important to the town’s economy, but proportionately less important than in the wider area – in 2011, ‘accommodation and food services’ accounted for 8% of employment compared to 10% in the wider district. Yet the town plays a critical role in the wider tourism economy, acting as the main transport hub, providing many of the district’s highly rated hotels and restaurants, providing the wider area’s main cultural focus, as well as the district’s main shopping and leisure resources.

Self-employment is high, but not as high in other North Devon towns, reflecting a shortage of major employers across the district as a whole. Incomes and skills are both in line with the North Devon average, but relatively low in national terms (see Section 5). Within the new Local Plan[[5]](#footnote-5), much of northern Devon’s future development growth is expected to be concentrated in Barnstaple, enhancing its role as a ‘Strategically Significant Town.’ Key spatial priorities for the development of the northern Devon economy[[6]](#footnote-6), in particular within Barnstaple, include:

* The Provision of effective infrastructure to stimulate economic investment and growth in productivity and employment (e.g. employment sites, innovation and skills infrastructure, transport).
* Investment in retail, leisure and tourism infrastructure to grow town centre economies.

Key sectors which are expected to be particularly important to the economy in the future are advanced manufacturing, energy, marine and business services (sectors with potential to grow and provide higher paid and skilled employment). Tourism, health/social care, agriculture and food & drink are also noted for their wider importance and existing contribution to local employment.

* 1. ***Related initiatives***

Other local projects and initiatives that are relevant to this Plan include:

* **Anchorwood Bank** – Anchorwood Bank is major riverside development site (17.57 ha), across the river from the town centre and within the area of focus of the CCT. Outline planning permission was granted in 2013 (since revised) for a mixed development of a new ASDA store, 174 homes, a petrol station, additional retail space and leisure uses including restaurants and cafés. Phase 1 of the development, which includes the new ASDA, a nature reserve, highways works and a riverside walkway is underway and will be completed in 2016. This is a major development which is of direct relevance to the nature, character and feel of the CCT area (see Fig. 2.3).

**Oliver Buildings**



* **The Oliver Buildings** – Adjacent to the Anchorwood Bank site and next to the historic Long Bridge (see Fig. 2.1), the four storey Oliver Buildings were built in 1888 as a cabinet making factory, at the time adjacent to the railway and offering berthing facilities for ships. The buildings were vacated in last 5 years and are reported to now be in a poor state of repair. In 2015, the buildings were granted Grade 2 listing status. Like Anchorwood Bank, this is a key development site affecting the CCT area. Suggested new potential uses for the building include commercial offices, a hotel, arts and craft studios, and performance and exhibition space.

***Figure 2.3* Anchorwood Bank development**

* **Seven Brethren –** proposals are being brought forward, linked to the aspiration to replace the existing Leisure Centre, for alternative development on the Seven Brethren site adjacent to Anchorwood Bank. Although at an early stage the future uses are relevant to the the CCT area and link the centre of town with the railway station.
* **Barnstaple Pannier Market and adjoining Guildhall** – hosting almost daily markets within England’s largest undercover market space, the 160 year old Barnstaple Pannier Market is a key heritage building within the town to which the CCT area will seek to link as part of a joined-up town centre visitor proposition. There are proposals to refurbish the historic building.

1. **Methods**
   1. ***About the Coastal Community Team***

This Plan has been developed by the Barnstaple Coastal Community Team (CCT) as a joined up framework for development and enhancement of the riverfront area from the historic Long Bridge to the mouth of the River Yeo (see Fig. 2.2). The CCT is led by North Devon Council, with representation drawn from key stakeholders with an interest in the collective development of the waterfront area.

