

**THINGS MADE
PUBLIC**

BARNSTAPLE CULTURAL PLAN

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INTRODUCTION

In Barnstaple we have many things that would be the envy of any town. A rich and varied thousand-year history that has left us with distinctive heritage buildings, streets and landscapes; a beautiful riverside setting and surrounding natural environment that attracts millions of tourists a year; an FE college that draws in bright young people from across the region; and a strong community spirit all of which contribute to a place that has fantastic promise.

However, our town faces significant challenges. Poverty and exclusion including high levels of rough sleeping are a major concern and the combination of rapid inflation and simultaneous recession is likely to push more individuals and families into desperate situations. Economic problems are likely to exacerbate deep issues of health, isolation and wellbeing faced by many Barnstaple residents of all ages.

Economic forces are also putting further pressure on the town centre which, despite proving more resilient than most, must combat the decline of physical retail and the need to develop a more diverse offer and purpose. Barnstaple's 18h economy, which benefits from a number of forward-thinking independent operators, is hampered by a disconnected system of roads and small cut-through streets that contribute to negative perceptions about crime, safety and anti-social behaviour. More broadly Barnstaple can feel like it doesn't show the very best out of the fantastic things it has to offer, with the sum of its parts not quite adding up to a strong, integrated identity.

Culture has a vital role to play in bridging this gap between Barnstaple's reality and its potential. Barnstaple boasts an engaged and passionate cultural sector ranging from a theatre run by an international award-winning

production company to a fantastic annual festival, community arts initiatives, a strong museum at the heart of the town and a range of independent cultural organisations, freelancers and volunteers. Directing this energy and supporting the people and organisations who generate it is vital to achieving a just, inclusive and flourishing town and community.

This is a moment of tremendous promise for Barnstaple. The successful Future High Streets Fund bid to transform Butchers' Row, the Pannier Market and surrounding buildings into the culture, community and leisure gem of the town, has catalysed cross-sector collaboration with culture at the very centre. Strong strategic plans and policies are bringing direction to the town's evolution, particularly the Barnstaple Technical Vision, itself building upon the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan and Devon Climate Declaration. The Flourishing Culture Northern Devon Culture Strategy has aligned the priorities and collective potential of cultural, community and environmental stakeholders across the region in line with North Devon's status as an Arts Council England Priority Place. This gives Barnstaple a strong platform to turbo charge its cultural offer.

This document, commissioned by North Devon Council, prepared by Things Made Public and developed in collaboration with over 35 town stakeholders, is a continuation of these plans. It provides a narrative, set of priorities and a process to guide decision-making that complements the wider spatial vision for the town and cultural vision for the region. This has been developed to ensure culture plays a central role in realising the spatial vision for Barnstaple and that investment, regeneration and placemaking in the town support a vibrant, distinctive and sustainable cultural life that prioritises the wellbeing of Barnstaple residents.

This document is broken into five main parts:

Section 2: Research Summary - Outlines 5 key themes or defining features of Barnstaple that have been identified through desk research and stakeholder engagement into social, cultural and economic trends within the town

Section 3: Cultural Vision - Sets the overarching ambition for what culture can be, mean and achieve for Barnstaple

Section 4: Cultural Framework - Provides a tool with which town stakeholders can identify and prioritise key cultural projects within Barnstaple based on agreed strategic assets and priorities for impact

Section 5: Cultural Character Areas - Outlines spatial character zones in the town, how they contribute to the overarching cultural life of Barnstaple, and priority projects for strengthening each area

Section 6: Action Plan - Sets out recommendations and actions for realising the ambitions of this vision for Barnstaple Culture

It is important that the Barnstaple Cultural Plan is not treated or delivered in isolation. Many of the important moves to support culture in Barnstaple span and coincide with areas such as transport, education, retail, health and environment. Culture must contribute towards a holistic approach to place transformation that involves the whole town.



CONTEXTUAL RESEARCH SUMMARY

The Barnstaple Cultural Plan has been unpinned by a detailed research process that has drawn from a number of sources, including:

- Existing policy and strategic context of the town
- Major initiatives and funding opportunities within the town
- Review of the town's physical and intangible history and heritage
- Analysis of economic, social and cultural data including investment, participation and social needs
- Engagement with stakeholders across arts, 18h economy, leisure and green spaces, education, heritage and economic development.

This research has been summarised into 5 key themes, identified as defining features of the town that carry particular importance for its identity, cultural potential and social challenges and opportunities. A detailed summary of this research can be found in the appendices. The 5 themes include:

1. Crafting & Trading – Bring to life 1,000 years of exchange, making and connection

Barnstaple has a rich and varied history as one of the most significant ports in the South West linking over the centuries with the trade of wool, cloth, tobacco, silver and pottery not to mention fishing and licenced piracy. These histories have left a legacy of tangible and intangible heritage from Castle Mound and Long Bridge to historic buildings and neighbourhoods throughout the town including 375 listed buildings. The history ties with a still vibrant craft and making sector that has carried through the Shapland & Petter furniture makers and Brannams Pottery to contemporary independent makers. All of this offers a wealth of currently underutilised physical and narrative assets that could define the town.

Joseph Kennedy's painting of The Strand, Barnstaple, credit Barnstaple Town Council



2. Rebels & Outliers – Celebrate a culture of self-reliance, independent spirit and anti-authoritarianism

Independent culture is one of the most notable driving forces in the town, exhibited in the annual Fringe TheatreFest, community arts with the Plough @ St Anne's, festivals like Barnstaple Carnival, night time venues like Masquerade and the area's creative industries sector. This independent spirit links with a history of being remote from the main centres of regional and national administrative power including Elizabethan piracy, parliamentary defiance of Royalist uprising in the Civil War, satirist John Gay and the Methodism movement. This independent culture currently lacks spaces and resources to link together and create critical mass as well as the permissions to experiment across the town, unleashing this potential could have a substantial impact on local culture.

The way to beauty is not by the broad and easy road;
it is along difficult and adventurous paths
Ethel Mary Mairet



3. Routes and Journeys – Join together the town into a place of discovery by foot and bike

Despite having evolved as a compact, legible and walkable town, Barnstaple still has issues of connectivity. Roads and car parks within the town centre cut off key assets like Castle Green and impact on the accessibility of the town centre in the evening and night-time. Concerns of crime, safety and anti-social behaviour particularly in linking avenues damage the experience of the town. Meanwhile north and south of the river struggle to speak to one another with Seven Brethren acting as a physical barrier between the town centre and the rest of Barnstaple. There is a significant opportunity for improvements through signage, wayfinding, town maps and public art to support navigation through the town, overall visual identity and welcome.



4. Green & Blue – Make the town as biodiverse and generous as its surroundings

Despite being within a UNESCO designated biosphere with the river Taw running through it, the town centre itself lacks accessible green open space and is impacted by large, tarmacked spaces like roads and car parks. Meanwhile the town is facing the impacts of the climate crisis due to flash flooding and the risk of rising temperatures. Creatively celebrating important green areas like Rock Park, Pilton Park and Castle Green; linking with the Tarka Trail and surrounding biosphere landscape; increasing town centre greening and reconnecting the town with the river Taw could have substantial impacts on wellbeing, sense of place and environmental quality.



5. Culture and Community Wellbeing – Bring out everyday creativity in people and use culture to help create strong communities

Barnstaple's substantial social challenges include income, health and educational deprivation that is being exacerbated by rising inflation and simultaneous recession. Homeless and rough sleeping are highly visible in the town centre. These challenging factors also significantly impact the aspirations and opportunities of local young people. Whilst culture cannot fix all these endemic problems it has a key role to play in supporting social enterprise to help communities have agency in making positive change in their neighbourhoods. The social context of Barnstaple also needs to be taken into context in the cultural offer with particular need for affordability and proactive approaches to increasing accessibility to making, shaping and experiencing culture.



CULTURAL VISION

Barnstaple is the heart of North Devon, serving not only its immediate residents, but all those living in the surrounding rural communities. As a cultural hub, its offer will radiate throughout and beyond its physical boundaries, connecting and amplifying people and places across the region.

Barnstaple is a town with a layered and fascinating history of over 1000 years of trading and making, independent spirit and international connection. Barnstaple will loudly celebrate its past whilst pointing to its future; seeking out every opportunity to bring to life the heritage of the town for everyday people in contemporary ways.

Sited in a world recognised UNESCO Biosphere, adjacent to the River Taw and Tarka Trail, Barnstaple's connection to nature is embedded into day to day life and the cultural offer within town will reflect, protect and honour the environment now, and in the future.

As the cultural engine of Northern Devon, Barnstaple will work in partnership to drive forward the Northern Devon Cultural Strategy, spearheading the way for inspiring creative educational opportunities, affordable cultural workspace and diverse cultural venues and programmes that prioritise community wellbeing.

Barnstaple will give creative people a reason to stay in the region and give everyone the opportunity to be creative.

Image Credit: Fringe TheatreFest





CULTURAL FRAMEWORK

What is the Barnstaple Cultural Framework?

The Barnstaple Cultural Framework is a tool with which town stakeholders can identify and prioritise key cultural projects within the town. The framework can also be used to assess the wider cultural offer of Barnstaple in the round, identifying areas of focus, growth and development.

How does the Barnstaple Cultural Framework work?

The Barnstaple Cultural Framework cross references the core 'needs' of the town against its core 'assets', creating a matrix of opportunity. By populating the framework with key projects and project ideas, it is possible to identify how individual projects can most effectively contribute to the wider needs of Barnstaple, whilst ensuring that a strong, cohesive cultural offer is developed.

How was the Barnstaple Cultural Framework developed?

The Barnstaple Cultural Framework was developed in collaboration with over 20 town stakeholders at the Barnstaple Stakeholder Visioning Workshop in August 2022. The framework is designed to evolve over time as the needs and assets of Barnstaple change and evolve. The framework should be revisited and used as a tool to curate a cohesive cultural offer within Barnstaple.

What are the core needs identified in the current Barnstaple Cultural Framework?

As identified by local stakeholders, the core needs of Barnstaple in a cultural context are:

Unshackling Opportunity

We want to make Barnstaple a place where culture helps lift people's levels of opportunity by raising aspirations, improving creative skills, creating pathways into creative work & supporting the success of creative professionals.

Bringing the Buzz

We want to make Barnstaple a place of gathering, where a diversity of people choose to come together at different times of day, evening and night, for welcoming, inclusive, shared communal experiences.

Facing Climate Crisis

Barnstaple is already being forced to adapt to the physical realities of climate change. We want culture to help to achieve the behavioural shifts and practical actions needed in the face of the climate crisis.

Connecting the Town

We want culture to be the thread that knits together a fragmented town through a distinctive identity, routes and journeys that reconnect people with parts of the town that have become isolated, supporting a more integrated Barnstaple.

Unleashing Our Youth

We want Barnstaple to be a place where young people aren't marginalised, where their creative energy enlivens the town and where they feel they have the agency and opportunity to pursue their ambitions.





What are the core assets identified in the current Barnstaple Cultural Framework?

As identified by local stakeholders, the core assets of Barnstaple in a cultural context are:

People Power

A strong culture of volunteering, community networks and organisations, artists and makers who are invested in Barnstaple are all powerful mechanisms for achieving change.

1000 Year Heritage

Barnstaple's deep and layered history of trade, rebellion and making have left distinctive physical assets in the town including buildings, monuments and traces that combine with an intangible wealth of stories and traditions.

Rooted Institutions

Large institutions (Council, Petroc College, Queen's Theatre etc.) bring physical assets, commissioning power, networks & experience that leveraged collectively can enact positive transformation.

Open Canvases

Barnstaple's variety of open spaces like Castle Hill Green, Rock Park, the Strand, Town Square and Paternoster Row, and even car parks, streets and blank walls offer a canvas for culture across the town.

The River

The Taw, its tributaries and the Tarka Trail are at the centre of Barnstaple, linking it with its past, its surroundings and an important source of connection to nature and wellbeing in its own right.

The Barnstaple Cultural Framework Template

Below is the current Barnstaple Cultural Framework template:

Barnstaple Cultural Framework	People Power	1000 Year Heritage	Rooted Institutions	Open Canvases	The River
Unshackling Opportunity We want to make Barnstaple a place where culture helps lift people's levels of opportunity by raising aspirations, improving creative skills, creating pathways into creative work & supporting the success of creative professionals.	1	2	3	4	5
Bringing the Buzz We want to make Barnstaple a place of gathering, where a diversity of people choose to come together at different times of day, evening and night, for welcoming, inclusive, shared community experiences.	6	7	8	9	10
Facing Climate Crisis Barnstaple is already being forced to adapt to the physical realities of climate change. We want culture to help to achieve the behavioural shifts and practical actions needed in the face of the climate crisis.	11	12	13	14	15
Connecting the Town We want culture to be the thread that knits together a fragmented town through a distinctive identity, routes and journeys that reconnect people with parts of the town that have become isolated, supporting a more integrated Barnstaple.	16	17	18	19	20
Unleashing Our Youth We want Barnstaple to be a place where young people aren't marginalised, where their creative energy enlivens the town and where they feel they have the agency and opportunity to pursue their ambitions.	21	22	23	24	25

A full-sized version of this template can be found in the appendices

The Barnstaple Cultural Framework Process: Prioritisation

Working with the long list of cultural spaces, projects and ideas created by local stakeholders, the framework has been used to identify key priority projects for Barnstaple by assessing:

- Social Value (how much a space, project or idea contributes to the core 'needs' of Barnstaple as identified by the Barnstaple Cultural Framework)
- Strategic Value (how much a space, project or idea utilises the core 'assets' of Barnstaple as identified by the Barnstaple Cultural Framework)
- Viability (how viable a space, project or idea is in terms of timeframe, resourcing and support)

The following framework showcases the current key priority cultural projects for Barnstaple as referenced in the Cultural Character Areas.

N.B Please note that many of the key priority cultural projects contribute to more than one core need and utilise more than one core asset.

