



Bideford Regeneration Strategy

The Bideford Strategy. Our Mission and Vision

Our mission is to revive Bideford town centre as a place of energy, where our green spaces are well-loved and well-used and there is improved access to our beautiful riverfront. Our vision is for a town of events with an evening economy which is flourishing again. A town with people living and working within it, generating positive footfall and security. A vision for a town that is for every day and every season that residents can be proud of and where visitors want to keep returning. A place where partnerships and communication play a crucial role in collectively shaping the local agenda.

Crucially, this vision champions the opportunity for the town and community to turn towards the water. From live music, to markets, to restoring the tidal fountains, the waterfront needs to return to becoming the true jewel in the town's crown – an asset to be looked at with envy. The development of Brunswick Wharf in East-the-Water will also be an important step towards achieving that goal, creating an interplay between the two sides of the river and generating additional footfall and vibrancy for the town centre.

Bideford is at a crossroads. With the Appledore Maritime Innovation Centre two miles downstream due to open in 2026, the Appledore shipyard resurgent after its purchase by Navantia and new investment in clean offshore energy off our shoreline, a vibrant local cultural scene and even the growth of a dynamic local seaweed industry, this historic waterfront town is on the way to becoming a centre for creative thinking, future skills and entrepreneurship.

To unleash our own entrepreneurial spirit and enable higher-skilled, higher-paid jobs we also need to provide places for that work to take place. That

This vision champions the opportunity for the town and community to turn towards the water



means a mix of co-working and serviced offices providing vibrant and diverse work and meeting spaces, unleashing opportunity for our dynamic small business community. And alongside those, spaces where people can learn the skills which take them into those jobs, whether in the maritime industry, creatives sector (including AI), professional

services, hospitality, or retail, providing a route for our young people to first become aware of and then aspire to good local jobs and to stay within our area. This must be the way to make the most of our local talent and assets.

Bideford has long had a strong independent retail offer, bringing character and interest to our streets. But retail by itself is not enough to stimulate the footfall and vitality our town needs. Our independent traders need to be cherished and promoted as offering a level of customer service and quality not to be found online.

Bideford by the numbers

18,000

Population. Up 10% between 2010 and 2021*

23%

of the population have level 4 qualifications

8,200

Population employed. Up 10% between 2010 and 2021*

95%

of households have high-speed internet

*2021 Census

of the existing retail zone needs to be reduced in order to allow the town to evolve and to create space for new experiences and a good quality residential offer.



The Bideford Strategy. Our Mission and Vision (Continued)

Housing will play an important role in Bideford's evolution, allowing more people to live in good conditions right at the heart of the town's energy and making the most of first and second floor spaces which sit empty despite the ongoing housing crisis.

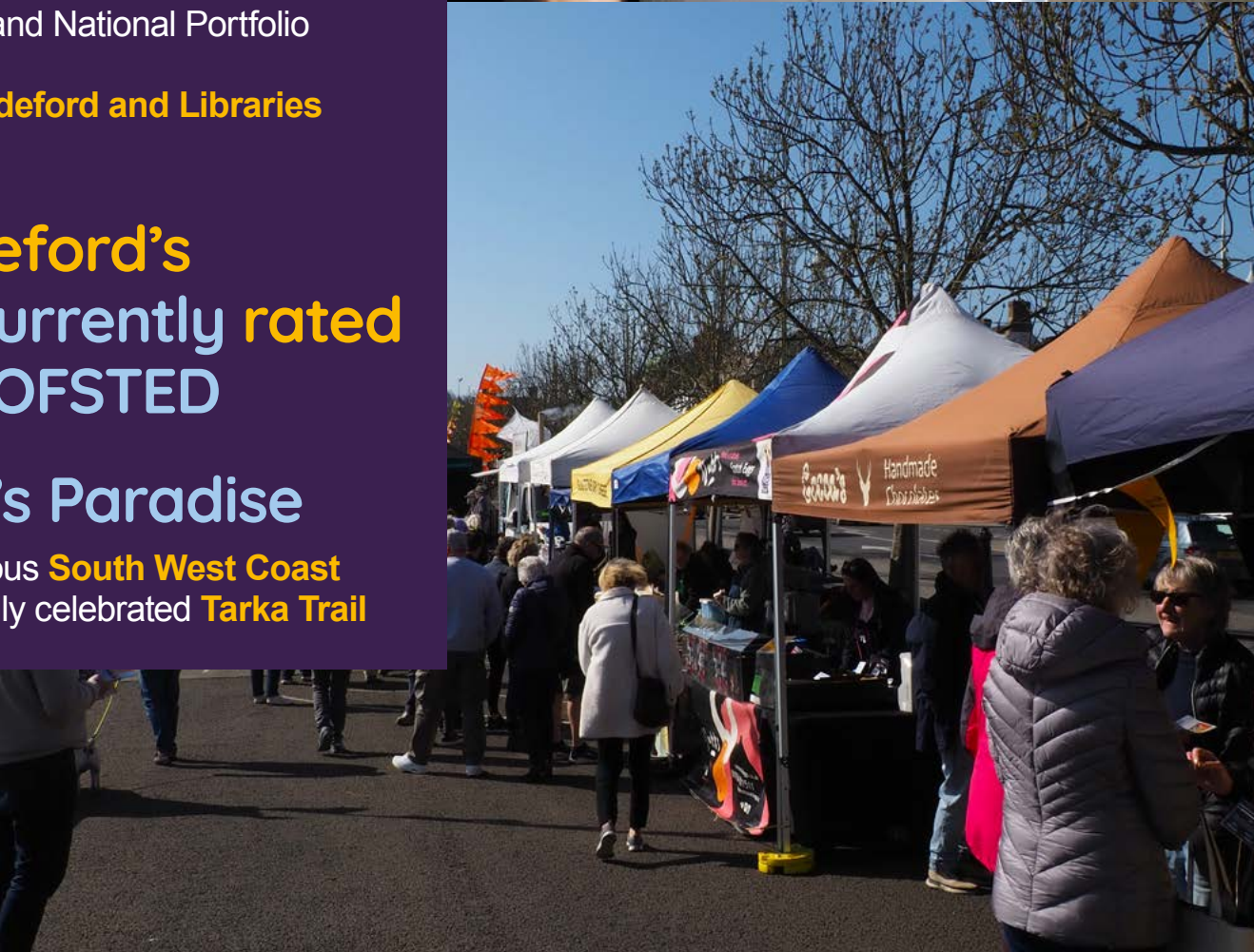
Bideford was once known far and wide for its range of evening options, and our vision is that the town will once again provide a place