Members of the team include representation from:

North Devon Council

Petroc (North Devon’s FE College)

Barnstaple Town Council (who also currently operate Barnstaple Heritage Centre and the Guildhall)

Barnstaple Town Centre Management

Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon

Barnstaple Bridge Trust

Devon County Council

* 1. ***How our plan was developed***

This Plan has been developed through facilitated workshop activity with the CCT, drawing upon key reports, published data sources and individual member expertise and perspectives to assess the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats in relation to the Riverfront area; to identify the area’s main needs and challenges; and to agree upon the key projects that should be taken forward to address them. The thinking and strategy has then been revisited as a team within separate workshop discussions, drawing upon wider consultation, to arrive at a refined and revised set of project initiatives that will together transform the Riverfront area and the opportunities it presents for visitors, residents and businesses alike.

Stakeholders who also attended workshops and meetings leading to the development of this plan, included representatives from the following organisations:

Devon County Council, North Devon Council, Barnstaple town council, Barnstaple Buildings Preservation Trust, Barnstaple Bridge Trust, Barnstaple chamber of Commerce, Barnstaple gig Club, Barnstaple and North Devon Museum, The Custom House, Tea by the Taw, The Venue, Peregrine Mears Architects

Within initial discussions, the team highlighted two priority areas, which focused thinking, project definition and scoping: (a) connectivity and transport, linking the Riverfront area into the wider town centre, from which it currently stands apart; and (b) the collective use of space within the Plan area to develop a stronger and more cohesive Riverfront and town centre proposition. The projects in Section 8 are presented in relation to these two strategic priorities. All projects have been assigned ownership by one or more CCT members, who will champion and report on their progress.

The CCT is a live forum and the Economic Plan a living document. The CCT will continue to develop the Economic Plan and drive its implementation in light of changing circumstances and opportunities.

1. **Our Plan – aims & objectives**

Barnstaple has a vital role within the northern Devon economy as the main sub-regional centre. We need to ensure that the town’s retail, leisure and visitor offering are strengthened and are competitive going forward, and that Barnstaple derives increased benefit as a tourist attraction in its own right.

**Our vision** is for the Barnstaple ‘Riverfront Quarter’ in to be a lively and vibrant element of the town centre offering, transformed by developing a unique mercantile heritage and leisure-based visitor offering, fully linked into the town centre, from which it currently stands apart.

**The aim of our Economic Plan** is to rejuvenate the Barnstaple Riverfront on both sides of the River Taw, from the Long Bridge to mouth of the River Yeo, for the benefit of businesses, residents and visitors alike, through initiatives which draw upon the rich mercantile heritage, cultural and leisure opportunities offered by the Riverfront area.

Our key **objectives** are:

* To enhance and strengthen the identity of the town by focusing on its USPs – its maritime setting and mercantile heritage.
* To increase opportunities for experiencing and enjoying Barnstaple’s mercantile heritage and leisure assets.
* To increase the number of visitors to the Riverfront area and their dwell time, leading to new business and employment opportunities.
* To increase the number and range of businesses in the riverfront area, supporting an integrated mercantile heritage and cultural offering.
* To increase year round, high quality, high earning employment opportunities, particularly for young people.
* To link the town centre with the new developments proposed and under construction.

1. **Community needs and supporting data**

***Demography*** *–* the town is growing faster than the wider district and county and has a relatively young and self-contained population, reflecting the economic importance of the town to the wider area

* In 2012, the Barnstaple Town Area[[7]](#footnote-7) had a population of 47,9391. Between the last two censuses, (2001-2011), the Town Area’s population increased by 7.3%, outstripping growth rates within the wider district (7.0%) and county (5.9%).
* Compared to the wider district and county, Barnstaple has a relatively young population. In 2011, 49.2% of Barnstaple parish’s residents were aged under 40, compared to 42.5% within North Devon district, 42.2% within Devon and 47.1% nationally[[8]](#footnote-8).
* In contrast, 24.3% of the parish’s residents were aged 60 and above, compared to 29.9% within the district, and 30.3% within the county.
* Analysis in 2005[[9]](#footnote-9) showed that during the week, the town’s population increases significantly. Whilst Barnstaple’s working population (13,590) was only 3,981 more than neighbouring Bideford’s, it drew in a further 5,753 employees a day whereas Bideford lost 545. Barnstaple experienced 42% more trips to work than there were working age residents in the town.
* In terms of travel to work for local residents, Barnstaple is very self contained – in 2001, 77% of residents in employment aged 16 to 74, lived and worked in the area9.
* The town’s population is expected to increase significantly, by 22.2% between 2011 and 2026. Growth is expected to be particularly high amongst older age groups – by 56.5% within the 65-84 age band and by 101.4% in the 85+ age band[[10]](#footnote-10).