Barnstaple

Cultural Framework

People Power

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The River

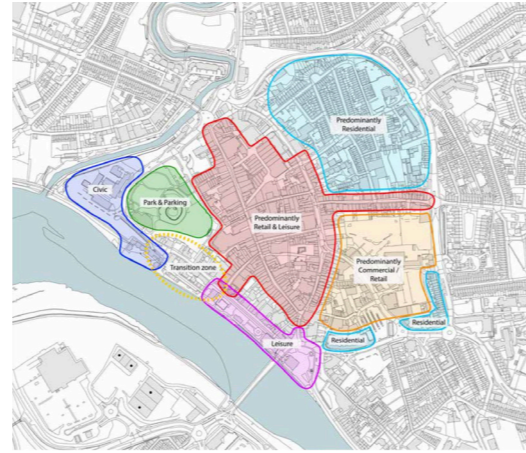
The Taw, its tributaries and the Tarka Trail are at the centre of Barnstaple, linking it with its past, its surroundings and an important source of connection to nature and wellbeing in its own right.

Unshackling Opportunity <i>We want to make Barnstaple a place where culture helps lift people's levels of opportunity by raising aspirations, improving creative skills, creating pathways into creative work & supporting the success of creative professionals.</i>	2A The Plough @ St. Anne's 2E Social Prescribing and Social Action 3E Social and Creative Entrepreneurship		1A Market Quarter		
Bringing the Buzz <i>We want to make Barnstaple a place of gathering, where a diversity of people choose to come together at different times of day, evening and night, for welcoming, inclusive, shared communal experiences.</i>	5A Live Music 3B Curating Independents	2D Castle Mound	3A Green Lane 2C Meanwhile Activity within Retail Park	4D Animating Public Squares	5D Riverside Animation
Facing Climate Crisis <i>Barnstaple is already being forced to adapt to the physical realities of climate change. We want culture to help to achieve the behavioural shifts and practical actions needed in the face of the climate crisis.</i>			1D Bridge Chambers	2D Castle Green	
Connecting the Town <i>We want culture to be the thread that knits together a fragmented town through a distinctive identity, routes and journeys that reconnect people with parts of the town that have become isolated, supporting a more integrated Barnstaple.</i>	1C Barnstaple Train Station	1B Heritage Trails		4A Greening the High Street 2B Gateway Public Art	
Unleashing Our Youth <i>We want Barnstaple to be a place where young people aren't marginalised, where their creative energy enlivens the town and where they feel they have the agency and opportunity to pursue their ambitions.</i>	1E Primary School Creative Hubs		4C Petroc Town Centre Spaces	3C Barnstaple Youth Trail	

CULTURAL CHARACTER AREAS



Technical Vision Area Focuses



Town Centre Land Use Zones

INTRODUCTION

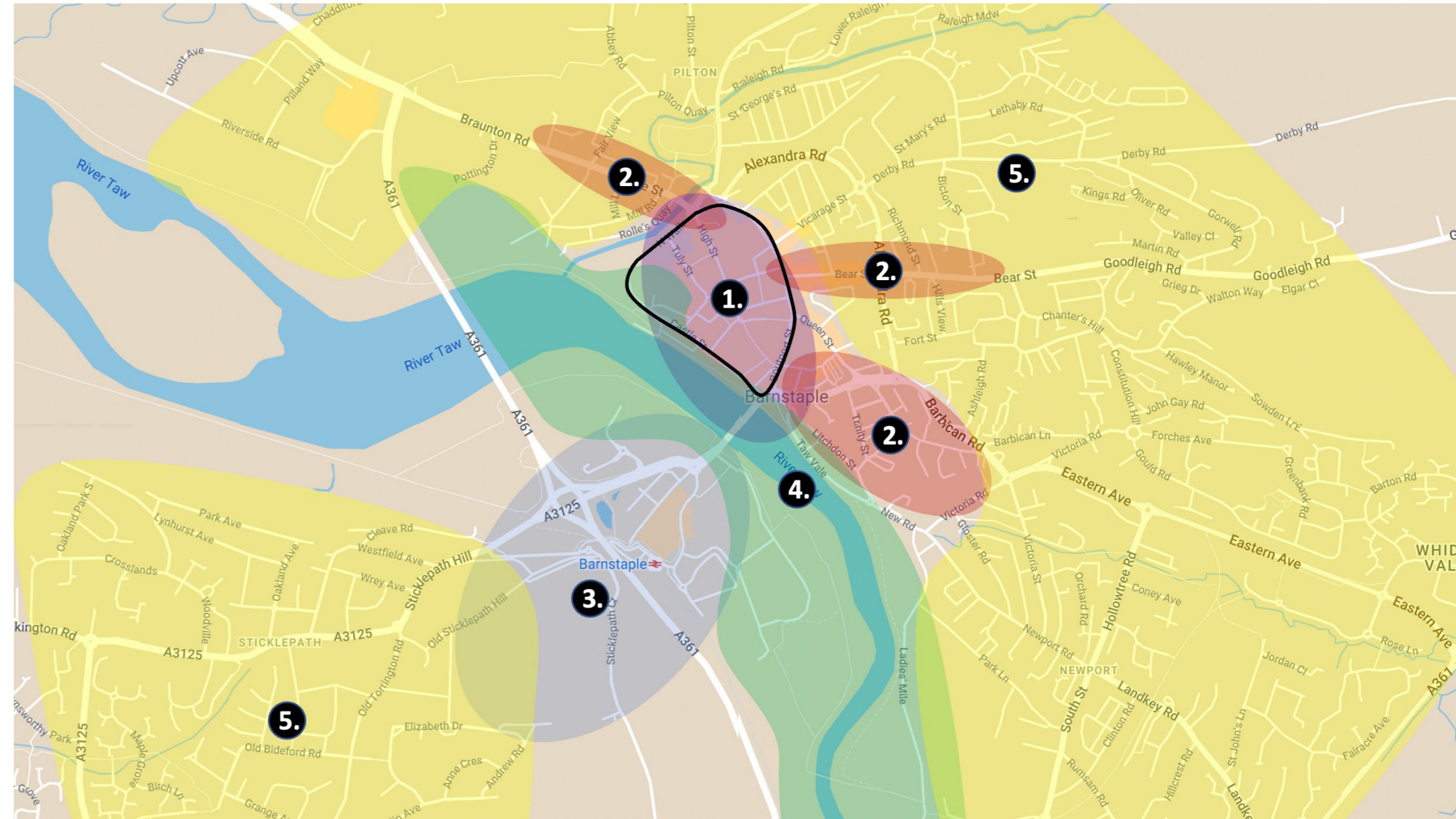
Having identified key cultural spaces and opportunity projects that address the core needs of Barnstaple, whilst unlocking strategic town assets, it is necessary to address the spatial dimension of place, sewing together key cultural assets in the context of wider development, regeneration and placemaking interventions across Barnstaple, creating a holistic and cohesive cultural plan for the town.

The 2020 Technical Vision for Barnstaple identified 3 areas of focus within the town centre and fringe. The 'North of the River' areas west of the town centre; Anchorwood & Seven Brethren or 'South of the River'; and the Town Centre itself which was further split into character zones based on dominant uses.

These zones have been taken into account and developed through a cultural lens to define five Cultural Character Areas for this Cultural Plan. These are based on an assessment of the particular cultural assets, characteristics, functions and strategic roles of different areas within the wider town. Consideration for the cultural needs and opportunities of each area, alongside an understanding of how they contribute to the overarching needs of the town will help focus priorities not only in cultural programming but aid the integration of culture into town planning, development and placemaking

The five Cultural Character Areas of Barnstaple are:

1. Barnstaple Heart - Based on the historic outline of the town core and its retained streetscape that now forms the retail, leisure and cultural centre of the town
2. Hidden Heritage Fringe - Characteristic neighbourhoods and streets surrounding the town centre notable for their listed buildings and mini clusters of independent businesses
3. Barnstaple South Side - Region south of the river notable for enterprises uses, the campus of Petroc College, Barnstaple Railway Station and the Seven Brethren Retail Park
4. Taw Riverside - Encompassing key public green spaces, riverside parts of the town such as the Strand and the unique importance of the river itself
5. Barnstaple Patchwork - The patchwork of distinctive residential neighbourhoods throughout the town each with their own local identities and communities development and placemaking



TOWN WIDE CONSIDERATIONS

Celebrating Barnstaple

Barnstaple already has a rich cultural offer. Whether that be its abundance of green spaces and physical activities; its numerous cultural venues across the town including theatre, art and drag; or its 1000 year old heritage, Barnstaple has a lot to shout about that is currently flying under the radar.

Immediately telling local residents, rural communities and tourists what is available in town should be a priority. Whether compiling an annual cultural activities programme of existing events, or installing temporary wayfinding measures that minimise disruption and share good news during the upcoming regeneration projects within the town centre, communicating to the everyday Barnstaple user will increase accessibility to culture.

Longer term consideration should be given to the development of a Barnstaple cultural brand and marketing strategy, giving a platform from which to celebrate the town's rich heritage, promote the excellent work of the cultural sector and raise awareness of the diverse cultural offer that can contribute to community wellbeing.

Alongside an improved marketing profile, commissioning interventions that bring a more distinctive visual identity to the town, potentially linked with key themes outlined in the research summary or design features such as Butchers' Row arches, will greatly enhance the legibility, navigation and overall experience of the town. Temporary interventions can be used to test approaches and involve local people in co-designing this visual identity. A strong placemaking approach should look to integrate common themes into everything from signage to lighting, lampposts, benches, planters and town maps.

Town Team for Culture

Cultural stakeholders already meet on an ad hoc basis to coordinate on key projects within the Town. However, there is not currently a consistent forum through which cultural stakeholders in the broadest sense, including education, community action, 18h economy, creative industries and environment, meet to share information and coordinate activity in Barnstaple. A Town Team for Culture would bring structure and consistency with regular meeting dates, agenda and a process for agreeing shared priorities and actions. This would help align cultural activity both between organisations and within wider strategic programmes. One of the primary purposes of this team should be to collect and collate the shared views and priorities for culture in Barnstaple and channel this voice into broader strategic and policy bodies including the Barnstaple Regeneration Board, North Devon Council Group and the Northern Devon Cultural Partnership. Membership of the town team should be open and welcoming, with consideration made for ensuring that participation is inclusive which may require small budgets to compensate freelancers to attend, translation and/or access support for people facing language or disability barriers.

There should be a small number of executive roles to ensure the team achieves actionable outputs including sending representatives or advisory notes to the above strategic groups. This should ideally be a role for a Town or Borough Cultural Officer with oversight across activity throughout the area and connections into wider strategic conversations.

Transformation through culture not for culture

Barnstaple Cultural Plan is a spatial cultural plan, aiming to present a cohesive approach to Barnstaple's culture offer across the town. The plan highlights the physical assets of the area, mapping existing and future activities. When investing into the material essence of Barnstaple it shouldn't be forgotten that in doing so, Barnstaple is investing into its people.

Barnstaple faces numerous economic and social needs. It is important to think about how culture can contribute to wider initiatives of social and economic transition, not just what is needed for the cultural sector. This is an opportunity to show wider stakeholders what culture can do to help them in terms of increasing town centre footfall, youth opportunity, creative industries, visitor economy and community wellbeing.

Ownership and agency are key in adding cultural value. Within Barnstaple there is the opportunity to create a cultural ecosystem that local people have the power to shape and direct, enabling people to decide what culture is, who makes it, where it happens and who experiences it. Embedding cultural democracy and community decision making into the cultural fabric of Barnstaple will maximise the potential of culture to positively impact lives.

As the region's largest and most connected town, Barnstaple offers the strongest potential critical mass of activity for the cultural sector. It is important though that this isn't restricted to the town itself, infrastructure within Barnstaple should be seen as a basis to radiate out benefits to its surroundings, whilst at the same time offering a platform for activity across northern Devon to reach larger audiences.

Diversity, Inclusion & Accessibility

It is vital that all people who live in and visit the town can access, participate in and create the best that Barnstaple culture has to offer. There is not a one-size fits all approach to achieving this, instead it is about embedding systemic attitudes to the way culture is commissioned and presented across the town. People face a range of barriers that can end up excluding them from cultural life including but not exclusively - language, affordability, mobility issues and fears of experiencing discriminatory behaviour.

If an event, venue or cultural group doesn't make it explicitly clear that it welcomes people of different age, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexuality and income level, then many people will assume it is not for them. As such, welcome needs to go above and beyond.

It is important to work with specialists who understand these barriers within Barnstaple's communities such as Sunrise Diversity and One Barnstaple to develop good practices that can be adopted wholesale across the sector. Including access needs budgets in all requests for funding to support this should be standardised practice with budgets being used to support activities such as translation services, support for deaf and hearing impaired, usage of symbols and signs for those with reading difficulties and access budgets for subsidising access for low income groups.

These approaches should equally apply to broader considerations of public realm commissions, street design and accessibility of decision-making bodies to ensure inclusion creates agency not just access.

BARNSTAPLE HEART

VISION

Defined by the heart-shaped outline of the town's mediaeval core, this is a compact walkable town centre, alive with varied experiences round-the-clock that represent the best of Barnstaple culture, nightlife and creative enterprise.

KEY WORDS

Discovery, variety, heart of Barnstaple, experiential, creative pop-up, indoor/outdoor, safe, walkable, around the clock, connected

SUB ZONES

The Guildhall, Pannier Market and surroundings; Green Lanes Shopping Centre; Southern Section

KEY NEEDS:

Increasing pedestrianisation particularly along the High Street and around Butchers' Row

More public areas for rest, community activity and green infrastructure

Addressing unsafe connecting alleys and streets

Bringing a stronger visual identity to the town centre

Lack of 5-8pm evening activity means the day and night time economies are disconnected

High levels of deprivation and homelessness

KEY OPPORTUNITIES:

Future High Streets Programme and transformation of the heart of the town at Butchers' Row, Pannier Market and Boutport Street

Council ownership of Green Lanes Shopping Centre

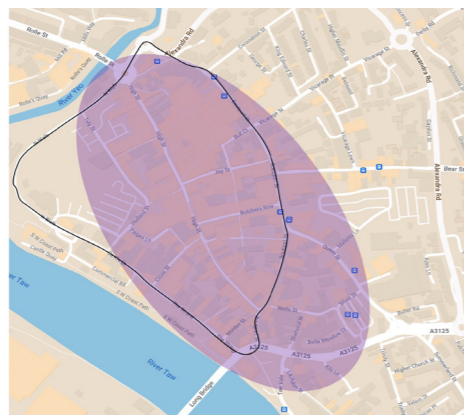
New and existing independent creative enterprises and night-time venues

Emerging cultural cluster around Queen's Theatre, Scott Cinemas, Plough @ St Anne's and 36/37 Boutport Street

CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE:

Queen's Theatre, The Plough @ St Anne's and Scott Cinema are the primary dedicated cultural spaces currently in the area. The Guildhall and the Shambles also offer a space for cultural and community activity. Businesses like Masquerade and Escape Down the Rabbit Hole bring important experience economy to the town.