where people can come together to spend time in a range of hospitality settings, with food, drink and laughter sitting comfortably alongside a range of experiences.

From bouldering to art exhibitions to events at the Pannier Market – we need to bring back the sense of Bideford being a great place for both a night out and a day out with friends, family or colleagues!

The designation of Heritage Harbour status for Bideford and the River Torridge in 2024 embodies the exciting opportunity the town faces – blending pride in a rich heritage with a determination to shape a town for an innovative future, a town which plays its part for current and future industries and can attract investment into higher level skills and jobs to help the wider region to thrive.

Heritage Harbour status also evokes the town's long-standing creativity and ingenuity which needs to be fostered, supported and brought to the fore. Our vision is for a town where art and heritage are interactive and part of everyday lives, including within the town's public realm. A Bideford with a cohesive, sustainable arts, culture and heritage identity. And a Bideford with an improved arts infrastructure – from artist studios to



WHY BIDEFORD?

UNESCO Biosphere

Set in the heart of the North Devon UNESCO Biosphere, an **environmental designation** shared with the Serengeti and Hawaii

2 Nationally Recognised Cultural Organisations

Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisations:
The Burton at Bideford and Libraries Unlimited

All of Bideford's schools currently rated good by OFSTED

A Walker's Paradise

Linked to the famous **South West Coast Path** and the locally celebrated **Tarka Trail**

makers' spaces, and a renewed aspiration to provide an extension to Bideford's valued art gallery and museum, The Burton at Bideford. To truly achieve that we need to come together to shape a dynamic Creatives and Community quarter, with The Burton at its heart.

All of this requires old buildings to have new lives, celebrating their heritage and stimulating pride in our beautiful architecture and its stories rather than frustration at its condition.

Bideford cannot shy away from long-standing deprivation issues – but nor should it accept them. Regeneration proposals will therefore place widened opportunities at their forefront. Stimulating improved employment must also come with improving access to the jobs created. The development of a health and wellbeing hub is central to that, allowing coordinated multi-agency partnerships to improve lives and widen participation within our community.

Nor can all of this be possible without considering transport. Parking plays a major role within that. But parking must not impact negatively on people's experiences, either by being too expensive or simply in the wrong place. Distances should be easily walkable and provide a positive pedestrian environment which does not involve dodging cars at every step. Electric charging needs to be easily and conveniently available. Cars will remain important during the course of these 5 years, but public transport, although not within the control of the Regeneration Strategy, must also be improved. This strategy calls for a direct connection to Tiverton Parkway station to enable a journey time of 3 hours from London to Bideford and fully unlock the entrepreneurial and job creation potential of the town.

Our vision is for a town where people young, old and everywhere in between feel at home and feel proud to be part of our community. A town with a plan that people want to be part of.

Welcome to the Bideford Regeneration Strategy – come and get involved!

The purpose of the Strategy



Growth and change can only happen with a coordinated plan involving the alignment of a wide range of partners who will deliver it. A range of foundation-level activities have taken place through the Regeneration Board, but the time is right for far greater ambition and collective delivery.

In 2025 Hardisty Jones Associates were commissioned by Torrington District Council on behalf of the Bideford Regeneration Board to develop a Regeneration Business Case for Bideford. To support this, OCR Architecture were appointed to provide an overall spatial strategy by creating an independent longlist of options for the 'Bideford Regeneration Masterplan Strategy.'

Those original expert documents have been honed and refined to provide this published and adopted Bideford Masterplan – a document to foster change and growth for the good of the local economy, community and environment.

The masterplan is structured around two core elements – the underpinning frameworks of how people move and flow around the town, how the core public realm spaces of the town 'work' and then how future development should improve and enhance experience of the town. Those frameworks then align with the core Pillars of the Bideford Regeneration Strategy to address existing challenges and create the desired impact.

Key Objectives

- To shape a town which our community recognises and can be proud of, addressing the frustrations many feel and enabling more people to shape the town's future.
- To reconnect the town to the River Torrington visually, spatially and economically.
- To make the most of under-utilised assets which need a new lease of life, such as the Pannier Market.
- To create opportunities for all and to use the built form to provide the infrastructure which unlocks our talents.
- To support the local entrepreneurial and independent spirit, shaping spaces for higher-skilled, higher-paid jobs that benefit a wider community.
- To create vibrancy through arts, culture, heritage and the creatives sector within the town and community's everyday lives.
- Making good quality housing available, in particular using currently vacant space.
- To have high environmental standards and improve a sense of the UNESCO Biosphere coming into the town through public realm.
- Creating a high quality, safe environment with public art enhancing an attractive public realm.