***Income*** – in national terms, North Devon is a low income area, with high levels of dependency on benefits

* At £26,000 in 2008, average household income in the Barnstaple Town Area was in line with the district average (£26,000) and a little below the county average (£26,800) but only three quarters (74.1%) of the national average (£35,100). Within Barnstaple parish, however, average income was only £24,100 (68.7% of the national average)[[11]](#footnote-11).
* Average income figures disguise significant variation across the town. In 2008, average household incomes within Barnstaple varied between £21,082 within Central Town ward and £26,025 within Bickington & Roundswell[[12]](#footnote-12).
* In 2011, 5.6% of 16-59 year olds within Barnstaple parish were claiming Income Support, compared to only 3.9% across the district, 3.4% across the county and 4.8% nationally[[13]](#footnote-13).
* At an average of £166,417, house prices within the town in 2011[[14]](#footnote-14) were lower than the district (£216,673) and Devon averages (£233,819) but higher than the national average (£161,281). In the previous 9 years, prices rose by 36% compared to national price rises of 24%. With significantly lower incomes than the national average, housing affordability is an issue, particularly for young people.
* Three quarters of homes (74%) were owned by residents (mortgage or outright), compared to an average of 68% across the district and 70% across the county[[15]](#footnote-15).
* Car ownership in Barnstaple (81% of all households owning at least one vehicle) was in line with the district (81%) and the county (83%) averages15.
* Barnstaple has pockets of high deprivation, with 5 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) falling within the most deprived quartile for multiple deprivation. After Exeter, no other town in Devon has so many areas within the most deprived quartile. Barnstaple Central Town ward includes one of the 4 most deprived LSOAs in the county which falls within the 10% most deprived nationally[[16]](#footnote-16).

***Education & skills*** – skills are in line with the district average but lower than the county average; schools attainment of qualifications is significantly lower than both the district and county averages

* Skills levels at the last Census were in line with the district average, but lower than the county average:
  + - Less than a quarter of residents aged over 16 had an NVQ Level 4 or higher qualification (23%), compared to 28% across the county and 23% in North Devon.
    - Almost 1 in 4 (24%) had no qualifications, in line with the district average (24%) and higher than the county average (21%).
* At school level in 2011, attainment of qualifications was significantly lower than the county and national positions[[17]](#footnote-17):
  + - Less than half of children (49%) achieved GCSEs at A\*-C grades, compared to the district (67%), county (74%) and national picture (80%).
    - A’ level achievement is good, but the experience of Petroc HE college is that many 18-24 year-olds leave the area for Higher Education opportunities

***Employment*** – the town has a broad-based mixed economy, reflecting its strategic role as a centre for employment and service delivery

* At the last census, the main sectors for employment within Barnstaple Town Area were retail (18%) and health (14% of all employees).
* Manufacturing accounted for 11% of employment and education 9%.
* ‘Accommodation & food services’, contributed 1 in 12 jobs (8%) compared to North Devon (10%), Devon (7%).