The redevelopment of the Pannier Market, Butchers' Row and 36/37 Boutport Street should open up further infrastructure for creative enterprise, exhibitions, events and other cultural activity. Council-owned Green Lanes Shopping Centre and vacant units in the town should also be seen as potential cultural spaces.



UNSHACKLING OPPORTUNITY:

Barnstaple Heart offers a unique opportunity within the town centre to incubate and grow creative businesses. Creating both pathways for individuals into creative careers, and businesses into established venues, Barnstaple Heart acts as a creative enterprise feeder for the wider town.

From 36/37 Boutport Street offering affordable workspace, to Green Lanes providing free public facing pop-up space, to Pannier Market presenting affordable sales pitches to individuals and businesses alike; Barnstaple Heart should be viewed as the place to bridge opportunities.

BRINGING THE BUZZ

The heart of the evening and night time economy in the town, Barnstaple Heart offers a range of diverse experiences throughout the day and night. From theatre to festivals, from pop-ups to markets, from street entertainment to programmed events in unexpected places, Barnstaple Heart should strive to amplify, encourage and grow the unique cultural offers already in the area, including businesses such as Escape down the Rabbit Hole and Masquerade. To ensure a diversity of experiences comes to fruition, it is key to engage a diverse range of people in programming.

FACING CLIMATE CRISIS

Greening within the town centre, and in particular within Barnstaple Heart will link people to nature, even in the midst of an urban environment. Partnering with key stakeholders such as Barnstaple in Bloom on public realm interventions and projects such as Greener Lanes offers a unique opportunity to green the town, through a local lens. Food and beverage also sits at the heart of Barnstaple Heart, and provides a platform to encourage an affordable, Okm food approach programming.

CONNECTING THE TOWN

An area of such vibrancy and activity needs clear wayfinding throughout. The mass of creativity within Barnstaple Heart gives an exciting opportunity to integrate both temporary and permanent public art and creative lighting solutions into the town centre, focusing on linking the streets and alleys that currently feel unsafe in a fun and creative way at all hours of the day. Connectivity in Barnstaple Heart is not just physical, but is also brought to life through programming. Initiatives such as The Plough @ St Anne's bring animation to a quiet area of town, reducing anti-social behaviour.

UNLEASHING OUR YOUTH

Sitting at the heart of the town, Barnstaple Heart holds a great responsibility in welcoming young people into the centre, providing them with a diversity of activities and experiences that can engage throughout the day and night, as well as the longer term opportunities in the form of pathways into creative careers. Existing regeneration projects such as 36/37 Boutport Street and Pannier Market offer key spaces in which to integrate co-design and co-delivery with young people, whilst spaces such as The Guildhall offer places in which to develop youth engagement.

KEY PROJECTS

1A Market Quarter - Creation of a new destination at the heart of Barnstaple through transformation of the Guildhall and Pannier Markets as flexible spaces for markets, cultural events, starter units for emerging creative enterprises and students, and community gathering activities; the rejuvenation of 36/37 Boutport Street with uses for creative enterprise, development space for students emerging from Petroc College, specialist visitor accommodation that could include space for visiting creative workers, and support for wellbeing, mental health and third sector activities; and revitalisation of Butchers' Row as the most distinctive heritage gem in the town through pedestrianisation, outdoor eating and culture. The combined impact will create a much needed cultural, community and leisure heart to the middle of the town and kickstart a stronger 18 hour economy.

2A The Plough @ St. Anne's - Expanding the programme of exhibitions, workshops, residencies, classes and community projects throughout the year in and around St. Anne's Chapel. Increased activation alongside enhancement of seating and lighting can help address anti-social behaviour and safety concerns around Paternoster Row particularly in evenings.

3A Green Lane - Diversification of Green Lane shopping centre with exhibitions, greening projects, arts commissions, school and college projects, and creative transformation of vacant units. Green Lanes can act as an incubator of new concepts and enterprises that then radiate out into the surrounding areas.

4A Greening the High Street - Large-scale expansion of green infrastructure along the high street including tree planting, supported by creative greening commissions. This will greatly enhance the look and feel of the town centre while also supporting the prioritisation of pedestrians over cars.

5A Live Music - Bring more live music capacity into the town centre by supporting dedicated live music venues and encouraging bars, restaurants and other leisure spaces to increase their live music offer. This will address a key missing element of the town's cultural offer while also supporting the wider 18h economy.

ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER STRATEGIES

Key projects outlined will collectively contribute to the Barnstaple Technical Vision by diversifying the town centre offer (Challenge 1), restoring historic buildings and townscapes (Challenge 2), prioritising walking and cycling over cars (Challenge 3) and ensuring regeneration complements the Devon Climate Declaration (Challenge 6). In line with the Northern Devon Culture Strategy, they will utilise vacant spaces and public realm to fuel culture (Our Cultural Hubs), support creative careers (Helping People Blossom) and create stronger conditions for people to make and experience culture that expresses a sense of place (Helping Places Thrive).

HIDDEN HERITAGE FRINGE

VISION

Intimate neighbourhoods clustered around the gateways to the town with independent businesses and heritage gems waiting to be discovered.

KEY WORDS

Explore, independent business, history, architecture, welcome, surprise, tours and guides

SUB ZONES

Lichdon Street & Trinity Street; Bear Street; Rolle Street

KEY NEEDS:

Poor wayfinding and lack of highlighted heritage makes areas difficult to discover for visitors

Car parks and bus station are currently unwelcoming and concrete

Private ownership of key heritage buildings mean some don't have uses that fully achieve their potential

Clusters of independents currently isolated and lacking identity

KEY OPPORTUNITIES:

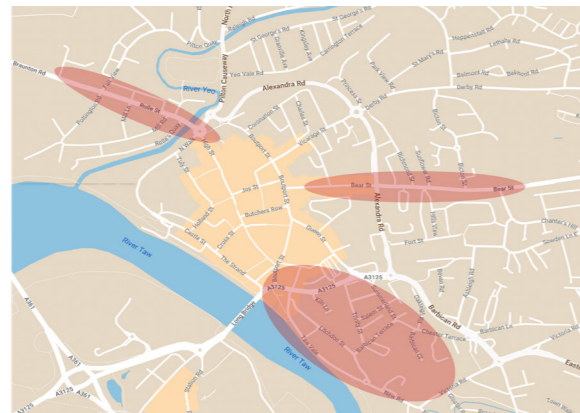
Large numbers of listed buildings and notable heritage often linked to historic industrial functions

Potentially impactful welcome mats to the town due to key car parks at Bear Street, Belle Meadow as well as Barnstaple Bus Station

Small independent shops offering an alternative to major town centre commercial

CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE:

Dedicated cultural spaces are limited, however large numbers of listed buildings, particularly around the former Brannam Pottery, Trinity Church and Bear Street are of significant cultural interest. Pockets of independent shops like Soundpad on Rolle Quay, Discovery Music on Litchdon Street and Tarka Books on Bear Street have potential to form alternative clusters. Key car parks at Belle Meadow and Bear Street as well as Barnstaple Bus Station should be seen as important cultural spaces as the landing point for many people into the town.



UNSHACKLING OPPORTUNITY:

Hidden Heritage Fringe is home to a number of small shop units, providing the perfect homes for independent, creative businesses, waiting to be explored by locals and visitors alike. By establishing relationships with the landowners of such properties, Hidden Heritage Fringe can become a key space for growing and developing the creative enterprises which were born and incubated in the likes of 36/37 Boutport Street, Green Lanes Shopping Centre and Pannier Market.

BRINGING THE BUZZ

Hidden Heritage Fringe is a place to explore, brimming with history. Boasting large numbers of listed buildings, alongside quirky independent businesses, this area feels unique and 'fringe'. From record stores to antique shops to book shops, Hidden Heritage Fringe should be the go to for a mooch and unexpected purchase. In order for these businesses to thrive they should be supported by incubation opportunities within Barnstaple Heart that encourage low risk, innovation and experimentation.

FACING CLIMATE CRISIS

Currently home to key car parks at Bear Street and Belle Meadow, as well as Barnstaple Bus Station, Hidden Heritage Fringe should strive to make the impermeable, permeable. Partnering with key stakeholders such as Barnstaple in Bloom on public realm interventions that can green these concrete jungles, will not only support the environment, but also soften key entrances into the town centre. As well as greening interventions, cultural interventions such as the existing Richt mural promote much needed dialogue around the climate crisis by teaming up with North Devon Biosphere to deliver educational workshops to young people.

CONNECTING THE TOWN

Hidden Heritage Fringe offers a welcome mat into the town, through the car parks at Bear Street and Belle Meadow, as well as Barnstaple Bus Station. As such, it is vital that the area welcomes people in, with a warm and friendly environment. From street art to street entertainment, Hidden Heritage Fringe is a key canvas for public realm cultural interventions and wayfinding, directing people into the town centre. Central to the identity of this area is heritage, which can be brought to life through heritage trails, encouraging the exploration of such a fascinating part of town

UNLEASHING OUR YOUTH

Full of heritage assets and historical significance, Hidden Heritage Fringe has the potential to offer young people a diversity of experience not seen elsewhere. By utilising spaces in a respectful, yet creative manner, young people can interact with Barnstaple in an unexpected way. Current offers such as the 'The Tower', a 7.5m climbing wall, built inside a church tower should be amplified and act as a catalyst for other unique, experience based offers to inhabit the town. whilst spaces such as The Guildhall offer places in which to develop youth engagement.

KEY PROJECTS

1B Heritage Trails - Creation and promotion of heritage trails across Barnstaple. Starting with the recreation of a Barnstaple Map based on the historic 1650 map held in the Bodleian library, expanding out into Hidden Heritage Fringe zones. A combined approach of maps, digital and physical information points, distinctive signage and heritage related street furniture will help bring a strong visual identity to the town and enhance the visitor experience.

2B Gateway Public Art - Temporary and/or permanent public art commissions at key entry points of the town like Barnstaple bus station, Bear Street Car Park and Belle Meadow. Commissions can act as mechanisms for engaging local communities in the transformation and representation of the town while also having substantial marketing and visitor attraction benefits.

3B Curating Independents - Supporting the clustering of independent creative businesses in strategic locations like Litchdon Street, Bear Street and Rolle Street to form small curated independent clusters. Distinctive pockets of independents around the fringe of the town centre can add important diversity to the overall town offer.

ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER STRATEGIES

The Hidden Heritage Fringe is key to Challenge 2 of the Technical Vision, restoring historic buildings and townscapes. It is also one of the main opportunities for Barnstaple to support a strong expression of place, given the distinctiveness of these neighbourhoods, as well as protecting important heritage and local landscapes which are central to the 'Helping Places Thrive' theme of the Northern Devon Culture Strategy.

VISION

The springboard of youthful Barnstaple offers a place of opportunity and creative experimentation that fuels the rest of the town

KEY WORDS

Learning, enterprise, experimentation, opportunity, arrival, community, youth, leisure

SUB ZONES

Petroc College & Roundswell, Long Bridge & the Riverside, Barnstaple Train Station and Retail Park

KEY NEEDS:

The retail park currently acts as a barrier between the station, college and the rest of the town

Despite the Tarka Trail, bike and walking routes are challenging and lack infrastructure

Physical distance between the college and the town centre make linkages difficult

Economic challenges of retaining young talent and providing good jobs for graduates

KEY OPPORTUNITIES:

Petroc College and the thousands of young people it brings into the town along with further and higher education learning

The start point of the Tarka Trail with its links into wider North Devon, as well as visitors it brings to the town Barnstaple Train Station both in its function as an entrance point into the town for many visitors as well as a community space

Growing amounts of enterprise and business development around Roundswell

Potential for redevelopments of Oliver Buildings and former Leisure Centre site to incorporate cultural infrastructure

BARNSTAPLE SOUTHSIDE

CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE:

Petroc College Campus is the most significant cultural infrastructure in the zone with learning, exhibition and workshop spaces that have potential not only for students but the whole town. The community-led transformation of the train station means it is now an important cultural and community space in its own right. The retail centre currently lacks a cultural offer but the decline of retail may make some of these spaces a potential location for future activity. Redevelopment of the Oliver Buildings could bring through further ground floor commercial space with potential cultural uses. The Tarka Trail is a significant cultural reference point that forms an important part of Barnstaple's identity.



UNSHACKLING OPPORTUNITY:

The presence of Petroc College and thousands of young people, make Barnstaple Southside a key component in the provision of pathways into creative careers. Partnership and programming that links young people to the career opportunities and support within the town centre are vital to ensure that the potential of this creative ecosystem is reached. In between the College and town centre sits Barnstaple retail park. As retail declines and our need for experience based leisure increases, the big box units provide exciting platforms for both temporary and permanent cultural animations.

BRINGING THE BUZZ

Currently a typical mix of retail park tenants such as B&Q, Halfords and Pets at Home, the Barnstaple retail park and surrounding area does not yet offer a diversity of experience or place to dwell. However, as retail needs shrink, the question of utilising big box units becomes more pressing. Barnstaple Southside has an exciting opportunity to utilise these spaces and re-imagine their uses. From a temporary fringe theatre, to affordable makerspaces to a pitch and putt bar, the once traditional retail park can become a place of unusual and unexpected happenings.