The Bideford Regeneration Board: Mission and Remit

The Bideford Regeneration Board was created in 2022 to support the town as it emerged from Covid and the resultant economic shock. Its fundamental founding principle was the ambition to create a shared vision for shared delivery of actions to support regeneration in a world where working together was only going to become more important. The Bideford Regeneration Board has been at the forefront of recent activities and strong foundations have been laid. The Discover Bideford platform has been established; events such as eat: Bideford have brought thousands of residents and visitors into the town; the Launch Bideford entrepreneur programme and social entrepreneur courses have helped new and expanding independent businesses to establish themselves in the heart of the town, such as Devonshire Cork & Vine.



But now is the time for more

In 2025 a new Board came together, refreshing the membership after an open call for new Members to bring together skills in strategy development, finance, governance, marketing, education and place-making to complement the strategic partners of Bideford Town Council, Torridge District Council, Devon County Council, Bideford Bridge Trust, The Burton at Bideford and TTVS.

That new board has set itself a clear mission which is presented through the Bideford Regeneration Strategy 2026 – 2031 and which this masterplan is at the heart of delivering:

- To regenerate Bideford, working with partners, including the private sector, to boost skills, housing and higher-paid, meaningful employment that inspires and retains our local talent.
- To create leadership and make things happen whilst also being committed to ongoing wider engagement and openness.
- To cherish and promote heritage but make it future looking, finding new purposes for old buildings and spaces to bring pride and energy to the town.
- To work together to create a healthy and thriving place and community.
- To allow the character of the town to come to the fore, in particular through arts, culture, heritage and creativity to bring fun, learning and interest into people's lives.
- To shape a town that is sustainable, both environmentally and for cyclical financial sustainability through investment.

More widely, the regional development of clean energy and maritime-related industries along with agritech opportunities provide a once in a lifetime opportunity for Bideford. This spatial masterplan seeks to provide clear frameworks and ambitions to enable the development of projects to support these core needs and address known challenges.

The Five Pillars

PILLAR 1

A Thriving Bideford Quay



AMBITION

- Create a central point of focus for the town with flexible public spaces and a food and drink offer
- Protect future flexible uses for Bideford Port
- Create improved visual impact while preserving car parking and ease of access
- Enable improved access to the water for leisure and wellbeing
- Celebrate local maritime heritage alongside an innovative vision of the future through public art
- Strengthen links between the west and east side of the water

PROJECTS

- Create a public walkway and flexible food and drink offer on Bideford Quay
- Establish a landmark watersports centre
- 'Sea Change' project for public realm
- Connecting town and quay
- Review crossing points and the pedestrian experience at either side of the Long Bridge

PILLAR 2

A Dynamic Market Complex



AMBITION

- Development of "The Market Complex".
- To re-establish a clear purpose for the Pannier Market and a reason for the community to use it

PROJECTS

- Development of the Bideford Market Complex as a bustling events space
- Part-pedestrianisation of Market Place

PILLAR 3

Unleashing Bideford's Entrepreneurial Spirit



AMBITION

- Provide a high-quality central office space to develop a local small business working hub in the heart of the town
- Develop a stronger working network for local businesses
- Work with partners to provide an improved skills offer within the town centre
- Improve footfall in the town centre during and after working hours

PROJECTS

- The New Jobs centre
- Bringing energy to the high street
- The Old Library co-working space
- A new life for vacant buildings
- A high-profile skills centre in the heart of the town
- Bridgeland Street – exploring the feasibility of creating a one-way street

PILLAR 4

Creative And Community Vibrancy



AMBITION

- Create a defined Creatives and Community Quarter surrounding The Burton at Bideford, including The Pill and Rope Walk
- Support The Burton at Bideford expansion ambitions and wider impact
- Provide a focal point for the creatives sector in the wider region, improving working spaces and productivity
- Create a performance venue with flexible community spaces
- Strengthen the town's heritage and innovation brand identity

PROJECTS

- The Burton at Bideford expansion
- High-profile Maker's Space
- Develop a Creatives and Community Quarter branding / design feel
- The Barrel House cinema, performance, community space and radio studio
- 'Sea Change' project for public realm

PILLAR 5

Opportunities For All And Unlocking Our Talent



AMBITION

- Provide improved housing options to support people to live in the town centre
- Bring targeted units back into active use
- High profile skills provision relevant to local employers provided within the heart of Bideford
- Provide better integration for health and well-being services

PROJECTS

- Multi-agency health and wellbeing hub
- A space for our young people
- Engage first and second floors as residential opportunities
- Community infrastructure
- Provide a safer and easier crossing from the town centre towards Bideford College and the Community Hospital
- Review crossing points to improve access between Victoria Park towards the town centre



Main Map Key

- Creative Quarter
- Retail Quarter
- Pannier Market
- The Quay

Inset Map Key

- a** Woolacombe & Putsborough Beach
- b** Croyde Bay Beach
- c** Westward Ho! Beach
- d** Navantia UK Appledore Shipyard
- Alverdiscott National Grid Substation & Yelland National Grid Substation
- UNESCO Biosphere (Pale tint area)
- Trainline to Exeter



Theory of Change

- Creation of workspaces.
- Creation of a high level skills centre
- Bringing vacant units back to life

- Sq m of workspace created
- Skills courses created
- Business support sessions delivered
- Jobs created
- Private sector investment levels
- Footfall count is higher

- More people working in the town centre
- Local businesses able to recruit locally and grow
- Reduced outward migration of businesses
- Higher footfall
- Investment into evening economy
- External investors and funders see the value and appeal in Bideford
- Number of vacant units filled

- Increased productivity and GVA
- Higher average earnings and skill levels for residents
- Improved aspiration levels and youth retention
- Lower Universal Credit claimant rate and lower levels of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)

- Unlock first, second and third floor residential units to address the housing crisis.
- Partner with private sector residential developments

- Residential units created

- 24/7 local vigilance
- Improved access to local housing
- Alignment of resources and strategic application of S106 allocations into future public realm and public art