***Tourism activity*** – the sector is important to both the town and the wider economy:

* In 2012, tourism within Barnstaple generated important benefits to the town’s economy[[18]](#footnote-18):
  + - 117,000 staying visitor trips (compared to 995,000 within the wider district)
    - 863,000 day visits (compared to 3,198,000)
    - £56.1 million direct visitor spend (compared to £356.3 million)
    - £57.3 million total visitor related spend (compared to £364.6 million)
* Visitor-related spend in Barnstaple supported an estimated 1,587 actual jobs (within the area and wider, and including part-time and seasonal jobs).
* Whilst one quarter of the district’s population (25.3%) lives within the parish of Barnstaple, the town attracts only 11.8% of the district’s staying visitors, and 15.7% of total visitor-related expenditure, although it does punch its weight in relation to day visitors (27.0%). Yet even the day visitors figure is only just above average, where it might be expected to be significantly higher for the area’s main retail centre – Barnstaple is currently not reaching its full potential as a tourism destination and attraction.
* Trips to a museum, church and historic house were ranked the 10th, 12th and 13th most popular leisure activity during overnight trips in England in 2012[[19]](#footnote-19). In 2013, the value of heritage-based tourism to the UK economy (including natural heritage) was calculated as £26.4 billion, contributing 742,419 jobs[[20]](#footnote-20).

1. **SWOT analysis of Barnstaple Riverfront area**

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| **Strengths** | **Weaknesses** |
| * Quality of the Barnstaple Museum offering * Award winning cafe * Strong mercantile heritage, but largely untapped potential * Range of unique heritage buildings * The river is a defining feature of the town * High visibility of the waterfront area, but limited local parking * Close to town centre | * The river is no longer the centre of focus for the town * Few current uses of the quayside * No riverfront focal point to draw footfall * Uncertain future of Barnstaple Heritage centre * Area is not integrated with the town centre and main pedestrian areas * Some current commercial uses not conducive to a heritage area * Shortage of car parking close to the Riverfront * Poor visitor awareness, reasons to visit, must see attractions * Lack of critical mass of attractions * Poor access to the river * Tired public realm * Availability of tourist information * No joined-up visitor proposition * Lack of identity |
| **Opportunities** | **Threats** |
| * Linking to the Anchorwood Bank development through a new footbridge * New uses of the Oliver Buildings * Potential Section 106 investment in public realm and visitor economy enhancements * Need for an ‘anchor’ attraction to bring footfall * Developing new leisure opportunities on the river – boating, kayaking, gig racing * Creation of a heritage, arts & crafts quarter * Town area theming to encourage exploration of all areas * Heritage trails and interpretation * Maritime/heritage themed festivals and events * Creating an outdoor craft market area, pop-up shops * Creating new reasons to visit * Wide range of case studies of successful waterfront development – get specialist input * Improved signage and interpretation * Growth in healthy lifestyle markets – new leisure uses | * Impact of the Anchorwood Bank development – character, footfall, loss of opportunity * Uncertain future of the Oliver Buildings * Future development of the Civic Centre is uncertain * Lack of private investment in this part of town * Rateable values a barrier to investment in what is a peripheral part of the town centre * Effects of prolonged economic downturn outside of the town centre * Competing development uses – potential to erode the vision for the area * The Strand is only pedestrianised during the day – traffic allowed after hours |

1. **Our priorities**

Through joined-up development and enhancement of the Riverfront area, we will deliver community, visitor and economic value, leading to new business and employment opportunities within the town which are key to meeting the wider needs of the community. We have identified two key priorities that respond to those needs and to the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the Riverfront area:

| ***Priority*** | ***Rationale*** | ***What we want to achieve*** |
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| 1. **Transport & connectivity** | Enhancing access to the Riverfront area and connections with the town centre to enable and encourage more people to visit as part of their ‘Barnstaple experience’.  The Anchorwood Bank development will compete with and potentially draw footfall away from the High Street. Depending on the retail offer, the development could have a significant impact for the town centre - there is a risk that footfall attracted to Anchorwood Bank will not cross the river. There needs to be a clear access and pedestrian links between the Riverfront area, the High Street and Anchorwood Bank. | Within six months:   * A strategy for traffic movement on the Strand * Improvements to existing links across the river   Within five years   * Delivery of improvements to car parking and transport links identified in the strategy * A cycle hub * Improved access to the estuary, building on existing watersports uses |
| 1. **Use of space in the Riverfront area** | Improve the core attraction of the Riverfront area for visitors, residents and businesses, including the heritage, leisure, food and drink, and retail offerings, in particular independent shops – there is a strong ‘keep it local’ movement within the town which we want to support and encourage.  Address current weaknesses of the area and barriers to improvement to develop a more cohesive identity and proposition to attract further investment in the future. In particular, to improve the environment, visitor dwell time and to encourage development of the evening economy. | Within six months   * Address slippery paving * Repair broken lights * Lighting strategy with electrical connections for events * Riverfront events   Within five years   * Development of imaginative and innovative links between the heritage assets on the Strand * Riverfront business uses to create a more vibrant feel * A town beach * Public art * A riverfront play area * Appropriate use for the Queen Anne’s Buildings |