FACING CLIMATE CRISIS

Barnstaple is an important stop on the Tarka Trail and Barnstaple Southside is home to the start of the South loop, with bicycles available for hire from Barnstaple station. Barnstaple Southside offers the opportunity to link cultural activities to the wider Tarka Trail, promoting important conversations around the climate crisis. The proximity of Petroc College provides young audiences, participants and producers that are often some of the most engaged in climate challenges within society.

CONNECTING THE TOWN

Barnstaple Southside is physically cut off from the rest of the town by the River Taw, therefore strengthening the connection between this area and the town centre plays an important role in connecting young people to the wider community. Currently the walk into town can feel unsafe, therefore wayfinding, lighting and the animation of facades such as the back side of Halfords are crucial in uplifting the area. There is the opportunity to integrate co-design and co-delivery with Petroc students into these interventions, promoting young people's sense of ownership.

UNLEASHING OUR YOUTH

Barnstaple Southside is a key player in connecting young people to the town centre. It is vital that the physical connection between the College is both safe and welcoming for young people, encouraging them to make the journey and engage with the wider town in a positive way. The connections need not just be physical; building partnerships and programmes that link Petroc College directly to the town offers an exciting opportunity to build relationships, whilst providing content. The upcoming partnership between Petroc and Sellador to deliver a Performance Arts (HNC/Degree) course is an excellent example of this

KEY PROJECTS

1C Barnstaple Train Station - Continuing the transformation of Barnstaple Train Station through creative projects, community programmes and a 'train station as community hub' model. The existing momentum created around the train station could be a catalyst for community-led ownership of assets that would attract significant outside interest.

2C Meanwhile activity within Retail Park - Unlocking large floor-plate retail or warehouse spaces that can diversify uses within the retail park and deliver projects such as open makerspaces for young people. While a long term process, facilitating the diversification of uses of the retail park would help address one of the biggest connectivity issues of the town as highlighted in the Barnstaple Spatial Vision.

3C Barnstaple Youth Trail - Trail of youth-led public art commissions running along the route from Petroc to the town centre, encouraging closer connection between students and the town centre. This could partly connect with the Tarka Trail, providing agency for young people to engage and take ownership of their town whilst also improving cycling/pedestrian connectivity.

4C Petroc Town Centre Spaces - Increasing the presence of Petroc in the town centre through programmes such as Selladoor/Petroc Performing Arts courses, youth takeovers of town centre spaces and permanent college infrastructure. This would bring much needed youth into the town centre whilst also providing a potential location for young people to gather, addressing issues of youth anti-social behaviour.

ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER STRATEGIES

Barnstaple Southside is central to establishing a complementary relationship between South and North of the river including the town centre and retail parks (Challenge 5 of the Barnstaple Technical Vision). It also plays a key role in encouraging walking and cycling (Challenge 3 of the Barnstaple Technical Vision). Youth-focused projects in particular make it vital to the 'Nurturing the Future' action of the Northern Devon Culture Strategy whilst also supporting regional and national cultural connections and partnerships.

TAW RIVERSIDE

VISION

The green and blue thread running through the town that connects Barnstaple and North Devon through outdoor culture, performance, environment and wellbeing

KEY WORDS

Environment, trade and river heritage, sport and active travel, intergenerational, outdoor, civic and community

SUB ZONES

Taw Vale & Rock Park; The Square & the Strand; South Bank & Seven Brethren

KEY NEEDS:

The River Taw is currently under celebrated despite its cultural importance as a link to Barnstaple's history, the North Devon countryside and different parts of the town

The Cattle Market car park currently cuts off Castle Mound and Castle Green providing a concrete barrier to important assets for the town

Cycle and pedestrian linkages between Rock Park and Town Square along Taw Vale aren't celebrated or encouraged

The Civic Centre area is a physical blot on the Barnstaple area and a break in the South West Coast path which is further disconnected around Castle Quay

KEY OPPORTUNITIES:

Large and well used green spaces, particularly Rock Park and Castle Green, offer inclusive spaces for outdoor cultural activity

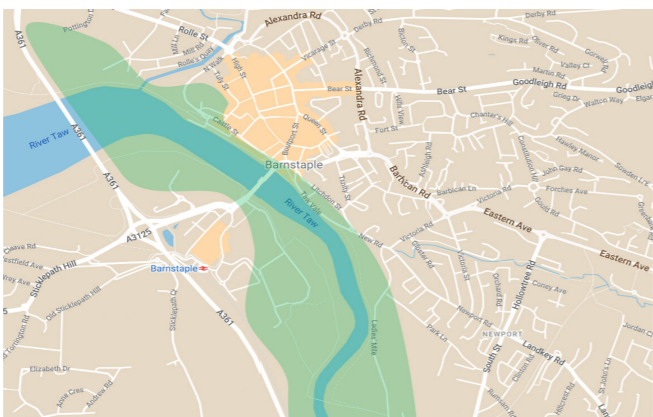
Walking and cycling routes along both banks of the river provide fantastic opportunities for connecting culture, environment, nature and the river

A line of cultural and community buildings running from Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon, Bridge Chambers, No.7 The Strand, Queen Anne's Café and Sunrise Diversity provide a focal point for community cultural activity in a riverside location linked to environment, heritage and a strong Barnstaple identity

Castle Mound and Castle Green provide an important central green public space otherwise lacking in the town

CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE:

The Strand and Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon provide the most significant dedicated cultural infrastructure that will expand with the improvements to Bridge Chambers that will act as the missing link that connects the Market Quarter project with cultural infrastructure along the river and the town south of the river. The main strength of the zone is in its outdoor cultural infrastructure from Rock Park and its skatepark, the coastal paths on either side of the river, key outdoor public spaces at Town Square, Queen Anne's Café and Castle Green along with sports pitches west. The new Tarka Leisure Centre will provide a key sport and cultural resource to the south of the river. The river itself is a currently under utilised but potential piece of cultural infrastructure in its own right.



UNSHACKLING OPPORTUNITY:

Taw Riverside boasts a multitude of cultural assets, offering a diverse range of opportunities to engage with culture, whether that be as a local resident or a professional. From the Museum of Barnstaple & North Devon to Barnstaple Skatepark and BMX Track, there is something on offer for people of all ages. The Oliver buildings, Worx Nightclub and Bridge Chambers are currently untapped cultural assets. The latter forms part of an exciting bid to the Arts Council England to refurbish the building into an accessible learning, creation & performance venue, whilst Worx has been purchased by Coastal Community Church, who plan to transform the vacant space into a thriving community hub with a cafe and skatepark

BRINGING THE BUZZ

Taw Riverside offers a unique opportunity for catering to a diverse range of people, by providing a multitude of accessible experiences, celebrating the outdoors. From the beautiful setting of River Taw, offering an inspiring location for a vibrant food and beverage provision; to Castle Green, Rock Park, Barnstaple Square and public realm outside the Library and Queen Anne's Cafe, which provide natural stages for events, festivals and outdoor arts; Taw Riverside can ensure vibrancy by encouraging local people, businesses and cultural organisations to utilise the existing assets. Working alongside charities such as Sunrise Diversity to shape these platforms will embed accessibility into the heart of spaces.

FACING CLIMATE CRISIS

Taw Riverside is the perfect place through which to connect people to nature, and the wider conversation around how we protect our environment. Home to bountiful green space, as well as the river itself, there are a number of natural canvasses on which the conversation and education around the climate crisis can take place in a meaningful way. Exploring how the river can be utilised for cultural programming offers unique and exciting opportunities for activation; whilst working with locally based organisations such as the North Devon Biosphere, Beaford Arts, Multi Story Theatre Company and Red Herring brings real opportunity to create change through the genuine connection to local people.

CONNECTING THE TOWN

Taw Riverside is a place of connections. The River Taw connects one side of the town to the other, whilst the riverbank connects The Strand through to Rock Park. These connections can be celebrated and amplified through the installation of wayfinding and public art that celebrates the unique environment of the everchanging estuary. The River Taw connects Barnstaple to the rest of the region in a very tangible way, giving Taw Riverside the opportunity to culturally connect to North Devon and Torridge through partnership projects and programmes which celebrate the awe inspiring environment of Northern Devon more widely.

UNLEASHING OUR YOUTH

The area is already a popular place for young people to meet and spend time. From Barnstaple Skatepark and BMX Track to Rock Park, Taw Riverside can build on the existing connection to young people, providing more diversity of experience and deeper links to the outdoors. These connections should be built on together, alongside young people, to develop a genuine sense of ownership of Barnstaple. Working alongside partners such as Museum of Barnstaple & North Devon, North Devon Biosphere and the Tarka Trail there is the potential to develop education opportunities; from engaging very young people in heritage to teaching teens land and river management skills, Taw Riverside can build deep bonds between young people and the town.

KEY PROJECTS

1D Bridge Chambers - Refurbish the listed Bridge Chambers as an accessible learning, creation & performance venue with a theme of culture and environment. Leverage the strategic location on the river to act as the connection between Petroc College and the heart of the town in Market Quarter. This will provide an invaluable resource for creation, workshops and community activity whilst also being a statement example of culture, environment and place combining in a single location.

2D Castle Green - Increasing the accessibility and community use of Castle Green through outdoor events and increased greening of Library Square and Cattle Market car park. This will help address the currently poor public green space offer in the town centre which could be further enhanced if connectivity is improved between Castle Green and the river.

3D Castle Mound - Celebrating heritage in and around Castle Mound through contemporary and creative physical and digital heritage interpretation, signage, library displays and soft landscaping interventions that give greater prominence to Castle Mound. This offers an opportunity for advanced approaches to heritage interpretation using augmented reality, digital interpretation and lighting that could enhance Barnstaple's reputation as a place that connects a long past with an innovative future.

4D Animating Public Squares - Increasing activation of Town Square, the Strand and Library Square for civic gatherings, community festivals, performances, parades and protests. The expansion of outdoor events and activities to a year-round programme will enhance the town's reputation as a destination for outdoor culture in line with the Northern Devon Culture Strategy.

5D Riverside Animation - Creatively engaging people in the riverside through school and FE arts programmes exploring art and nature, pop-up creative hides and observation spaces, events and festivals that make use of the river. Creating waterway projects can have significant benefits for wellbeing, environmental sustainability, biodiversity and overall pride in place as well as offering distinctive cultural experiences.

ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER STRATEGIES

Taw Riverside directly addresses Challenge 4 in the Barnstaple Technical Vision of connecting the town to the River Taw whilst also ensuring regeneration contributes to the Devon Climate Declaration (Challenge 6). Initiatives in this zone are also vital to the strong environmental commitments of the Northern Devon Culture Strategy, engaging people in the protection of their local landscapes including the environment of wider Northern Devon. In doing so they should also aim to connect with broader initiatives across the Northern Devon biosphere.

VISION

Local neighbourhoods with strong individual identities supported and galvanised through community-led socially engaged culture. These knit together to form a connected town-wide identity.

KEY WORDS

Wellbeing, generosity, collaboration, grassroots, interaction, inclusion, intergenerational

SUB ZONES

Pilton; Newport; Sticklepath; Gorwell; Raleigh; Derby; Roundswell; Forches & Whiddon Valley

KEY NEEDS:

The town will be extremely hard hit by rising inflation and the financial crisis leading to increasing levels of poverty and households with limited disposable income

Communities are currently disjointed from one another without a strong sense of collective identity

A missing middle of younger working age population means there is a dual challenge of an ageing population at risk of social isolation and a young population that feels the town is dominated by older groups

Challenges linked to education, opportunity and aspiration with low overall qualification and educational attainment levels

KEY OPPORTUNITIES:

Strategically located primary schools that can act as central loci of individual neighbourhoods

Community infrastructure including halls, parks, allotments and community woodlands provide a foundation of resources that communities are already actively engaged with

Important civic links such as health centres, faith groups and other civic organisations provide potential links into people with the greatest levels of need in the town

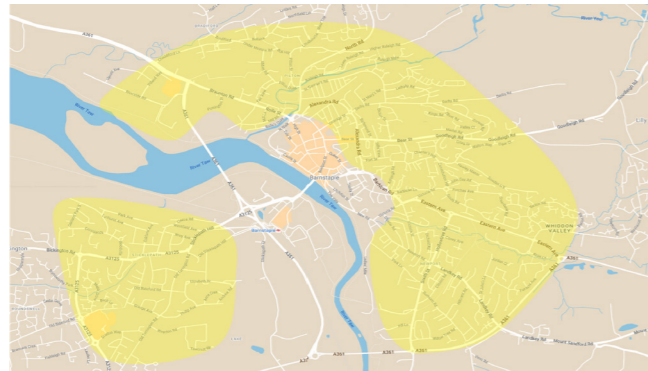
One Barnstaple's links with the health sector opens up the possibilities for social prescribing and cultural activity supporting wellbeing

Community festivals and events like Pilton Green Man and Barnstaple Carnival offer inclusive grassroots cultural activity that can be enhanced

BARNSTAPLE PATCHWORK

CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE:

Cultural infrastructure varies between neighbourhoods but much of the most important infrastructure is linked to civic infrastructure. Primary schools are located at the heart of neighbourhoods and have an important social and potential cultural function. Similarly pockets of community owned spaces like community woodlands and allotments often have strong resident engagement. Community centres vary between neighbourhoods with some, like Forches and Whiddon Valley providing vital spaces for community gathering and workshops, however other areas are lacking in this regard.



UNSHACKLING OPPORTUNITY:

Barnstaple Patchwork offers an exciting opportunity for local residents to genuinely shape and drive the cultural provision that they want to see. This broad, neighbourhood based area should focus on prioritising community ownership and shared decision making - putting the power and resources into the hands of local people to use as they so wish. Working alongside partnerships such as One Barnstaple can open up much needed possibilities for social prescribing and cultural activity supporting wellbeing.

BRINGING THE BUZZ

Barnstaple Patchwork is made up of a host of neighbourhoods with their own unique identities and cultural offers. From Pilton Green Man to Barnstaple Carnival, community festivals and events are embedded in the history of a place and shaped by local people. Programming is supported by a wide range of community infrastructure and civic groups such as halls, parks, health centres, schools, and faith groups. The key to unlocking the power of Barnstaple Patchwork is in amplifying what already exists, and removing barriers to growth and development.

