

BIDEFORD TOWN COUNCIL



Town Hall
Bideford
Devon
EX39 2HS

Telephone:
Bideford (01237) 428817/8

Paul Swan
Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

Thursday 28 November 2024

To: Members of the Market Management Committee

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of **Market Management Committee** of the above-named Council to be held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Bideford, on **Thursday 5 December 2024 at 6.30 pm** for the purpose of transacting the following business.

In accordance with The Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 members of the public are welcome to attend. There is a legal right to film/record/photograph/report public meetings.

Paul Swan
Clerk to the Council

AGENDA

1. To receive apologies and reasons for absence.
2. To receive declarations of interest on items on the agenda and note any requests for dispensation received by the Clerk prior to the meeting. Enc
3. Public participation session of 15 minutes duration on items on the agenda.
4. To approve the minutes of the Meeting held on 24 October 2024 as a correct record. Enc
5. Accounts - To approve the payments listed. Enc
6. Chairman's / Market Administrator's Report.
7. To receive an update on the financial performance to the end of November 2024. To follow

8. Market Hall.
 - a. To discuss the potential of the Market Hall facility, including opportunities, investment, promotion, future (business) plans and its position in the Community.
 - b. To consider and resolve upon the merit and viability of replacing the Southern Electric Market Hall entrance doors including costs of removal / replacement and funding. Cllr Bushby/
E mail
 - c. To consider and resolve upon the Café facility, repair and refurbishment. E mail
9. To consider the Real Ideas Interim Report, establish whether satisfied to proceed with the final element, or not, and resolve accordingly. Enc
10. Tenant / Trader representatives.

11. **PART II (Closed Session)**

12. **To resolve to exclude members of the public and the press to progress a matter of a confidential nature under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings Act) 1960 and Local Government Act 1972, ss 100 and 102.**
13. Chairman’s Report – confidential, including staffing, matters.
14. Tenant / Trader.
 - a. To receive any terminations of leases by tenants / traders, give consideration to applications received for tenancies of premises and resolve accordingly.
 - b. To consider and resolve upon tenant / trader / landlord matters including correspondence received questioning tenant business practices. E Mail

MARKET MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Councillors:	Bushby C Hawkins K Hind	Ms R Clarke (Town Mayor) J Hellyer	Mrs J Gubb Mrs L Hellyer
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Traders/Tenants: Mrs Austin

Date of Next Meeting: 16 January 2025

Declaration of Interests at meetings

- Where a matter relates to an interest in list A, the member shall not participate in a discussion or vote on the matter. He /she only need declare it if it is not already noted on the register of interests.
- Where the matter is in list A, but is a sensitive interest, the member shall not participate in a discussion or vote; the member shall disclose that there is an interest but not the nature of it.
- Where a matter relates to an interest on list B the member shall not vote and may only speak as a member of the public.
- A member only has to declare an interest in list B if it is not already on the register of interests.
- If the interest is in list B and is sensitive in nature and not already registered then the member shall disclose the interest but not the nature of it.
- Where a matter relates to the financial interest of a friend, relative or close associate (other than in list A) the member shall disclose the interest and not vote. He or she may speak but only as a member of the public.

List A:

- 1 **Employment, office, trade or vocation** – carried on for profit by member or spouse or civil partner.
- 2 **Sponsorship** – any payments for the previous 12 months, other than by the Council, to assist in Council duties
- 3 **Contracts** – any current contracts between the Council and the member or his/ her spouse or civil partner or a company the member is a director or partner of.
4. **Land** – any beneficial interest in land within the area of the Council by member, spouse or civil partner.
- 5 **Licenses** - any license, alone or with others, by spouse, civil partner or member to occupy land in area of Council.
- 6 **Corporate Tenancies** - any tenancy where the Council is the landlord and the member, spouse or civil partner has a beneficial interest in the tenant.
7. **Securities** – a beneficial interest is held in a body that has land or business in the area of the Council by the member, spouse or civil partner that either exceeds £25,000 or the total share capital is in excess of one hundredth of the of the total shares issued.

List B:

Any interests which relate to or is likely to affect:

1. Any body where the member has general control or management and was appointed by the Council.
2. Any body that the member is in a position of control or management and either:
 - (a) exercises functions of a public nature;
 - (b) is for charitable purposes; or
 - (c) has the purpose of influencing public opinion or policy (including political parties and trade unions)
3. Any gifts or hospitality that the member has received by virtue of his or her office in excess of £50.

*Further details can be found in the Bidford Town Council Code of Conduct
adopted 21.06.2012*



BIDEFORD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Market Management Committee

held in the Council Chamber of the Town Hall on,

Thursday 24 October 2024 at 6.360 pm

PRESENT:	North Ward:	Councillor D Bushby Councillor K Hind
	East Ward:	Councillor J McKenzie (substitute for Councillor Ms R Clarke) Councillor J Hellyer Councillor Mrs L Hellyer
	West Ward	Councillor T Inch (substitute for Councillor Mrs J Gubb) Councillor C Hawkins
	Market Complex	Mrs K Austin Mr P Jeffers
IN ATTENDANCE:		Mr R Coombes (Deputy Town Clerk) 1 x Tenant 2 x Public

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING

Prior to the commencement of the Meeting it was established that neither the Chairman nor Deputy Chairman were in attendance.