- Increased volume of people living within the heart of the town
- Lower antisocial behaviour levels

INPUTS

OUTPUTS

OUTCOMES

IMPACTS

- Creation of a high profile Maker's Space
- Redevelopment of the Market Complex
- Public realm and public art improvements, including on Bideford Quay
- Creation of a defined Creatives and Community Quarter
- Improvement of local branding and communications
- Investment into celebration of heritage, including the Bideford and River Torridge Heritage Harbour

- Community engagement responses
- Public and private sector investment into arts, culture and heritage
- Amount of public realm improved
- Skills courses created
- Business support sessions delivered
- Number of works of public art created
- Number of web hits to Discover Bideford and new sign-ups
- Number of heritage assets improved
- Number of local events supported
- Footfall count is higher

- Community feels more aware of local plans and more engaged
- Public realm is greener, more appealing and works better to support dwell and enjoyment
- Bideford is regionally and nationally known for becoming an art and heritage hotspot
- Local Creatives sector able to grow
- Improved local branding and wider perception

- Increased local pride in place and community engagement

- Health and wellbeing hub
- Early diagnostics centre

- Number of people receiving healthcare provision in Bideford
- Number of charities and community organisations working in partnership
- Number of pilot programmes funded

- Improved access to local healthcare
- Reduction in diagnostic timings
- Increased volume of funding secured for health and volunteering charities

- Improved mental health and overall wellbeing levels
- More local residents are involved in community volunteering activities



A Thriving Bideford Quay

The River Torridge shaped Bideford. It is the jewel in the crown of the town, the kind of feature that would be the envy of most places across the country. And yet it currently serves a split role: beautiful car park and place to eat fish and chips as well as hard-standing dumping area for vessels, with the two sections separated by the Lundy Building - itself too frequently a source of antisocial behaviour. Even worse, the quay itself is then harshly separated from the town by the A386. There is so much more that can be achieved.

The quayfront forms part of the working Port of Bideford, a pivotal element of the town's heritage and character. That working Port should not be lost, but nor should the generational opportunity to re-establish the opportunity to shape a place where people are able to enjoy time together along the waterfront.

Providing attractive and positive interventions along the water's edge will help promote enjoyment, wellbeing and vibrancy back into the town centre. Soft and hard landscaping can creatively provide areas of seating as well as enable flexible opportunities to enable both enjoyment and dwell, focusing primarily around Fisherman's Wharf to the north of the Lundy building. Music and events are a key part of Bideford's character yet the space simply does not support them at the moment. A principal goal for the Bideford Regeneration Strategy is to explore what the next phase of the quay's life should be, starting engagement with local traders, water users and the community to then shape future designs and actions. Part of that work will also involve ensuring that people are able to safely and easily access the quayfront, with crossings and access being of paramount importance.

The tidal range of the Torridge means that access for watersports cannot happen 24/7. But improved access, storage and infrastructure improvements need to be explored to reconnect our town with time spent on the water. The Ilfracombe Watersports Centre provides an ideal example for how the provision of a facility can serve to attract activity providers and simply enable more to happen! But for many people enjoying the water does not mean spending time on it. There is nowhere to sit and spend time by the water. Any new watersports centre should also provide a way to enjoy the stunning views and wellbeing impact of being by the water as part of a new landmark for the town.



The perfect place for waterside fun

The quayfront provides the perfect setting for numerous events throughout the year, bringing locals and visitors together. The Water Festival, Food festival and similar events attract people from all over Devon and beyond for....



First steps. Year 1

Reinstate Bideford tidal fountain as a centrepiece for the town.

Events on the Quay are profiled through Discover Bideford.

Undertake community engagement on the future of Fisherman's Wharf (Bideford Quay) with follow-up design proposals created.

Deliver at least 1 piece of public art.

Ambitions Year 5

The quayfront is attractive and accessible, with street surfacing improving the connection to the main town.

A reduction in anti-social behaviour by the strengthening of positive footfall.

A wide range of events and leisure options bring people together along/on the river.

Churn and interest created through starter units with an amazing shop window to the world.

Watersports centre is in use creating improved access to the water.

A Dynamic Market Complex

The Bideford Market Complex is a Grade II Listed landmark with immense potential to become a thriving cultural, social, and economic hub for the town. Its architecture and central location offer character and charm, but the decline of traditional retail, the concentration of shopping on Mill Street, and the market's location at the top of town have contributed to reduced footfall, a sense of separation, and an overall decline in impact on the wellbeing of Bideford.

At the same time, there is a pressing local need: Bideford currently has no large, purpose-equipped events venue. The Market Hall is already licensed for alcohol consumption and approved for hosting dance, film, and live music events, yet its infrastructure requires significant revitalisation if it is to fulfil its potential as the heart of the town's cultural and social infrastructure.

Through investment and strategic planning, Bideford Town Council is advancing a bold vision: transforming the Market Complex into a flexible, multi use venue and economic catalyst serving residents, businesses, and visitors.

Over £1.4m has been secured; investment protecting the building's historic fabric while enabling modernisation. Planned enhancements, such as flexible staging and improved acoustics, will allow the Market Hall to host conferences, trade shows, and cultural events at a scale currently unavailable in North Devon, directly supporting the North Devon and Torridge Economic Strategy.

The small starter units remain a distinctive asset, supporting new and growing businesses. Successes such as Devonshire Cork & Vine and Jack in the Box demonstrate the potential of flexible, experience led retail and hospitality. With new complementary businesses joining and existing traders expanding, Butcher's Row continues to build momentum, positioning the Market Complex as a regional foodie destination and driver of wider economic benefit.