FACING CLIMATE CRISIS

Connecting people to nature in the places in which they live can be a very powerful tool in creating change. Barnstaple Patchwork already offers a range of green spaces to enjoy and programme, allotments to grow and relax in, and community owned woods to protect and maintain. Initiatives such as Yeo Valley Community Woodland already demonstrate the power of community to come together, make change and protect the environment. Promoting community ownership, community led programming and volunteer opportunities will create a thriving place, which is respected and loved by local people. of community to come together, make change and protect the environment. Promoting community ownership, community led programming

CONNECTING THE TOWN

Barnstaple Patchwork is made up of the tapestry of neighbourhoods surrounding Barnstaple town centre. Drawing local residents from the nearby areas will be key in ensuring the wider success of Barnstaple and can be done by actively linking programmes and activities from satellite neighbourhoods to central locations in the town. Working with local organisations and residents to not only amplify their voices in their neighbourhoods, but also throughout the town will likely create a wider sense of ownership and pride.

UNLEASHING OUR YOUTH

Barnstaple Patchwork is home to a number of primary and junior schools that serve the children of Barnstaple and beyond. Ensuring that young children have access to culture at an early age can ignite interest and inspire curiosity, demonstrating to children that they can have a future in Barnstaple should they wish to pursue a creative career. Linking the activities located in other areas of Barnstaple can create pathways for local children from primary school to College to careers, showcasing the range of opportunities that are available to them.

KEY PROJECTS

1E Primary School Creative Hubs - Connecting school art and cultural education with the wider town and encouraging a creative community hub role for primary schools in every neighbourhood. The location of primary schools in the heart of Barnstaple's distinctive residential neighbourhoods provides an opportunity to increase the reach of culture into different parts of the town while also delivering community and educational benefits.

2E Social Prescribing and Social Action - Increasing opportunities for people to improve individual and community wellbeing through social prescribing, creative programmes in community spaces such as community gardens, woodlands, parks and allotments, and enhancing capacity of grassroots community organisations. Programmes should also focus on increasing opportunities for paid freelancers to deliver work of social and community wellbeing value.

3E Social and Creative Entrepreneurship - Supporting and developing the opportunities and impact of freelancers in the creative and social enterprise sectors delivering work in local communities through involvement in commissions, micro-grant programmes and business support. As well as supporting creative careers, the wider benefits of a strong creative social enterprise sector on wider social challenges within the town can be substantial.

ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER STRATEGIES

Barnstaple Patchwork largely falls outside the more central areas of focus of the Technical Vision. However it is deeply rooted in the ambitions of the Northern Devon Culture Strategy to reduce barriers to local people accessing, participating in and defining culture in their own communities (Helping People Blossom). This is connected to the expectation that culture should break down distances between people and communities, improving individual and community wellbeing in the process (Helping Places Thrive).

ACTION PLAN

ACTION PLAN TABLE

In conclusion to this report, we recommend a number of actions that have been developed alongside local stakeholders that should be taken to begin realising the projects outlined in this plan. These can be best summarised in 14 overarching points:

1. Form a Town Team for Culture and appoint a Cultural Officer to oversee and support a cohesive cultural offer for Barnstaple [Action 1-7]

2. Amplify the cultural potential of the Future High Streets Project by enhancing with strategic cultural investment via the Arts Council England 'Cultural Development Fund' [Action 8-9]

3. Add cultural value to existing town funding streams by integrating cultural democracy, creative commissioning, social prescribing and amplifying the youth voice [Action 10-14]

4. Empower and encourage community generated cultural activity and socially engaged arts practice [Action 15-16]

5. Amplify the rich cultural offer that already exists in Barnstaple via a marketing campaign [Action 17-19]

6. Develop a cultural town brand and marketing strategy for Barnstaple [Action 20-23]

7. Commission creative wayfinding solutions such as public art and heritage trails to connect the town centre [Action 24-26]

8. Prioritise mobilising the cultural sector to contribute to tackling the causes and effects of the climate crisis [Action 27-31]

9. Commission green interventions on the High Street and car parks within Barnstaple [Action 32]

10. Utilise existing assets such as Green Lanes Shopping Centre to provide cultural meanwhile opportunities [Action 33-39]

11. Support and facilitate the presence of Petroc College and other educational institutions within the town centre [Action 40-41]

12. Prioritise affordable creative workspace and skills development for the cultural sector [Action 42-44]

13. Reduce barriers to delivering cultural activity in public realm spaces such as public squares, green spaces and the River Taw [Action 45-48]

14. Support the diversification of the evening and night time economy by removing barriers to the change of use of business activity [Action 49]

Form a Town Team for Culture and appoint a Cultural Officer to oversee and support a cohesive cultural offer for Barnstaple

Number	Action	Zone	Timescale	Cost	Benefit
1	Form a Town Team for Culture bringing together a wide ranging body of local cultural stakeholders to catalyse a cohesive approach to culture in the town.	All	Immediate	£	XXX
2	Adopt the Barnstaple Cultural Plan	All	Immediate	£	XXX
3	Ensure that the Barnstaple Town Team for Culture is represented on the Barnstaple Regeneration Board, the North Devon Council Group and the Northern Devon Cultural Partnership	All	Medium	£	XX
4	Appoint a Cultural Officer to oversee the cultural development of Barnstaple and its contribution to the surrounding areas.	All	Medium	££	XXX
5	Collectively develop a shared commitment to fair pay within the cultural sector, ensuring all partners commit to compensating freelancers fairly for their work.	All	Immediate	£	XX
6	Commit to ambitious and exemplary environmental practices as the Town Team for Culture.	All	Immediate	£	X
7	Proactively make space for the youth voice in the cultural sector of Barnstaple, ensuring that it is not just heard, but is embedded in decision making on a practical and strategic level by committing to youth representation within the Town Team for Culture.	All	Immediate	£	XX

Develop and submit a bid to Arts Council England ‘Cultural Development Fund’

Number	Action	Zone	Timescale	Cost	Benefit
8	Develop and submit a bid to Arts Council England ‘Cultural Development Fund’, adding value to the regeneration of Market Quarter and Bridge Chambers.	Barnstaple Heart and Taw River-side	Immediate	£	XXX
9	If unsuccessful, understand feedback, anticipate critical investments and devise an alternate funding strategy.	Barnstaple Heart and Taw River-side	Medium	XXX	XXX

Add cultural value to existing town funding streams by integrating cultural democracy, creative commissioning, social prescribing and amplifying the youth voice

Number	Action	Zone	Timescale	Cost	Benefit
10	Identify opportunities for implementing cultural democracy into the existing cultural offer of Barnstaple. In particular focus on creating and growing opportunities for cultural democracy within the ‘Barnstaple Patchwork’ zone, prioritising community wellbeing.	All, Barnstaple Patchwork	Immediate	£	XXX
11	Utilise existing funding streams and future placemaking budgets to integrate creative commissioning into placemaking and soft regeneration projects, prioritising local talent where possible. For example, public realm seating need not just be seating, but can also be a reflection of Barnstaple’s rich heritage.	All	Immediate	££	XX
12	Work with One Northern Devon, Arts Council England, cultural organisations, community spaces such as community woodlands and social/creative entrepreneurs to facilitate social prescribing systems aimed at enhancing individual and community wellbeing.	All, Barnstaple Patchwork	Medium	££	XXX
13	Wherever possible, cultural funding applications should be developed in conjunction with young people. For example, there shouldn’t be an application made for a youth-focused cultural project or programme that has not been directly developed with or by young people.	All	Medium	£	XX
14	Integrate young people into the delivery roles of cultural activity across Barnstaple. Rather than viewing the role of young people as only participatory, commit to ensuring that young people are proactively encouraged into roles of cultural delivery and power, such as cultural commissioners and project management.	All	Medium	£	XXX

Empower and encourage community generated cultural activity

Number	Action	Zone	Timescale	Cost	Benefit
15	Support community driven cultural activity through the provision of small grants and signposting to external funding opportunities.	All, Barnstaple Patchwork	Medium	££	XXX
16	Develop volunteering capacity within cultural organisations and programmes, providing genuine opportunities to contribute in a meaningful way.	All	Medium	£	XX

Amplify the rich cultural offer that already exists in Barnstaple via a marketing campaign

Number	Action	Zone	Timescale	Cost	Benefit
17	Produce a calendar of existing annual events and distribute the information locally and regionally in an accessible and exciting way.	All	Immediate	£	X
18	Expand the Rock Park page on the Barnstaple Town Council to a broader guide to the towns green spaces and walking routes with contact links or information on how to utilise these spaces for events.	All, Taw Riverside & Barnstaple Patchwork	Immediate	£	X
19	Bring together main stakeholders on major cultural regeneration plans such as Market Quarter, Bridge Chambers and public works around Castle Mound and the Library in order to align the phasing of the projects and how they are announced and celebrated to the public in order to build a sense of momentum and excitement.	Barnstaple Heart, Taw Riverside	Immediate	£	XX

Develop a cultural town brand and marketing strategy for Barnstaple

Number	Action	Zone	Timescale	Cost	Benefit
20	Create a cultural brand that reflects the unique qualities of Barnstaple and celebrates its heritage.	All	Medium	££	XXX
21	Develop an accessible online platform where the cultural offer of Barnstaple can be promoted and celebrated locally, regionally and nationally.	All	Medium	££	XX
22	Build a cohort of 'Barnstaple Champions' who will promote and talk passionately about culture in the town. This should include local residents, politicians and business people as well as creative individuals and organisations.	All	Long	£	X
23	Work across Northern Devon with regional partners to devise and implement a multi-faceted marketing strategy to promote the cultural offer of Northern Devon and Barnstaple within it. Utilise the cultural brand, connected communication and online platforms as tools to showcase and celebrate what the region has to offer.	All	Long	££	XX

Commission creative wayfinding solutions such as public art and heritage trails to connect the town centre

Number	Action	Zone	Timescale	Cost	Benefit
24	Develop cultural and heritage trails in and around Barnstaple that connect the town in people's minds, whilst celebrating what is unique to Barnstaple. Where possible, integrate technology such as augmented reality.	All, Hidden Heritage Fringe	Medium	££	XXX
25	Improve wayfinding throughout the town by installing creative signage that reflects Barnstaple's heritage.	All	Medium	££	XXX
26	Commission temporary and permanent public art and creative lighting throughout the town centre, focusing on gateways to the town and areas that are perceived to be unsafe.	All, Hidden Heritage Fringe & Barnstaple Southside	Medium	££	XXX

Prioritise mobilising the cultural sector to contribute to tackling the causes and effects of the climate crisis

Number	Action	Zone	Timescale	Cost	Benefit
27	Work with regional partners and the Northern Devon Cultural Partnership to create and deliver a professional development programme to support cultural organisations and individuals to implement best environmental sustainability practice.	All	Medium	£	X
28	Form close partnerships with the environmental sector and identify key environmental issues that culture can be utilised to support, disrupt and progress.	All	Medium	£	XX
29	Commission cultural programmes that address local environmental issues head on, with an emphasis on broadening and deepening conversations.	All, Taw Riverside	Medium	££	XXX
30	Actively deliver and participate in programmes that connect the environmental conversation across the Northern Devon region.	All	Medium	££	XX
31	Barnstaple is a hub of culture and will inevitably attract people across the region to travel to the town. Work with partners to understand the impact of such travel and how best to minimise the detrimental effects on the environment.	All	Medium	£££	XXX

Commission green interventions on the High Street and car parks within Barnstaple

Number	Action	Zone	Timescale	Cost	Benefit
32	Support community driven cultural activity through the provision of small grants and signposting to external funding opportunities.	All, Barnstaple Patchwork	Medium	££	XXX

Utilise existing assets such as Green Lanes Shopping Centre to provide cultural meanwhile opportunities

Number	Action	Zone	Timescale	Cost	Benefit
33	Kickstart interest and confidence in delivering meanwhile projects by using publicly owned stock such as Green Lanes Shopping Centre to deliver an exemplar project.	Barnstaple Heart	Immediate	££	XX
34	Support the region and diversify the Barnstaple offer by actively encouraging and facilitating touring cultural offers within existing cultural venues, public realm and pop-up spaces.	All	Immediate	£	XX
35	Produce and implement a regeneration/re-positioning culture-led plan for Green Lanes Shopping Centre, utilising vacant space, under used public spaces, marketing and events opportunities, business collaborations and public art commissioning.	Barnstaple Heart	Medium	£££	XXX
36	Convene asset managers and owners to identify growth pathways for independent enterprises from pop-up to affordable leases to market rents in the town centre and agree proactive ways of curating the offer in the town.	All, Barnstaple Heart, Hidden Heritage Fringe, Barnstaple Southside	Medium	£	XX
37	Develop and maintain a list of heritage buildings with details of ownership and leases wherever possible. When leases come up in strategic locations like Hidden Heritage Fringe proactively support the curation of appropriate uses by facilitating suitable independent businesses to take on these spaces	Hidden Heritage Fringe	Long	££	XX
38	Provide a clear point of information that signposts landlords and creatives to existing guidance that supports meanwhile use activity, providing a list of key contacts for those interested.	All, Barnstaple Heart, Taw Riverside & Barnstaple Southside	Long	£	X
39	Create an open source, online resource of vacant spaces and creative practitioners, enabling individuals and organisations to come together in an organic way. Think Airbnb, but for cultural meanwhile-use. Ensure that both property owners, creative practitioners, cultural organisations and community groups are consulted prior to the delivery of the platform to ensure that the website is fit for purpose and enables the listing of relevant information.	All, Barnstaple Heart, Taw Riverside & Barnstaple Southside	Long	£	XX

Support and facilitate the presence of Petroc College and other educational institutions within the town centre

Number	Action	Zone	Timescale	Cost	Benefit
40	Convene a workshop between cultural organisations and staff leads for creative courses at Petroc to identify projects that can be turned into briefs for students and integrated into curricula. This could include youth takeovers of physical spaces, creative partnerships with local businesses and public realm projects.	Barnstaple Southside	Immediate	£	XX
41	Work with local primary and secondary schools to improve links with local cultural organisations, support creative subjects in the curriculum and engage school children in projects and commissions in the public realm across Barnstaple.	Barnstaple Patchwork	Medium	££	XXX