1. **Our plan**
   1. ***Transport & connectivity***

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| **Key project (title)** | **What it will deliver (type of outcomes & outputs) SMART** | **Who will lead & key partners** | **Estimated cost** | **Possible funding streams** |
| TC1. Lighting, Public Realm and Signage | Increased visitors, dwell time and expenditure, growth opportunities for businesses | CCT,NDC, TCM | TBC | S106 contributions, DCC, NDC, CCF |
| **Description & rationale:**  Refresh and enhance the lighting and public realm areas to improve the look and feel of the area, to encourage walkers and cyclists into the town from the Tarka Trail, to attract families and to develop the evening economy. Key initiatives include:   1. Address slippery surfacing/paving on The Strand (short-term quick win) 2. Repair broken lights between the trees on The Strand/develop alternative lighting scheme for the trees (short-term quick win) 3. Install ‘festooned’ lighting around The Strand (short-term) 4. Create new ‘play lighting’ features (short/medium-term) 5. Create more lighting installation in the riverfront area - light the Long Bridge to make a feature of it (medium-term) 6. Create an all-weather public space (wind-breaks, covered areas to encourage events on the Riverfront (medium-term) 7. Introduce electrical connections for temporary events, e.g. Christmas markets (short-term) | | **Resources required to deliver** | Project management time | |
| **Next steps & dates** | Scoping/costing of initiatives  Implementation – mix of **short** (within 12 months) **and medium-term** (1-3 years) initiatives | |

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| **Key project (title)** | **What it will deliver (type of outcomes & outputs) SMART** | **Who will lead & key partners** | **Estimated cost** | **Possible funding streams** |
| TC2. Traffic on The Strand | Increased visitors, expenditure, encouraged evening economy, growth opportunities for businesses | NDC, BTC, DCC | TBC | TBC |
| **Description & rationale:**  Currently The Strand is open to traffic after 4pm, which is a confusing message and, as a consequence, the area is not used to its full potential.   * 1. Reduce or remove parking and car use to make The Strand fully pedestrianised (medium-term).   2. Review the current parking provision and develop a parking plan that supports recreational activities, events and town centre requirements (need to cater for coach parties) (medium-term).   3. Consider delivery access from the Castle Street end of the Strand rather than from The Square (possible quick win).   Ensure that The Square is incorporated within any solution. | | **Resources required to deliver** | Project management time | |
| **Next steps & dates** | Scope proposals, feasibility, consultation  **Medium-term** activity 1-3 years, review delivery access **short-term** (within 12 mths) | |

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| **Key project (title)** | **What it will deliver (type of outcomes & outputs) SMART** | **Who will lead & key partners** | **Estimated cost** | **Possible funding streams** |
| TC3. The Strand Cycle Hub | Increased visits and expenditure, reduced congestion | CCT, NDC, BTC, DCC | TBC | S106 contributions, DCC, NDC, CCF |
| **Description & rationale:**  The Tarka Trail (part of the South West Coast Path and a National Cycle Route) brings a lot of tourists to the river front area but the space does not offer anything else for the visitor. There is need for a family attraction to keep visitors on the Riverfront and in Barnstaple Town. Create a cycle hub – bike racks, signposting, app of things to do now you are in Barnstaple, play area for children/recreational space. We wish to create a stopping point as an interface between the town and the Trail. | | **Resources required to deliver** | Project management time | |
| **Next steps & dates** | Scope proposals, feasibility, consultation  Implementation - **medium term** (1-3 years) | |