Success must also be measured in community pride. Co designed events, volunteer opportunities, and youth initiatives will ensure the complex reflects local aspirations. While nearby parking supports access, anticipated growth will require additional solutions, which the Town Council is committed to exploring.



First steps. Year 1

- Deliver Phase 1 of the works through the Community Regeneration Partnership.
- Work with the Architectural Heritage Fund to design proposals blending heritage and modern functionality.
- Strengthen trader engagement, increasing the number and diversity of businesses in Butcher's Row.
- Launch a rebranding campaign, positioning the Bideford Market Complex as a new cultural identity for the town.
- Pilot a series of headline events, showcasing the revitalised space and building momentum for future phases.



There's a buzz!

There is a definite buzz around Butcher's row that continues to grow, and with careful appointments will become a vibrant offering to visitors. This approach strengthens the case for positioning the Market Complex as a regional foodie destination, encouraging both churn and innovation while driving wider economic benefits across the town.

Ambitions Year 5

- To establish the Bideford Market Complex, benefitting local businesses, community groups, and the visitor economy.
- To grow complex footfall by at least 50% from pre-investment baselines.
- To achieve full occupancy of Butcher's Row units' encouraging fresh ideas and innovation.
- To host a year-round programme of events, from music and comedy to food festivals, conferences, and community celebrations.
- To become recognised as a regional food and cultural destination.

3 PILLARS

Unleashing Bideford's entrepreneurial spirit

A growing economy depends on accessible places to work and opportunities for dynamic people to come together, share ideas, raise concerns, and spark collaboration. At present, the heart of Bideford lacks spaces and networks that enable this kind of economic and social cohesion. The Bideford Regeneration Board is committed to working in partnership to change that landscape and support a more connected and ambitious local economy.

A vibrant local economy creates momentum. It attracts investment, builds confidence, and shows young people the range of careers available to them locally. It also opens doors for career changers and reinforces the town's entrepreneurial roots. Bideford has long been shaped by small businesses, hard work, and creativity. The success of Node at Roundswell highlights what is possible: high quality, modern workspace paired with on site business support, information about grants and events, and a strong network. These elements boost productivity and competitiveness, yet such a community currently doesn't exist within Bideford town centre. This gap must be actively addressed so businesses can thrive locally rather than being pushed elsewhere.

Large underused buildings, from the Old Library to the Job Centre, offer opportunities. With investment, strong business cases, and the right partners, these buildings could become dynamic, flexible workspaces suited to a range of business needs. While there will never be a one size fits all model, providing high-quality options is essential for supporting both local entrepreneurs and remote workers who choose to live in Bideford but work elsewhere. Expanding workspace provision would also increase daily footfall, strengthening the town centre and benefitting cafés, shops, and the evening economy.

The revitalisation of East-the-Water is another major catalyst. Brunswick Wharf will introduce new homes and commercial spaces, bringing more people who will need places to work, socialise, and shop along with future job creators. Investment in the Royal Hotel will amplify this energy, offering a high quality base for professional visitors and investors.

Socially minded business also has an important role in Bideford's future. The growth of social enterprise and interest in B Corp principles reflect a commitment to local social and environmental impact. The 2024 Social Enterprise course, supported by the Regeneration Board, demonstrated demand and laid foundations for future cohorts aligned with broader ambitions for inclusive opportunity.

Ultimately, Bideford must confidently present itself as a great place to work through positive communications, strong press stories, and a reputation for helping businesses get things done, supported by proactive partnership with Torridge District Council. In short: rolling out the red carpet for growth and investment.



Ambitions Year 5

A variety of office and workspaces offer parking and public transport access.

Old buildings celebrate their heritage, fostering a diverse and supportive community.

Town thrives after 4 PM, especially on Thursdays and Fridays.

All ages can access skills training for career growth and impactful employment.

Many local B Corp businesses demonstrate commitment to social value.