Prioritise affordable creative workspace and skills development for the cultural sector

Number	Action	Zone	Timescale	Cost	Benefit
42	Signpost cultural freelancers and creative businesses to already existing business support schemes such as 12 hours of free business support from North Devon+ or diagnosis and business support referral delivered by The Heart of the South West Growth Hub.	All	Medium	£	X
43	Prioritise affordable, shared creative workspace that is suitable for a diverse range of art and craft forms within new developments and under-utilised heritage assets. Thought should be given to the provision of shared facilities and equipment such as makerspaces and live/work spaces.	Barnstaple Heart, Taw Riverside & Barnstaple Southside	Long	£££	XXX
44	Prioritise affordable co-working spaces that are suitable for a diverse range of creative careers such as Graphic Designers, Web Developers and Architects within new developments and under-utilised heritage assets.	Barnstaple Heart, Taw Riverside & Barnstaple Southside	Long	£££	XXX

Reduce barriers to delivering cultural activity in public realm spaces such as public squares, green spaces and the River Taw

Number	Action	Zone	Timescale	Cost	Benefit
45	Identify quick win activities that will shine a spotlight on the public realm and showcase it as a place where cultural activity thrives. Explore different forms of activation and monitor how these are received by the public, utilising an action research approach to refine and develop the offer.	All, Barnstaple Heart & Taw Riverside	Immediate	££	X
46	Encourage animation of the public realm by removing barriers through the implementation of a short, simple EOI process for interested parties to complete prior to the submission of a full Amenity Application form.	All, Barnstaple Heart & Taw Riverside	Medium	£	X
47	Develop a public realm toolkit, which clearly and concisely demonstrates an overarching timeline towards event delivery. As well as including practical information such as when to apply for a TENs licence or when RAMS documentation should be completed, it should also touch upon the softer elements which make an event a success such as the implementation of strong branding, local marketing and promotional opportunities, trusted suppliers etc.	All, Barnstaple Heart & Taw Riverside	Medium	£	X
48	Proactively support the delivery of cultural activities in, on and around the river by providing clear health and safety and environmental guidance on what, when and how cultural activity can be sustained.	Taw Riverside	Medium	£	XX

Support the diversification of the evening and night time economy by removing barriers to the change of use of business activity

Number	Action	Zone	Timescale	Cost	Benefit
49	Local Authority to support diversification of the High Street and evening and night time economy through policy, supporting change of use applications where appropriate.	All, Barnstaple Patchwork	Barnstaple Heart & Taw Riverside	££	XXX

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 - BARNSTAPLE SPATIAL VISION

Barnstaple Spatial Vision prepared by Lavigne Lonsdale

We will restore and strengthen Barnstaple's status as the heart of civic, commercial, educational, cultural and community life in North Devon in the mid-21st century. This will not be achieved by trying to turn back the clock. We need to make the town centre attractive, appealing and fit for purpose in a new era, reflecting the way we live now. It needs to be resilient in the face of the challenges presented by the digital economy and the attractions of competing locations.

Barnstaple is a handsome town in a beautiful riverside setting. We will mobilise its rich array of heritage assets, ambitious businesses, cultural and community organisations. We will revitalise the iconic Pannier Market and build on the revival of Butchers' Row, establish a sustainable core of high quality retail in the heart of the town, and encourage diversification by regenerating and re-purposing what are now struggling secondary locations. We will encourage public buildings and community uses to cluster in the town centre. We will rebalance the town centre, by reconnecting it to the Taw, restoring place quality and coherence south of the river, and reducing the negative impacts of road traffic and surface parking.

Barnstaple will be recognised as one of England's liveliest, most attractive and prosperous small towns, the focal point for a large rural hinterland, and an essential part of the North Devon experience for UK and international visitors. The revived town centre will contribute to an enhanced quality of life, and its cosmopolitan appeal will make it an increasingly popular place to live and work, and especially attractive to young people and families. This is an ambitious vision which reflects the insights and aspirations of the community. This document sets out a plan to make it happen, focusing on six key challenges.

Challenge 1: To make Barnstaple more attractive to residents and visitors by revitalising and diversifying the town centre economy

Challenge 2: To restore, reuse and celebrate Barnstaple's historic buildings and townscapes

Challenge 3: To put people first by encouraging walking and cycling and reducing the negative impact of traffic and parking

Challenge 4: To reconnect the town to the River Taw

Challenge 5: To establish a complementary relationship between the historic core and the retail parks on the south bank of the river

Challenge 6: To ensure that the regeneration of Barnstaple town centre contributes to the Devon Climate Declaration

APPENDIX 2 - FLOURISHING CULTURE

Flourishing Culture Northern Devon Culture Strategy prepared by Things Made Public

Key Themes and Actions

HELPING PEOPLE BLOSSOM

NURTURING THE FUTURE - Champion the youth voice in northern Devon whilst actively developing pathways to creative opportunities and sustainable creative careers.

CULTIVATING CONNECTIONS - Ensure northern Devon culture is embedded in regional, national and international networks that expand the reach of its borders, whilst bringing cutting edge culture and knowledge into the region.

MAKING CULTURE VISIBLE - Collectively celebrate and promote northern Devon culture so that it is a source of pride to our communities and attractive for people who visit.

OUR CULTURAL HUBS

CULTURAL INVESTMENT PLANS - Integrate culture into visions and investment plans for our town centres, positioning town's as the heart of northern Devon's cultural offering.

THE PUBLIC REALM - Maximise the potential for culture in the public realm of town centres throughout the region.

USING VACANT SPACES TO FUEL CULTURE - Leveraging temporary and long term vacant spaces, development opportunities and heritage assets for cultural use.

HELPING PLACES THRIVE

EXPRESSIONS OF PLACE - Create the conditions for our communities to make and experience culture that expresses their connection to the local environment, in the places they live.

PROTECTING OUR LANDSCAPES - Recognise the interdependent relationship between people, culture and the environment through cultural activity that acts on the climate crisis.

NAVIGATING THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE - Use culture to break down the distance between people, both physical and social, by spreading cultural opportunities across northern Devon.

RESEARCH SUMMARY

THINGS MADE PUBLIC



Barnstaple Fringe Theatrefest brings streets and venues alive each year with 4 days of theatre, performance, music and art

The following research summary draws out key themes developed from a review of policy, heritage, demographics, cultural activity, place analysis and engagement with local stakeholders. This aims to give a contextual focus to the Spatial Vision for Culture in Barnstaple by emphasising notable features of the town that differentiate it from other places, along with considerations for how these features should inform a cultural interventions in the town.

Overall, 5 key themes have been identified due to their importance to the historic identity of the town, its current cultural offer and the challenges and opportunities it faces.

5 RESEARCH THEMES



Butchers Row and Barnstaple Pannier Market are the heart of the town and plans for regeneration of this area are key to the future identity and culture of Barnstaple

- 1 CRAFTING & TRADING
- 2 REBELS & THE OUTLIERS
- 3 ROUTES & JOURNEYS
- 4 GREEN & BLUE
- 5 CULTURE & COMMUNITY WELLBEING

CRAFTING & TRADING

Bring to life 1,000 years of exchange, making and connection

A History of Trade and Industry

Barnstaple has a rich and varied history as one of the most significant settlements and ports in the south west with a historically prominent role in local, national and international trade that has left its mark on the physical and cultural fabric of the town.



The Prudence Privateer at Barnstaple Quay in 1590

From Saxon times, when Barnstaple was one of Devon's four early settlements permitted to mint coins, the town has had a key trading function. This set a consistent theme for Barnstaple as a regional and eventually international centre of trade. In the middle-ages this centred around the wool and cloth trade. The opening of channels to the new world in the 16th and 17th centuries saw a boom in this trading function. The newly established Great Quay and later Queen Anne's Walk acted as a merchants' exchange. Cod fishing in Newfoundland, licensed piracy and trade with the Americas enabled Barnstaple merchants to grow rich. Their wealth supported high quality silversmiths and plaster workers and a thriving pottery industry exported across the Atlantic. As the river silted up in the 18th and 19th centuries, this maritime trading function diminished. The town remained a regional civic, cultural and market centre and there were important manufacturers of ceramics, furniture and textiles until the end of the 20th century.

Heritage Built into the Town

The legacy of this history is embedded in its physical fabric. The shape of the defended Saxon settlement and heart shaped mediaeval street pattern is still evident of the town centre core. The town boasts the Norman Castle Mound, mediaeval Long Bridge and an array of 17th century almshouses as well as charming cobbled neighbourhoods. Georgian and Victorian development, often hiding earlier buildings, now dominates the built form of the town including the Guildhall, Pannier Market and the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon.

In all Barnstaple has around 375 listed buildings that together make up a strong architectural history and identity. Whilst some of these have been successfully adapted for new creative uses, others remain either underutilised or in many cases at risk. The Oliver Buildings on Barnstaple waterfront were at one point listed on the Victorian Society top ten endangered list before revised designs for redevelopment were created.

Sensitive thought as to how to retain such sites whilst also seeking to define creative uses that are relevant to these buildings' origins and bring new life into them is one of the major challenges

375 listed buildings, more than cities including Derby and Leicester



North Devon Artist and Sculptor Edward Crumpton works with traditions of rope weaving and knotting to create sculptures deeply reflective of place. An example of the kind of independent creativity that marks Barnstaple out from other places.

21st Century Making and Connection

The contemporary threads of Barnstaple's making and trading history are not just physical. The town and its surrounding area have a notably strong independent craft culture, continuing the long legacy that runs from early wool trade via Brannam pottery, the arts and crafts movement through to the present day. Local and regional initiatives like the Maker Series and ArtMakers highlight the extent of independent making taking place in the town and surroundings.

It also retains a clear role of both regional, national and international connection, as the commercial and civic centre of North Devon and a significant tourism centre.

However, for a town with such a strong combination of built heritage and historic significance it is strange that this heritage isn't reflected in the reputation or identity of the town. It is rarely seen as one of the great historic trading ports of the UK. Whilst the Barnstaple and North Devon Museum provides a hub for this history and knowledge, it is rarely reflected in the public realm. Plaques linked to the Barnstaple Heritage Trail exist but it is challenging to find a map. Heritage festivals and events are also limited. Barnstaple Elephant Day, a short-lived

event celebrating the discovery of an elephant in a clay pit in Summerland Street in 1844, is one highlight of how stories from the past can be reignited in the present.

Considerations for Barnstaple Culture

- The stories of Barnstaple's trading and making past are waiting to be brought to life, particularly in locations like Queen Anne's Walk through public art, events and information points
- It is important that heritage assets that are either at risk or that offer opportunities for creative activation are identified, including engagement with developers and landlords such as Acorn Properties and the Oliver Buildings
- There is room for more festivals and animation in public space of the town that celebrate the shared heritage of the town and incorporate creative interpretation into existing activities
- There is a strong narrative of Barnstaple as a place where worlds meet, playing on the joining of river and estuary, the linking of local creativity with international exchange and an overall identity of welcome.

REBELS & THE OUTLIERS

Celebrate a culture of self-reliance, independent spirit and anti-authoritarianism

Throughout its history Barnstaple has been a town of independent spirit and thought. From its roots as a defended gathering point against Viking invaders, through the forging of charters to prove its independence from feudal overlords, its parliamentary defiance of the Royalist norm during the Civil Wars, its welcoming of Huguenot refugees, and strong support for parliamentary reform, Barnstaple's tradition of self-reliance and religious and political dissent stands out.

Independent Culture

This self-reliance and radicalism, influenced by a combination of being a centre of international trade, yet at the same time distanced from national centres of administration and power, has impacted the culture of Barnstaple. John Gay, writer of *The Beggar's Opera* and one of Barnstaple's most famous sons, rejected the formality of pursuing a trade career in London to become one of the great British satirists.

Today, culture is not defined by a single artform or major institution. Whilst the town contains important anchor institutions like *Queens Theatre* run by *Selladoor* and *Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon*, a legacy of underfunding particularly

Barnstaple was a key port for privateers, effectively licenced pirates with permission to raid Spanish ships in the 16th and 17th centuries



Cartoon by Francis Carruthers Gould (1844-1825) part of a line of Barnstaple satirists that stretches from John Gay through to contemporary graffiti and street art.

at a national scale has meant it is independent initiatives and projects that often impact the town most.

Fringe TheatreFest is one of the most striking examples of this independent spirit, with an army of volunteers and a team of passionate artists, performers and doers, it creates a critical mass of independent theatre and performance in the town every year spilling out of cultural venues into accessible locations. The large number of independent artists and makers are further evidence of independent creating spirit.

The Plough @ St Anne's is a valuable example of independent cultural organisations and community creativity coming together support more year round activity through the animation of the chapel at the heart of the town.

Independent spirit further expressed through strong local popular culture seen in volunteer-led events like *Barnstaple Carnival* which has run consecutively for 75 years attracting over 20,000 people a year.



Independent venues and initiatives like *Escape Down the Rabbit Hole* help make Barnstaple more than a cookie-cutter town

Much of the night-life in Barnstaple contains a striking note of individuality. Venues like *Masquerade*, *Escape Down the Rabbit Hole* and *Latitude48* differentiate from typical chain bars and nightclubs to give Barnstaple the foundations of a unique, albeit currently dispersed and fragmented, night time experience.

Creative industries is similarly defined in terms of independent activity over large institutions or industries. The sector forms 2.31% of all employment in the region, higher than the Devon average but still low for the UK and overwhelmingly dominated by micro and small businesses. Many within the sector are attracted to Barnstaple for the opportunities of a different kind of lifestyle to major cities, with a rich variety of media, immersive technology and design organisations.

Amplifying Individuality

Much like its trading and making heritage this independent activity and spirit remains oddly invisible in the town much of the time, something that can be found if sought out, but

not immediately apparent. The challenge in all cases is to create critical mass around the independent 'doers' in the town, celebrate their activity and encourage more by loosening the restraints around experimenting in the town.