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| **Key project (title)** | **What it will deliver (type of outcomes & outputs) SMART** | **Who will lead & key partners** | **Estimated cost** | **Possible funding streams** |
| TC4. Riverfront Heritage Assets | Longer visits, increased visitor expenditure | BTC, Museum, History Group | TBC | CCF |
| **Description & rationale:**  The town has many heritage buildings (234 Listed Buildings and an Ancient Monument), yet there is currently no clear linking of sites or unified heritage proposition to encourage movement and visitor flows between sites. Develop heritage information and interpretation that supports visitor exploration of the Riverfront Quarter and of the wider town. Consider alternatives to attract visitors into the town, including teenagers, and link with events. | | **Resources required to deliver** | Research, project management time, marketing, promotion, signage | |
| **Next steps & dates** | Research and draft options, develop proposals  Implementation - **medium term** (1-3 years) | |

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| **Key project (title)** | **What it will deliver (type of outcomes & outputs) SMART** | **Who will lead & key partners** | **Estimated cost** | **Possible funding streams** |
| TC5. River Leisure Access | New leisure uses on the river, healthy exercise opportunities, increased visits | NDC, BTC | TBC | CCF |
| **Description & rationale:**  There is poor access to the river/water for leisure uses, which are not currently encouraged (only 1 slipway, no stage facilities, the Gig Club has no riverside storage). Initiatives include:   * 1. Create a recreational/leisure area to promote the use of the river (medium-term)   2. Create a jetty to improve access to the river (medium-term)   3. Boat storage and additional slipway – particularly for Gig club (medium-term)   4. New watersports facilities to promote the use of the river (medium-term)   5. Build on the maritime/mercantile heritage of the area – potential dragon boat racing, other events (medium-term) | | **Resources required to deliver** | Project management time, scope and assess options, consultation | |
| **Next steps & dates** | Develop and scope project approach  Implementation – **medium-term** (1-3 years) | |

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| **Key project (title)** | **What it will deliver (type of outcomes & outputs) SMART** | **Who will lead & key partners** | **Estimated cost** | **Possible funding streams** |
| TC6. Anchorwood Bank – Riverfront - High Street Link/Bridge | Increased footfall in the Riverfront area, increased visitor expenditure | NDC, DCC, BTC | Major capital cost | S106 contributions, DCC, NDC, CCF |
| **Description & rationale:**  Identified need for a foot/cycle bridge linking the Anchorwood Bank development and the Barnstaple Riverfront, with pedestrian and cycle links to the High Street. Currently the Asda Development has contributed £500,000 to the project. There is a shorter-term project to make improvements to the existing link. | | **Resources required to deliver** | Project management time | |
| **Next steps & dates** | Scoping/costing of project (within 12 months)  Implementation – **long-term** (>3 years) | |

* 1. ***Use of space in the Riverfront area***

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| **Key project (title)** | **What it will deliver (type of outcomes & outputs) SMART** | **Who will lead & key partners** | **Estimated cost** | **Possible funding streams** |
| SP1. Riverfront Events | New visitors, increased visits, increased dwell time and expenditure | CCT, NDC, BTC, TCM | TBC | CCF |
| **Description & rationale:**  Create a programme of arts, cultural, and recreational events in the Riverfront quarter to boost use and activity – this represents a focus of our plan to attract footfall from Anchorwood Bank to the Riverfront and town centre by developing a vibrant environment. Potential initiatives include:   * + 1. Fairs and open markets     2. Festivals and events     3. Live performances     4. Pop-up shops | | **Resources required to deliver** | Project co-ordination, individual project management time | |
| **Next steps & dates** | Develop overall approach and project proposals, consultation, project co-ordination  Timescales will vary from element to element  Overall plan - **medium term** (1-3 years) | |