First steps. Year 1

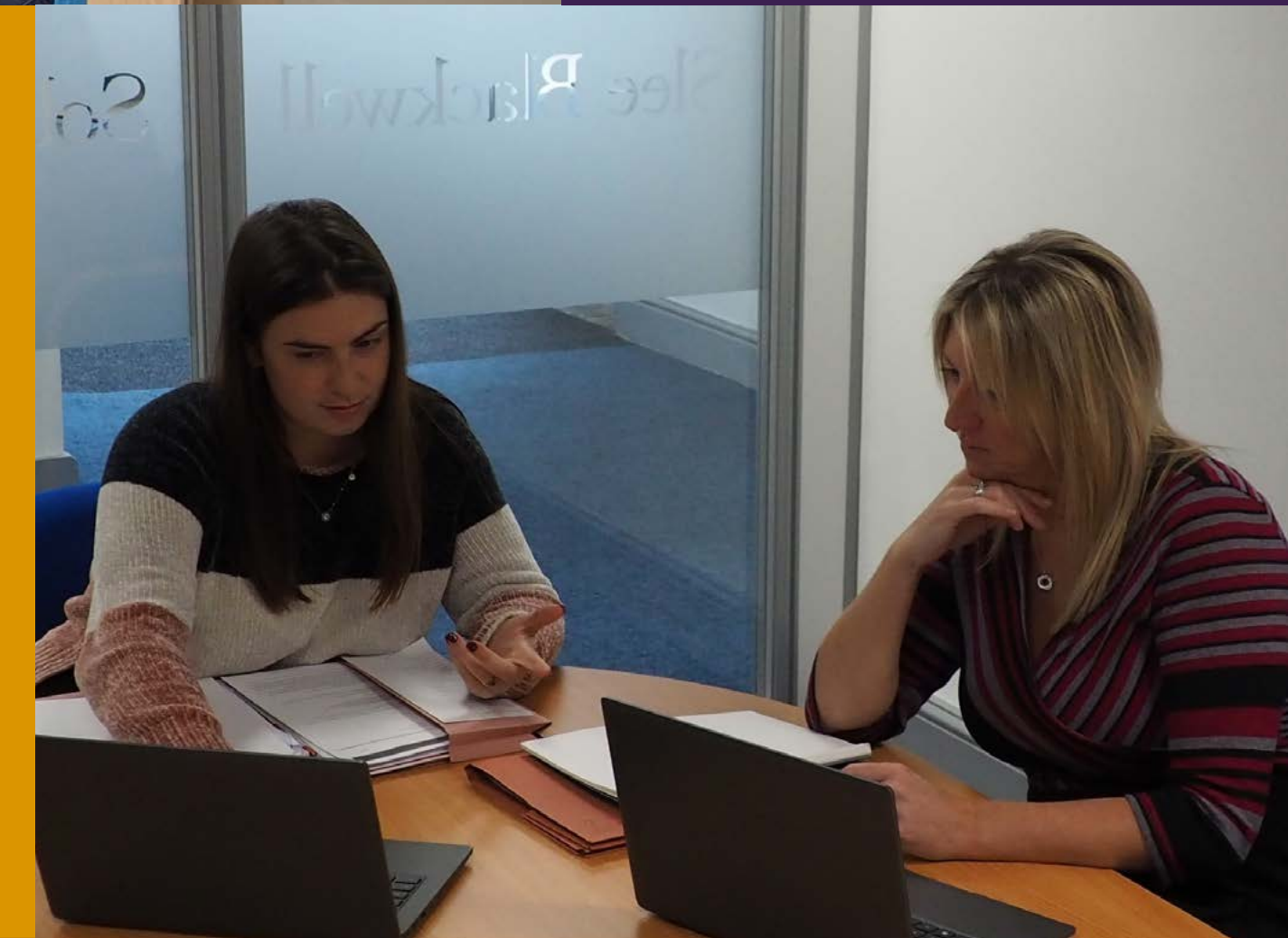
Feasibility work undertaken into at least 1 large-scale work space in the heart of Bideford.

Vacant unit policy delivered for new vacants and those which have been vacant for over 12 months.

Networking events organised to raise awareness and encourage involvement in steering the town's future.

Roundtable event held with the Local Planning Authority to ensure that Bideford is "open for business".

Investment day held to attract support into the heart of the town.



Creative and community vibrancy

Investment into arts, culture, heritage and creativity is far from “money wasted” - it is a direct investment into place-shaping, community wellbeing and a shared sense of identity in an ever-changing world. These sectors are, at their heart, about telling and developing stories, and Bideford is rich with narratives waiting to be explored. For a small town, Bideford is uniquely privileged: it is home to two Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisations The Burton at Bideford and Libraries Unlimited as well as one of only eleven designated Heritage Harbours in the UK. Set within the North Devon UNESCO Biosphere and facing real challenges around climate change and rising sea levels, Bideford offers exceptional storytelling opportunities. This was demonstrated powerfully through the interaction of scientists, artists and policymakers during the 2025 ‘Melting Ice | Rising Tides’ exhibition and symposium at The Burton.

Cultural and community activity in the town is currently dispersed, lacking a central hub and the connectivity that helps creativity flourish. Bideford needs a clearly defined ‘Creatives and Community Quarter’ to support local vibrancy and cross sector collaboration. The Bideford Masterplan proposes new makers’ spaces and artists’ studios near The Burton, alongside exploring an expansion site to showcase more of the museum’s permanent collection. This would create a dynamic, evolving space focused on impact, learning and storytelling.

The town also lacks a large scale performance venue. Theatre and cinema are vital to economic vitality and community wellbeing, and further feasibility work is needed to progress proposals for the Barrel House cinema, performance space and radio studio. The Market Complex likewise has potential to strengthen the town’s music and events offer.

Pillar 4 emphasises widening audiences and participation. The Burton at Bideford already attracts over 160,000 visitors annually, but limited space restricts how much of the collection can be displayed. As throughout the Regeneration Strategy, there is a strong focus on enabling young people to participate, shape local activity and access pathways into meaningful employment. The Burton’s potential expansion and upcoming 75th anniversary provide a major opportunity to support this ambition.

The Bideford Regeneration Strategy calls for creativity and heritage to be celebrated more openly. Numerous underused spaces across the town could become canvases for bringing stories, past, present and future, to life through artwork or digital tools such as virtual reality. Building on approaches used successfully in other maritime communities, a coordinated programme “Sea Change” is envisaged to bring together universities, Arts Council England partners, local industry and the Bideford and Torridge River Heritage Harbour. The ambition is clear: to ensure Bideford understands and celebrates its heritage while remaining confidently forward-facing, ready to welcome maritime and clean energy investment that benefits the community and environment. Public art and signage will have a key role in making the town more accessible, attractive and welcoming.



Investment in the arts, heritage and culture is critical for well-being and a sense of identity

First steps. Year 1

Community conversation started to explore how to tell the story of Bideford’s rich history, including a focus on celebrating key women.

Create a pilot project for Sea Change in the town to highlight Heritage Harbour, future innovation to bring public arts and creativity into the town.

The Burton’s 75th celebrations spark discussions on the town’s cultural future.

The Bottle Kiln in Victoria Park is restored and activated as part of a community celebration.

Ambitions Year 5

Cohesive branding unites the town, shaped by the community’s input.

Art and heritage are interactive, enriching daily life in public spaces.

A strong cultural events program has gained regional recognition.

Improved arts infrastructure includes artist studios and expanded museum spaces.

High-quality performance venues are located in the town center.

Opportunities for all and unlocking our talent

“Our reimagined NHS will be designed to tackle inequalities in both access and outcomes – as well as to give everyone, no matter who they are or where they come from, the means to engage with the NHS on their own terms.”