Whilst new examples of street art have been popping up in recent years, including work by *Mau Mau*, *RichT* and *Barnstaple in Bloom*, it remains less apparent than in comparable towns such as *Bideford*.

The lack of creative work and experimentation space or even community gathering areas in Barnstaple is a clear barrier, restricting opportunities for creative collaboration, chance encounters and seeding of new initiatives. This is at the heart of new initiatives at *Bridge Chambers* and *Boutport Street*. Ensuring that these become permeable, low barrier-to-entry spaces that form creative communities that are not closed or cliquey is essential.

It is also important that creative activity isn't restricted to a few spaces. Cultural institutions like *Queen's Theatre* and *Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon*, need to be incubators of activity that spread into the surrounding town.



Murals by artists like *Mau Mau* can be controversial, but they stimulate debate and give identity to otherwise cookie-cutter places

For an area that has numerous vacant buildings, assets in need of revitalisation and public squares and spaces, the determination needed by individual doers to actually get initiatives off the ground is considerable. Again, positive steps are being taken and the success of *Fringe TheatreFest* as an example in unlocking locations across the town shows it is possible.

It is important though that this activity not only amplifies the activity of existing creatives, but also brings out the creativity of all Barnstaple residents and encourages them to unleash it across the town. Creating space for workshops, participatory art and experimentation, not just activity which is low risk and comfortable, is ultimately what will make for dynamic culture in Barnstaple.

Considerations for Barnstaple Culture

- Homegrown creative potential is strong enough in the town that amplifying and expanding individual creativity rather than parachuting in from outside is likely to breed success. This isn't just about supporting professional artists. Giving everyone the confidence in their creativity and

space to take risks and express themselves across their town will ultimately make for a more distinctive, welcoming and buzzing place.

- There is a key need for a creative hub in Barnstaple, a space where people can devise, make, collaborate and create. Ensure barriers to entry are low and minimising formalised structures that allows this to form a more organic rather than forces creative community is key

- Across the town, a conscious intention to find ways to remove barriers to making things happen will reap rewards, whether it is finding ways to streamline permissions for outdoor performance, street art or animating public assets.

- Models of collective and community ownership could be particularly strong ways of harnessing the independent approaches of Barnstaple's cultural offer and cultivate a distinctive identity in the process.



ROUTES & JOURNEYS

Join together the town into a place of discovery by foot and bike

Physical Barriers

One of the challenges facing Barnstaple is that despite its compactness, walkability and variety of destinations, it remains a difficult and disconnected place to navigate, particularly at night. It also lacks a strong sense of connected identity meaning the town somehow feels less than the sum of its parts.



Activation of St Anne's Church by Plough Arts has helped bring more people into the surrounding green which otherwise has poor perceptions of safety. However, increased activity throughout the year is needed to expand this impact

The town's carparks and road system act as significant physical barriers between key locations of the town centre in particular. Cattle Market Carpark for example, isolates the assets of Barnstaple Library and Castle Mound from the rest of the town. Sections of the town that are neglected, abandoned or underutilised further contribute its fragmentation. Areas with the potential to be assets to the town, such as the public spaces surrounding the Church of St Peter and Paul instead act as barriers. The disconnection between the north and south of the river is also highlighted in the 2020 Technical Vision Document for Barnstaple.

Finally, the Alexandra Road leaves the majority of residents isolated from the centre of town. The growth of neighbourhoods over time has also led

70% of people surveyed on crime and safety in Barnstaple stated that they feel unsafe in the town centre

to sporadic communities with little integration between them, something that further anticipated growth may exacerbate as the area of the town expands. Together these issues mean literally and conceptually bringing people together is a challenge.

Crime & Safety

One of the main impacts of and contributory factors to this disconnection is crime and safety. 70% of people surveyed on crime and safety in Barnstaple stated that they feel unsafe in the town centre. Barnstaple experiences a 171.8 per 1000 population crime rate - 3.4 times higher than the Devon/Cornwall average with 94.5 incidents on antisocial behaviour per 1000 population every year, 4.4 times higher than the Devon/Cornwall average. Rowdy public behaviour and street drinking are the most common complaints whilst 15% of antisocial behaviour incidents mention youths, young people or kids. The most serious concerns relate to violence against women with a 3-year average crime rate of 31.8 crimes per 1000 people 3.8 times the regional average.

The Police Crime Prevention Academy Environmental Visual Audit Study identified a number of key locations which particularly contribute to poor perception of safety including unlit alleys off the high street, areas around the Market Square Carpark and alongside the Library, Church Walk and Theatre Lane. Perception of crime leads to a drop in activity, eyes on the street and a subsequent deterioration in safety. Addressing this cycle is key to making the town more than the sum of its parts.

One of the focuses of this should be finding ways to better link together what is currently a dispersed night-time economy, identifying strategic points where more evening and night time activity would create the necessary critical mass of people to make moving through the town at night more appealing and safe.

Wayfinding

Another contributing factor to the disconnection of the town is the absence of a connected wayfinding identity. Whilst some themed walking tours exist, there appears to be little in the way of guides and easy to use maps of the town. In spite of the richness of the town's history, the town lacks the kind of trails that encourage movement and exploration of the town that similar locations would expect to have.

Wayfinding, branding and effective signage are also areas which could be improved. There are opportunities to emphasise and celebrate architectural and design features of the town in creating a more connected identity. For example, different types of archway designs, ranging from Long Bridge to Butcher's Row. Protecting key design assets of the town such as areas of cobbled streets are also vital to maintaining a sense of character.

An active In Bloom group has helped bring a stronger identity to certain sections of the town through greening and planting, particularly the



Abingdon's Town Map is a good example of how wayfinding can lead to a celebration of a town's identity

Strand and Barnstaple Train Station. Extending this work to a fully integrated programme across the town centre or beyond could also act as a mechanism for linking the town more effectively.

The collective impact of this disconnection is not just the practical element of finding one's way around the town. A connected and navigable town that links together key areas of activity and encourages movement between them also creates a strong sense of place which Barnstaple, for all its assets, currently lacks.

Welcome

There are numerous routes for people to come to Barnstaple, whether it is down the Tarka Trail, into the train station, bus or road. Even before then, many people's conceptual entrance into the town will be digital, online searches, review sites and other tools that are used to decide where to go and how to get there.

Across all of these platforms, a strong sense of welcome and arrival is vital. Barnstaple Train Station currently sets the standard for this. Despite a history of being threatened, the strong community involvement in the station and trainline has helped turn it into a bright, comfortable and welcoming entrance point into the town. This has



Barnstaple Train Station sets the standard for creating a sense of arrival and welcome in the town with a strong feeling of community that makes you want to stay, not just pass through

However, other entrance points are less successful. Road signs encouraging people into the town and welcoming them once they arrive are limited. The main bus stations are unfriendly. Meanwhile, the Tarka Trail remains something that would be used to pass through or get out of Barnstaple instead of Barnstaple feeling like the heart of the trail.

Exploring interventions, from distinctive road signage, to bike hubs on the Tarka Trail, to murals and public art could all help Barnstaple make a better first impression on visitors. Maps, both paper, digital and within the public realm are another opportunity for the town. The fact that the basic urban form was set down early in the town's history means maps are able to represent this invisible heritage in dynamic ways that could be further exploited in the public realm. For example, the ancient town wall and 4 gates into the town no longer remain but could be conceptually brought back to life through maps and interventions in public space.

Improvements to place marketing are also needed, given the importance of the tourism

economy to Barnstaple and its surroundings, the town needs to do more to present itself as more than just a wet weather option in the region.

Considerations for Barnstaple Culture

- There are neglected areas that currently act as key barriers between strategic locations in the town which could be reanimated through cultural activity, particularly at evening and night.

- There are strong opportunities for trails and guides of the town that can improve the visitor offer, encourage movement and exploration through the town and celebrate heritage and identity.
- Creative approaches to wayfinding and navigation that draw on common, distinctive Barnstaple themes can enhance the sense of place in the town. This can include commissions for signage, public art and street furniture that give a stronger visual identity to the town.

- There is a need to identify and improve gateways and welcome points into the town including key road routes, Tarka Trail, Bus Station as well as online platforms

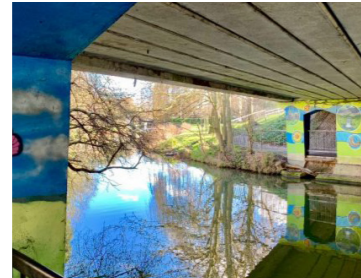


GREEN & BLUE

Make the town as biodiverse and generous as its surroundings

Access to parks, public spaces and nature

Barnstaple is a contradiction. Despite being within a UNESCO recognised biosphere with the river Taw running through it, the Tarka Trail and close links to sea, countryside and national parks, the centre of town itself has a distinct lack of accessible green and open spaces.



Chelmsford is a good example of a place that has creatively enhanced and celebrated its waterways and their biodiversity as a means of building identity in the town...

Most of Barnstaple town centre and surrounding neighbourhoods are in the lower performing deciles for access to Green & Blue space, a measure of accessibility and quality of public open spaces and waterways. Public parks are limited and either isolated or underutilised particularly within the town centre. Castle Green is a prime example, cut off by a carpark to one side, North Walk and tiring civic offices on the other. The area around Paternoster Row/Church Lane is another undervalued pocket of green which feels neglected and even unsafe. The Square located next to the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon is cut off from the town centre by busy roads.

Rock Park presents the strongest link to parks and green space within the town itself and it is notable that the park is well used and active at different times of day by a broad cross-section of demographics. This is enhanced by sports and skatepark facilities.

50% of Barnstaple LSAOs have below average access to quality Green & Blue Space

The River Taw is fundamental to the history and identity of the town, but while improvements have been made to the southern riverfront it remains under-celebrated as an asset. Movement between the stretch of the river and nearby green areas like Rock Park are minimal in what should be a prime route for runners, cyclists and walkers. The river itself has also been described as an eyesore due to the levels of flotsam and jetsom. The River Yeo is largely ignored, even where it runs alongside areas of green like Pilton Park.

Food, Drink and Bringing Nature into the Town

This missed opportunity extends to food, drink and other ways by which places are able to bring the benefits of natural and rural surroundings into towns. The food and drink offer in the town is limited, with only 9% of people surveyed saying they are 'very satisfied' with their independent food offer. Whilst Barnstaple Pannier market runs a regular farmers market and an annual FoodFest, there remains a shortfall in the collective offer.



Programmes like Barnstaple In Bloom have been successful in bringing more nature into the town through volunteer-led planting and cleaning programmes. Initiatives like this are vital vehicles for community, creative exploration of biodiversity and protecting landscapes that could be expanded.

Wellbeing, Community and Climate Change

The combined impact can make Barnstaple itself can feel quite harsh. One that you get out of in order to experience countryside and green rather than enjoy as part of the everyday experience. This has knock-on consequences on health and wellbeing inequalities between those who are able to travel elsewhere to enjoy the benefits of the North Devon landscape, and those who can't.

Issues of biodiversity, access to nature and health of natural assets also has a climate change dimension. Flooding is the primary risk facing Barnstaple due to its rivers. Biodiversity is also significant, sitting within a UNESCO designated biosphere reserve and an AONB. North Devon has active Extinction Rebellion and Fridays For Futures groups that primarily organise within Barnstaple. Both Barnstaple Town Council and North Devon Councils have made climate commitments as part of declaring a climate emergency. Improvement of green and blue is not just of cultural or aesthetic importance to the town. It is a means of moving towards a more sustainable future.

Considerations for Barnstaple Culture

- Identify neglected parks, green spaces, river areas and places of rest that could benefit from creative interventions to revitalise them
- Explore opportunities for pop-up parks and other guerrilla methods of greening the town creatively and reducing the amount of surface level concrete such as in carparks
- Boost the Food and Drink offer of the town through interventions such as evening markets, targeted independent food districts such as within the pannier market and programmes promoting km0 food
- Increasing tree coverage in the town centre is essential. Large tarmaced areas, particularly surrounding the river impact on water runoff, further exacerbating and accelerating flood risks. As climate impacts begin to be felt, it is likely that trees coverage and increasing green space will also become a vital cooling mechanism for the town.

CULTURE & COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Bring out everyday creativity in people and use culture to help create strong communities

Social & Economic Challenges

Barnstaple faces a significant number of complex social challenges and any cultural vision for the town has to be seen through this lens. The majority of the town sits within the 30% most deprived in country although neighbourhoods of lower deprivation exist on the outskirts of the town. The centre of Barnstaple itself ranks in the top 10% most deprived in the country.

Whilst unemployment isn't a defining problem for the town, amounting to around 2.4% of the working age population, quality of work is a severe issue. Economic activity rates are almost 10% higher than the national average meaning the majority of working age population are employed, self-employed or in the jobs market, but hourly pay is 10% lower than the rest of Devon and 15% lower than the UK. Only 63.4% of jobs are full-time compared with 75% nationally.

Hourly pay in Barnstaple is 10% lower than the rest of Devon and 15% lower than the UK



Specialised homeless pods have been developed to tackle challenges of rough sleeping in Barnstaple

When this is combined with average house prices which have risen 10% in just two years the result is a population with severely limited disposable income. This will have increased due to the current cost-of-living and inflation crises.

Homelessness and rough sleeping is a visible outcome of these challenges. North Devon's levels of rough sleepers is well above average and the majority of these are within Barnstaple.

This underlying income deprivation both exacerbates and underpins issues of health, crime and aspiration. These in turn influence a perception and sense of esteem in Barnstaple as a place. North Devon ranks in the bottom 15% of parliamentary constituencies for place satisfaction with 27% saying they had a negative perception of where they live.



Popular community events like Barnstaple Carnival are an important platform for inclusive creative expression. Helping such events and their participants raise aspirations and ambitions can broaden the range of people involved in creating across Barnstaple.

This all impacts on the aspirations of young people. Barnstaple is notable for having a younger population than other parts of Devon with 19% of the population under 18. Only 64.8% of students receive 5 or more GCSE A* to C grades compared with 77.8% in Devon and without a university it can feel like a place young have to leave to access opportunities.