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| **Key project (title)** | **What it will deliver (type of outcomes & outputs) SMART** | **Who will lead & key partners** | **Estimated cost** | **Possible funding streams** |
| SP2. Barnstaple Museum Extension. | Enhanced heritage offering, new visits, increased visitor expenditure | Museum | £1.8m | HLF |
| **Description & rationale:**  Extension of the Museum to improve the visitor offering, including new display space, improved temporary exhibition space, enhanced educational and visitor facilities and associated activities programmes | | **Resources required to deliver** | Project management, match funding | |
| **Next steps & dates** | Stage 1 HLF bid successful  Stage 2 to be submitted in August 2016 with decision in December  Implementation - **medium term** (1-3 years) | |

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| **Key project (title)** | **What it will deliver (type of outcomes & outputs) SMART** | **Who will lead & key partners** | **Estimated cost** | **Possible funding streams** |
| SP3. Riverfront Business Uses | Enhanced visitor offering, increased visits and expenditure | CCT, NDC, TCM | TBC | TBC |
| **Description & rationale:**  Historic buildings along The Strand area are underutilised, often used as office accommodation, which has an impact on the town’s distinctiveness and identity, as well as civic pride and well-being through missed opportunities for higher value uses. There is a need to incentivise change of use to create a more vibrant feel and active economy, particularly food and drink and creative businesses. Work with the Planning Team and individual businesses to develop an enhancement programme. Opportunities presented by Bridge Chambers to be explored. | | **Resources required to deliver** | Project management informed by case studies of the experience of other areas | |
| **Next steps & dates** | Review of best practice, case studies  Work with Planning Team, develop overall plan  Overall plan - **medium term** (1-3 years) | |

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| **Key project (title)** | **What it will deliver (type of outcomes & outputs) SMART** | **Who will lead & key partners** | **Estimated cost** | **Possible funding streams** |
| SP4. Barnstaple Heritage Centre | Strengthened heritage offering, new riverfront attraction, new and longer visits, increased visitor expenditure | NDC, BTC, TCM | TBC | TBC, HLF, private sector investment |
| **Description & rationale:**  Barnstaple Town Council is vacating the existing riverfront Heritage Centre building (leased from North Devon Council) and intends to develop the historic Guildhall (adjoining the Pannier Market) as a new heritage attraction. There is an opportunity for a new use of the existing Heritage Centre Building to reinforce the vision for the riverfront area (e.g. a high value restaurant).  Develop new uses for the building and ensure that the relocated heritage attraction is linked into the town’s heritage offering (e.g. through signage, joint promotions). | | **Resources required to deliver** | Project co-ordination, funding | |
| **Next steps & dates** | Building survey, review potential uses and required improvements  Implementation – new use for vacated Heritage Centre – **short-term** (within 12 mths); refurbishment of the Guildhall - **medium-term** (1-3 years) | |

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| **Key project (title)** | **What it will deliver (type of outcomes & outputs) SMART** | **Who will lead & key partners** | **Estimated cost** | **Possible funding streams** |
| SP5. Castle Mound - Linked Art & Cultural Space | Strengthened town centre cultural attraction, longer visits, increased visitor expenditure | CCT | TBC | TBC |
| **Description & rationale:**  Create new arts and cultural space, together with a programme of events, making better use of the green space by Castle Mound and to create vibrancy and buzz. | | **Resources required to deliver** | Project management time, co-ordination, marketing & promotional activity | |
| **Next steps & dates** | Develop proposals  Implementation - **medium-term** (1-3 years) | |

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| **Key project (title)** | **What it will deliver (type of outcomes & outputs) SMART** | **Who will lead & key partners** | **Estimated cost** | **Possible funding streams** |
| SP6. Riverfront Play Area | Improved offering for families, new and longer visits, increased visitor expenditure | CCT | TBC | TBC |
| **Description & rationale:**  There are currently few facilities for families within the town centre as a whole. Create new play area to increase footfall and activity on the riverfront area | | **Resources required to deliver** | Project management time, planning application, budget | |
| **Next steps & dates** | Develop plans & costings  Implementation - **medium-term** (1-3 years) | |