– NHS 10 Year Health Plan

Bideford has a strong voluntary and community sector, with TTVS at its core. Local organisations consistently highlight rising levels of need, with increasing numbers of residents seeking help for complex, interlinked issues. Mental health services face long waiting lists, and for those most in need the system can feel inaccessible or overwhelming. When support is difficult to reach, people can become trapped in cycles of crisis, self medication and disengagement from the labour market. Although Bideford remains statistically one of the safest places to live in the UK, the strategy calls for collective action to improve outcomes for all, ensuring no one is left behind.

There is a clear ambition to work collaboratively with statutory partners, including the NHS and Department for Work and Pensions. Recent investment into Bideford Hospital through the Community Regeneration Partnership creates a unique opportunity to address the town’s complex health needs in a more integrated way.

Central to this approach is the creation of a Health and Wellbeing Hub at Bideford Hospital. With funding secured, partners including the NHS, TTVS, charities and Torrington District Council are shaping a model that brings the wider local offer into a single accessible building. The aim is to provide coordinated, rapid referrals and remove the confusing pathways that currently deter many residents. A 2025 pilot involving organisations supporting people experiencing homelessness highlighted the urgent need for a single point where health, housing, mental health and substance misuse services can be delivered together.

Alongside the hub, a new Community Diagnostics Centre will help detect conditions earlier and overcome barriers linked to distance – a major benefit for residents.

Bideford’s health and wellbeing work must also build on the town’s strong culture of physical activity. Hundreds of people participate regularly in rugby, football, rowing and running, demonstrating a strong local appetite for active lifestyles.

However, improving health outcomes must go hand in hand with preventing issues from escalating. This includes supporting people to see and access a brighter working future. Strengthening employability is central to this: while schools and providers such as Learn Devon offer guidance, more is needed to help people identify their skills and confidently enter the workforce. Mentoring programmes and greater community involvement can help residents, especially young people, stay local and feel connected to opportunity.

This strategy also commits partners to working with skills providers to expand higher level and vocational training within the town, improving access to better paid employment and enhancing long term life chances for residents of all ages.



Ambitions Year 5

A health and wellbeing hub which is accessible to all, bringing stakeholders together.

Be a place driven by partnerships with evidence of impact leading to better employment.

People know where to go to get physical and mental support, or to upskill.

Plans are developed for a higher level skills provision in the heart of Bideford.



First steps. Year 1

Learn from regional examples such as The Pearl Exchange to support retention of the 18 – 35 demographic in the town.

Support the delivery of a Health and Wellbeing Hub at Bideford Hospital.

To run at least 3 employability courses in Bideford town centre, including confidence-building digital skills, to increase work-readiness.

Lobby for further skills funding, working with education providers and employers in the town.

Monitoring

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

1. A thriving Bideford Quay

Headline	Measurable	Baseline (31st March 2026)	Year 1 goal (2026 - 2027)	Aspiration (2031)
How many people are spending time on the Quay?	Footfall counter			
Community attitude to the Quay?	Survey			
Volume of events held on the Quay?	Discover Bideford listings			

2. A dynamic Market complex

Headline	Measurable	Baseline (31st March 2026)	Year 1 goal (2026 - 2027)	Aspiration (2031)
How many people are spending time at the Pannier Market?	Footfall counter			
Community attitude to the Pannier Market?	Survey			
How well used are the units?	Vacant unit count			
How well used is the Market Complex?	Volume of events			

3. Unleashing Bideford's entrepreneurial spirit

Headline	Measurable	Baseline (31st March 2026)	Year 1 goal (2026 - 2027)	Aspiration (2031)
How many people are spending time in the town centre	Footfall counter on Mill Street			
Workspace availability	Volume of street-facing shared office / co-working spaces provided			
A networked town	Number of people attending networking sessions (annual total)			
A well-used town	Number of vacant units			

4. Creative and community vibrancy

Headline	Measurable	Baseline (31st March 2026)	Year 1 goal (2026 - 2027)	Aspiration (2031)
A creative town	Visitor numbers to The Burton at Bideford			
A making town	Number of creatives working within the town centre			
A creative town	Volume of public art commissioned within the town centre			
A growing town	Investment secured into cultural and creative infrastructure			

5. Opportunities for all and unlocking our talent

Headline	Measurable	Baseline (31st March 2026)	Year 1 goal (2026 - 2027)	Aspiration (2031)
Creative a more skilled community	Number of people completing courses delivered in Bideford moving them closer to work			
Delivering inclusive employment and skills opportunities	Number of people taking part in activities that support them towards employment			
Creating a more skilled Bideford business community	Number of businesses directly supported the the Work, Skills and Sector Development Plan			
Develop and deliver a strategic Work, Skills and Sector Development plan for Bideford	Volume of funded partnership projects towards targeted outcomes			

Action Plan Year 1 Pillar 1

Pillar 1. A thriving Bideford Quay

Objective	Action	Lead	Partners	To be completed by
To improve public realm in Bideford town centre	Create a pilot project for Sea Change public realm on Bideford Quay to highlight heritage harbour, future innovation and to bring public art and creativity into everyday lives	Torrige District Council – Cultural Development Officer, Estates team	The Burton at Bideford Heritage Harbour North Devon Maritime Network	August 2026
To improve public realm in Bideford town centre	Reinstate Bideford tidal fountain	Torrige District Council		April 2026
To analyse the impact of onstreet parking on the High Street	Engage with Devon Highways to create clear parameters and understanding to of the potential for parking adaptations on High Street	Torrige District Council – Head of Communities and Place	Bideford Town Council	November 2026
To secure investment funding for quayside spaces in Bideford	To develop a fully costed design scheme for Fisherman's Wharf	Torrige District Council – Economic Development Manager		December 2026
To maximise the impact of events on Bideford Quay	Opportunities for push notifications for Discover Bideford are scoped and explored	Torrige District Council – Economic Development Communications Officer	Bideford Town Council The Burton at Bideford	May 2026
To secure investment funding for quayside spaces in Bideford	Undertake community engagement on initial Fisherman's Wharf design proposals	Torrige District Council		May 2026