Community Culture and Good Lives

Culture and deprivation are not bound to one another. A community facing socio-economic challenges can be culturally vibrant and culture alone cannot solve deep structural issues. But neither are they mutually exclusive. 39% of the Barnstaple population are amongst the least likely to engage in traditional formats of arts and culture according to the audience agency, largely due to barriers of income, education, time and complex social factors.

Projects and events like Sunrise Diversity's community centre, Barnstaple Carnival and Fair, and Barnstaple Pride show different ways that encouraging and unlocking everyday creativity can lead to powerful social impacts.

Considerations for Barnstaple Culture

- Work with agencies that have a wider social, health and community remit such as social prescribing programmes, to embed everyday creativity in their approaches.
- Help popular community events like Barnstaple Carnival and Fair expand their creative ambition to provide accessible routes into creative participation.
- Identify opportunities for community-led commissioning and co-creation in the public realm. This could include community co-created public art, community-led pop-ups and larger community creative events like Big Draw.
- Work with social and community organisations to identify key local issues that cultural activity should be highlighting, exploring and challenging.

APPENDIX 4 - The Barnstaple Cultural Framework Process: Longlist

Having identified the core needs and core assets of Barnstaple with local stakeholders, a long list of cultural spaces, projects and ideas was collectively drawn up. At the time of writing, these included:

Green Lanes Art Wall: An empty wall in Greens Lane shopping centre that could be repurposed as an art space to display the work of individuals artists and schools.

Creative Social Justice Projects: Programmes that support creative approaches to tackling social inequality, improve community wellbeing, build capacity for socially engaged art and build community wealth

Creative Hub: A space that can support creative workshops, community events and activity that supports everyday creativity

Barnstaple Community Play: Proposed large scale community play for 2023 made with local Barnstaple people organised by MultiStory

Sunrise Diversity Creative Activities and Events: Run through Sunrise Diversity Centre and spaces such as Barnstaple Library supporting inclusion, welcome and community for marginalised groups across Barnstaple. Including events such as Barnstaple Pride

Craft and Design Workshops in Heritage Spaces: Remaking the link between Barnstaple locations associated with ceramics, craft and design heritage through workshop spaces, studios and exhibitions

The Shambles at Guildhall: Space for community wellbeing activities and creative workshops connecting Barnstaple Guildhall and the Pannier Market

The Plough @ St. Anne's: St. Anne's is one example of an extraordinary group of historic buildings concentrated in between Barnstaple's two main shopping streets and now hosts a programme of community arts activity. Local and regional artists exhibit, there are regular workshops, residencies, classes and community projects throughout the year.

Selladoor Plans for Queens Theatre: Plans for Selladoors development of Queens Theatre include a stronger emphasis on community committees to increase ownership of festivalised production, companies employed to train and build creative capacity of local communities and an emphasis on talent development. Acting as a resource for social proscrying is also highlighted

Open Studios: Increasing the opportunities for people to enter kilns, studios and workshops to see artists working on their practice

Art Hides: Creatively designed spaces where people can observe nature along the river

River Festival: Festival or cultural programme focused on cultural celebration of the river, this could include regattas, heritage explorations of the river's heritage as a trading route, or environmental programmes about the rivers biodiversity and the threats of climate change

Discovering the River Yeo: Develop community-led interventions that increase appreciation of and access to the River Yeo beginning with improvements to Pilton Park. This could include creative activities that explore the biodiversity of the river, campaigns to increase and improve pedestrian routes alongside the river and voluntary cleaning groups

Building Capacity of Pubs & Cafes to put on cultural events particularly in evening times: Working to increase levels of live music, performance and exhibitions across Barnstaple by building relationships with cafes, bars and restaurants, encouraging them to programme more cultural activity

Pilton Green Man Day: Pilton Green Man is an organisation which brings wider benefits to the community of Pilton through the running of Pilton Green Man Day in July every year.

Fringe Theatrefest: An annual celebration of theatre in all its varied forms that takes place in Barnstaple over four days in late June

Barnstaple Carnival: Barnstaple Fair Carnival has been held in the town since 1931 and has run for 75 consecutive years this year. Barnstaple Fair, operated by the Showman's Guild of Great Britain, is the largest in the West Country and it is tradition for the Carnival to follow this event.

Masquerade Lounge Bar: Neither gay bar, nor straight bar, but somewhere "you can be you be what you want to be." "We just want an environment where everybody feels safe, with no preconceived judgement,"

Escape Down the Rabbit Hole - Combination of bar, escape room and event space next to the Pannier Market

Heritage Festivals: Developing festivals that explore and interrogate Barnstaples past and how they relate to its present, whether that be reviving popular events like Elephant Day or developing new ones such as a Maritime Festival exploring Barnstaples trading past

Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon: New exhibition exploring the endangered skills and crafts on the Red List, by the Heritage Craft

Climbing at the Tower: An example of innovative use of a heritage asset at Holy Trinity Church where one of the disused towers has been converted into a climbing wall

Pannier Market Festival: There is scope and interest to develop a Pannier Market Festival. Ideas include art festivals, food festivals and eco festivals

Queens Theatre National Partnerships: The national and international links of Selladoor along with a federalised approach to their network of theatres means Barnstaple will attract high quality national productions that might not otherwise come to the town

Town Centre Music Venue: Creating a town centre grassroots music venue, possibly within Green Lanes

Barnstaple parkrun: A free, fun, and friendly weekly 5k community event. Walk, jog, run, volunteer or spectate, starting at Rock Park.

Floating Cinema and River-Based Happenings: Increasing cultural activities taking place on the river that might include floating platforms for outdoor concerts or cinema screenings

Bike Hubs and Tarka Trail Start Point: Encourage cycling tourism by creating a high quality bike hub or cafe at the ‘starting point’ of the Tarka Trail

Tree Planting Down Barnstaple High Street: Increasing the amount of green in Barnstaple Town Centre while providing important cooling and shade in the town centre through the planting of trees along the length of Barnstaple High Street

Barnstaple In Bloom: Volunteer-led programmes have already seen the livening up of Barnstaple Station, the Strand, Forches and mural commissions under Long Bridge and on the High Street with further projects in the pipeline

Richt Mural: Street artist Richt returns to Barnstaple to paint the town’s first mural, highlighting iconic references from the area and surrounding natural environment. The project teams up with the North Devon Biosphere and UNESCO for an SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) aligned worksop for young people.

Pedestrianising Butchers Row and the High Street: Encourage and complement the prioritisation of pedestrians over cars throughout the town centre through increasing the spill out of cafes onto the street, activation of public spaces to encourage blending of pedestrian and car space, such as with more busking opportunities and soft interventions like painting of pedestrian zones onto the road to expand the area pedestrians feel comfortable to walk

Greening the Strand: Building on recent green improvements to the Strand and expanding so that a riverside ‘green route’ connects all the way from beyond to Rock Park to Barnstaple Playing Fields

Pannier Market Park: Turning the Pannier Market into a new ‘public space’ for Barnstaple encouraging people to relax, dwell and eat their lunch through the provision of seating areas, soft flooring and simple interventions that make it place to stop rather than walk through

“Greener Lanes” at Green Lanes: Barnstaple in Bloom & Green Lanes Management propose to partner to introduce planting schemes into the shopping centre. These include (1) A permanent collection of plants, including trees (2) Professional exhibitions and f&b offers by local nurseries and garden centres (3) Community grow bags (4) Living walls inside and outside the centre

Bridge Chambers: The Council have submitted an Arts Council England CDF bid to convert Bridge Chambers into a hub of art, performance and environmentalism

Climate Crisis Measures: Plant trees and reduce tarmac to increase permeable surfaces

Greening the Cattle Market Car park: Enhancing the potential of Castle Green and Mound by softening the psychological barrier of the car park either through reduction of parking to expand total green area, or by tactical planting that connects it more with the park

Climate Commissions: Commissions that raise public awareness of the environmental challenges facing Barnstaple and the river

Tourism Transport: Improve direct links into the town from tourism hotspots

Barnstaple Carnival Competitions: Area-based competitions as part of Barnstaple Carnival that see local neighbourhood blocks competing for the most creative parade

Town Team: Bringing together a cross section of stakeholders with shared interest in a more culturally vibrant town centre to lobby for larger interventions such as pedestrianisation and masterplanning that complements the needs of culture in the town

Statement Commission in the Strand: A high profile public commission in a significant location such as the Strand that is based on strong themes of Barnstaple identity and heritage

Activating St Anne’s Chapel & Church Walk: Interventions to encourage more activation of the area around St Anne’s Chapel to increase footfall and make it feel like a safer area, particularly in evening times

Bodleian Library: Barnstaple Museum have been successful in their HLF bid celebrating the recent Bodleian Library discovery of a detailed map of Barnstaple during its heyday in about 1650. Funding includes – loan costs and reproduction fees for use of the map, expert input into exhibition content and professional fees for the learning programme, production of learning resources and exhibition graphics, equipment for the exhibition and learning programme

Promoting Future High Streets: Making a bigger noise about the Barnstaple’s Future High Streets Work to promote the town regionally and nationally

Marketing and Branding: A strong Barnstaple Brand that is used on everything from regional road signs pointing towards the town, to signage within the town and high street through to online platforms

A New Town Guide: An improved guide to Barnstaple that gives stronger emphasis to the variety of attractions and interest to be found in the town

The Shambles at Guildhall: Community, wellbeing and creative workshops in the Shambles Cafe connecting the Guildhall to the Pannier Market

Evening Outdoor Performances: Increase levels of public performances and busking taking place between 5pm and 8pm to create a better link between daytime and night time economies. Encourage participation of cafes, shops and restaurants to stay open at these times

Public Art Trails: Publicising opportunities to see works of Barnstaple artists across the town through maps and trails. This could also include 'Cow Parade' style temporary events with themed temporary installations across the town

Painting the Town: Expanding the amount of public art and colour across the town, particularly in locations that are deemed challenging such as cut through streets and alleys.

Safer Streets Bid: £20,000 bid made for the establishment of a Community Sparks Fund to empower the local community to reclaim their public spaces. Project could include running local events and activities to activate/change spaces in the town centre, making redundant local buildings and spaces used and loved, landscaping or public art in neglected areas and creative art, signs, or window displays

Barnstaple 5k - A running, cycling and walking route along the River Taw that is highlighted by markers along the route on pavement surfaces, planters and other creative approaches, encouraging full exploration of the river route

Tarka Trail: The Tarka Trail starts in Barnstaple. Inspired by the route travelled by Tarka the Otter from Henry Williamson's famous 1927 novel, the Tarka Trail is a 180 mile, figure of eight walking and cycling route that traverses unspoiled countryside, dramatic sea cliffs and beautiful beaches enabling you to explore and experience the very best North Devon has to offer.

Mentoring and Apprenticeships: Increasing the number of young people being mentored by local creative practitioners and accessing creative industries apprenticeships

Petroc-Barnstaple Art Trail: Youth-led public art works along the route between Petroc College and the town encouraging a stronger link between the college and the town

Learning Programmes at Guildhall: Encouraging engagement of schoolchildren with historic artefacts at the Guildhall

Petroc / Selladoor Partnership - Programme to deliver a Performance Arts 4/5 (HNC/Degree) course within 3 years

Peripatetic Music Rehearsal Rooms: Bringing young people into the town centre at evening times through access to music education

Large Scale Makerspace for Young People: Identifying a large vacant space that can be used by young people to learn skills in making, art, design and generally have space to experiment.

In Bloom Programmes with School Art Departments: Collaborations with local school art departments to create works that can be displayed in public space across the town

Barnstaple Skatepark: Barnstaple skatepark was built by Gravity and opened in 2009. It is an all concrete skatepark with a variety of transitions and is perfect for beginners trying to learn the basics or for more experienced riders wanting to master the lines.

Schools Creative Ecology Projects: Programmes with school children to understand the ecology of the river

APPENDIX 5- The Barnstaple Cultural Framework template

Barnstaple

Cultural Framework

	People Power <i>A strong culture of volunteering, community networks and organisations, artists and makers who are invested in Barnstaple are all powerful mechanisms for achieving change.</i>	1000 Year Heritage <i>Barnstaple's deep and layered history of trade, rebellion and making have left distinctive physical assets in the town including buildings, monuments and traces that combine with an intangible wealth of stories and traditions.</i>	Rooted Institutions <i>Large institutions (Council, Petroc College, Queen's Theatre etc.) bring physical assets, commissioning power, networks & experience that leveraged collectively can enact positive transformation.</i>	Open Canvases <i>Barnstaple's variety of open spaces like Castle Hill Green, Rock Park, the Strand, Town Square and Paternoster Row, and even car parks, streets and blank walls offer a canvas for culture across the town.</i>	The River <i>The Tow, its tributaries and the Tarka Trail are at the centre of Barnstaple, linking it with its past, its surroundings and an important source of connection to nature and wellbeing in its own right.</i>
Unshackling Opportunity <i>We want to make Barnstaple a place where culture helps lift people's levels of opportunity by raising aspirations, improving creative skills, creating pathways into creative work & supporting the success of creative professionals.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
Bringing the Buzz <i>We want to make Barnstaple a place of gathering, where a diversity of people choose to come together at different times of day, evening and night, for welcoming, inclusive, shared communal experiences.</i>	6	7	8	9	10
Facing Climate Crisis <i>Barnstaple is already being forced to adapt to the physical realities of climate change. We want culture to help to achieve the behavioural shifts and practical actions needed in the face of the climate crisis.</i>	11	12	13	14	15
Connecting the Town <i>We want culture to be the thread that knits together a fragmented town through a distinctive identity, routes and journeys that reconnect people with parts of the town that have become isolated, supporting a more integrated Barnstaple.</i>	16	17	18	19	20
Unleashing Our Youth <i>We want Barnstaple to be a place where young people aren't marginalised, where their creative energy enlivens the town and where they feel they have the agency and opportunity to pursue their ambitions.</i>	21	22	23	24	25

THINGS MADE PUBLIC

BARNSTAPLE CULTURAL PLAN