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| **Key project (title)** | **What it will deliver (type of outcomes & outputs) SMART** | **Who will lead & key partners** | **Estimated cost** | **Possible funding streams** |
| SP7. Public Art | Enhanced environment, strengthened cultural attraction offering on the riverfront, increased swell time | CCT | TBC | TBC |
| **Description & rationale:**  Install public art on the riverfront to mark the area as a cultural focus | | **Resources required to deliver** | Project management time, fundraising | |
| **Next steps & dates** | Convene project group, develop proposals Implementation - **medium-term** (1-3 years) | |

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| **Key project (title)** | **What it will deliver (type of outcomes & outputs) SMART** | **Who will lead & key partners** | **Estimated cost** | **Possible funding streams** |
| SP8. Barnstaple Town Beach | New visitors, increased visits and expenditure | CCT, EA | TBC | TBC |
| **Description & rationale:**  Bring the beach economy to Barnstaple through the creation of an artificial beach, with access to watersports opportunities and facilities | | **Resources required to deliver** | Project co-ordination, project management time, technical surveys | |
| **Next steps & dates** | Outline proposals and seek technical surveys  Implementation – **long-term** (>3 years) | |

***Abbreviations***

BTC Barnstaple Town Council

CCF Coastal Communities Fund

DCC Devon County Council

EA Environment Agency

HLF Heritage lottery Fund

NDC North Devon Council

TCM Barnstaple Town Centre Management

1. **Barriers & risks to implementing our plan**

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| **Identified barriers/risks** | **Impact** | **Likelihood** | **Overall** | **How we will manage/overcome** |
| 1. Not being able to secure external funding | Hi | Med | Med | * Realistic assessment of funding options – only bring forward high quality projects with funding potential * Review alternative, community-based funding options * Buy-in from the Town, District and County Councils to support project proposals and leveraging of in-kind contributions as match funding |
| 1. Delay or non-delivery of key projects | Hi | Med | Med | * Maintain focus of the CCT on the progress of key projects * All projects to have individual project owners, who report on progress |
| 1. Obtaining planning permission for the range of project ideas | Med | Low | Low | * Early two-way engagement with the Planning Authority for them to understand our aspirations and for us to understand the planning constraints * Prioritise focus on areas of common agreement * Develop ongoing working relationship at a strategic level |
| 1. Not being able to secure support and investment of the private sector, which the Plan is seeking to encourage | Hi | Hi | Hi | * Early engagement with the private sector to communicate aims, individual projects and timescales * Close working with developers to bring forward commercially viable projects * Leadership of the CCT |

1. DCC, Patient & Practitioner Services Agency [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Devon County Council (2011)*Barnstaple Town Study Report: Core Strategy Evidence,* October 2011 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Census, 2011 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Including wholesale and motor vehicle repair [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The North Devon & Torridge local plan 2011-2031 (publication draft 2014) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. North Devon Council & Torridge District Council (2014) *Northern Devon Economic Strategy 2014-20* [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Comprising the parishes of Barnstaple, Landkey, Fremington and wider area [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Census 2011 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Roger Tym (2005) *South West Regional Assembly – Functional Analysis of Settlements* [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Devon County Council population projections, 2010 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Estimates based on Experian’s Mosaic Household dataset. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. CACI and Paycheck data provided by CACI (2008) [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Dept of Work & Pensions [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Land Registry 2011 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Census 2011 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Indices of Deprivation 2010 within *Analysis of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation*, Devon County Council [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Devon County Council, Children’s & Young People’s Directorate, June 2011 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. The South West Tourism Research Company [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. GB Tourism Survey, 2012 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Oxford Economics (2013) *The Economic Impact of the UK Heritage Tourism Economy* [↑](#footnote-ref-20)