Action Plan Year 1 Pillar 2

Pillar 2. A dynamic Market complex

Objective	Action	Lead	Partners	To be completed by
Pannier Market refurbishment and modernisation – delivery of Community Regeneration Partnership funding	Timber roof structure repair followed by roof renewal Rainwater disposal system upgrade Exterior masonry maintenance Plumbing, heating and electrical minor upgrades	Bideford Town Council	Torrige District Council	March 2027
Re-establish a clear purpose and strategy for the Pannier Market and create a compelling reason for the community to use it	Secure development and capital funding for modernisation alterations in the Market Hall to target a range of events including conferences and private events, ensuring sustainable income generation Establish a co-designed community events programme involving schools, youth organisations, local artists, and community groups, ensuring inclusivity	Bideford Town Council	Torrige District Council	March 2027
Strengthen the economic role of Butcher's Row and starter units	Maintain 100% occupancy of Butcher's Row units with food, drink and experience-led businesses Establish themed trading days and seasonal markets to reinforce identity (e.g. artisan food, producers' markets, Christmas market)	Bideford Town Council	Torrige District Council	March 2027
Improve access, connectivity and public realm	Undertake feasibility and community engagement processes to establish the benefits of part-pedestrianisation of Market Place Enhance wayfinding and visual connections between Mill Street, the Quay and the Market Complex to address perceived separation Explore additional parking solutions and shared-use arrangements to accommodate increased footfall	Torrige District Council / Devon County Council	Bideford Town Council	March 2027

Action Plan Year 1 Pillar 3

Pillar 3. Unleashing Bideford's entrepreneurial spirit

Objective	Action	Lead	Partners	To be completed by
To create a range of workspaces for the local business community	Feasibility explorations undertaken into the development of a large-scale workspace in the heart of Bideford	Torridge District Council		May 2026
To create a more vibrant entrepreneurial community in Bideford	To host a roundtable event with the local Planning Authority, agents, architects and investors to ensure that Bideford is 'open for business'	Torridge District Council	Devon County Council	June 2026
To create a more active town centre	To develop a vacant unit policy for both for new vacant units and those which have been vacant for over 12 months	Torridge District Council	Devon County Council	May 2026
To create a more vibrant entrepreneurial community in Bideford	Organise at least 2 networking events in Bideford town centre	Torridge District Council		December 2026
To create a more vibrant entrepreneurial community in Bideford	Publish an investment deck for Bideford	Torridge District Council	Bideford Town Council Devon County Council	July 2026
To create a more vibrant entrepreneurial community in Bideford	Host an investment day for Bideford	Torridge District Council	Bideford Town Council Devon County Council	August 2026

Action Plan Year 1 Pillar 4

Pillar 4. Creative and community vibrancy

Objective	Action	Lead	Partners	To be completed by
To improve public realm in Bideford town centre	A community conversation is started to explore opportunities to tell the story of Bideford's rich history in public realm spaces, including a focus on celebrating key women from Bideford's history.	Burton at Bideford	Building owner Torridge District Council Bideford Town Council Bideford Bridge Trust Heritage Harbour	February 2026
To improve public realm in Bideford town centre	Create a pilot project for Sea Change public realm on Bideford Quay	Torridge District Council – Cultural Development Officer, Estates team	Burton at Bideford Heritage Harbour North Devon Maritime Network	August 2026
To improve wayfinding in Bideford town centre	Undertake at least 3 wayfinding and public realm interventions on the Quay and at key points around the town to tell stories of past and future and improve how people discover Bideford.	Torridge District Council	Bideford Town Council Burton at Bideford Bideford Bridge Trust Bideford and Torridge Heritage Harbour	March 2027
To define the strategic importance and scope of a potential watersports centre	Engage with key water users to define need and opportunity for Bideford water-sports centre	Torridge District Council - Community Engagement Project Officer		March 2027
To improve public realm in Bideford town centre	Restore and activate the Bottle Kiln in Victoria Park as part of The Burton's 75th anniversary, bringing together the community in a unique celebration event.	Burton at Bideford	Torridge District Council	Autumn 2026

Action Plan Year 1 Pillar 5

Pillar 5. Opportunities for all and unlocking our talent

Objective	Action	Lead	Partners	To be completed by
Health and wellbeing pilot delivered	Deliver the Community Regeneration Partnership funded Health and Wellbeing Hub within Bideford Hospital	Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	TTVS Torridge District Council	December 2026
Early diagnostics centre	Create an early-diagnostics centre at Bideford hospital to reduce travel times for Bideford residents	Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	TTVS Charities / community organisations	March 2027
Skills lobbying	Lobby the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority to ensure skills funding is directed towards Bideford Run x courses by...	Torridge District Council		November 2025
Scope young people's space project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a steering group to scope the need and potential for a young people's space in Bideford (18-35) 2. Visit The Pearl Exchange in Bude to learn more about the journey and process. 3. Create an open meeting to gauge initial community interest. 4. Develop proposals for a pilot project including identified building/space 	The Burton at Bideford	Torridge District Council Bideford Town Council Heritage Harbour	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. April 2026 2. May 2026 3. June 2026 4. July 2026



For Further Information:

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To discuss specific opportunities or to arrange a visit, including with any of the key organisations or clusters listed:

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