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Hellyer, seconded by Councillor McKenzie and

RESOLVED: That Councillor Hind assume the Chair for the duration of the Meeting.

(Vote – For: 7, Against: 0)

50. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors Ms R Clarke (South Ward – personal) and Mrs J Gubb (East Ward - personal).

51. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND ANY REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

There were no declarations of interest.

52. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION OF 15 MINUTES DURATION**

None.

53. **MINUTES**

Proposed by Councillor Mrs Hellyer and seconded by Councillor Hawkins, the Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 September 2024 were approved and signed as a correct record.

(Vote – For: 5, Abstention: 0, Against: 2)

54. **ACCOUNTS**

It was proposed by Councillor Hawkins and seconded by Councillor McKenzie, and

RESOLVED: That the lists of payments for 24 October 2024 be approved.

(Vote – For: 7, Against: 0)

55. **CHAIRMAN’S / MARKET ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT**

- a. Bustling Market. Councillor J Hellyer had seen detail from a coach firm providing a two day visit to the area including RHS Garden Rosemoor and the Bideford Pannier Market.

The Clerk advised that SWEMS had agreed to run a “a bustling” Event on 24 June 2025.

- b. Real Ideas. The Interim Report was circulated to Members after the publication of the Agenda. The Town Clerk had negotiated a phased payment schedule, at the outset, based on both parties satisfaction (to mitigate any risk).

Members agreed to formally address the report at the next Meeting, on 5 December 2024, to resolve whether or not to commit to a further payment and commission the final element of the report, on the basis of what has been received to date.

- c. Net receipt payment. TDC’s “self-insurance,” insurers provided for a net payment of £240 (after excess deduction) following shop unit water damage.

56. **DRAFT BUDGET 2025/6**

The Chairman led Members to review the Rent element of the budget in the first instance.

- a. Rent Review.

Proposed by Councillor T Inch, seconded by Councillor Mrs L Hellyer and

RECOMMENDED: That a rental increase of two per cent be implemented effective 1 April 2025; the resultant tariffs are either rounded up, or down, to the nearest

pound. That each tenant / trader is advised accordingly.

(Vote: – For: 5, Against: 2, Abstention: 1)

b. Draft Budget 2025 – 2026.

Members previously had sight of the Draft Budget Document.

Members discussed and ascertained the elements that made up the budget.

Proposed by Councillor T Inch, seconded by Councillor Bushby and

RECOMMENDED: That the Draft Market Budget 2025/2026 be supported by the Council.

(Vote: – For: 6, Against: 1)

57. **TENANT / TRADER REPRESENTATIVE**

The Clerk stated that Mr Jeffers had advised that he “will be stepping back,” as a Representative for personal reasons.

To receive reports/requests:

- a. That the “eaves” of Butcher’s Row be cleaned as the Christmas Decorations are put in placed. Members concurred.
- b. Confirmation was given that at the Signing of the Lease element of the “Victorian / Frost Fair,” to be held on Saturday 14 December 2024, mince pies and “Market” mead would be distributed by the councillors / Civic Party.
- c. The Perspex boards normally present in the Market Place entrance of Butcher’s Row be reinstated. Members concurred.
- d. That the Notice Board cork is replaced, as previously agreed.
- e. That £150.00 from the “Special Projects,” budgeted fund is invested in new additional Christmas Decorations (that would be reused for the future). Members expressed their agreement.

58. **PART II (CLOSED SESSION)**

The Chairman thanked the Market Tenants for their attendance and contributions.

Proposed by Councillor T Inch, seconded and

RESOLVED: To exclude members of the public and the press to progress matters of a confidential nature under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings Act) 1960 and Local Government Act 1972, ss 100 and 102.

(Vote – For: 7, Against: 0)

59. **CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

There was no report.

60. **TENANT / TRADER**

a. Terminations / Applications.

The Clerk advised that two very promising applications had been received for 13 /14 and 20 Butcher’s Row. Interviews have been arranged.

b. Tenant matters.

The Clerk confirmed receipt of the penultimate payment in lieu of rental arrears.

The Clerk provided detail of concerns raised by a Tenant questioning tenant business practices.

Members requested full sight of the correspondence with a view to consideration at the Meeting to be held on 5 December 2024.

The business of the meeting having been completed, the Chairman thanked the members for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 7.41 pm.

Signature of Town Mayor: Date:

Signature of Chairman: Date:



BIDEFORD TOWN COUNCIL - Accounts for approval at the Market Management Committee Meeting - 24 October 2024

Number (All)

Row	Date Entered	PV	Description	Extended Description	Net	VAT	Gross
1	30/09/2024	BSPM17	Llyds	Service Charges	32.56		32.56
2			TDC	Premises Licence	70.00		70.00
3			Coastal Recycling	Waste removal	175.15		175.15
4	01/10/2024	BSPM18	TV Licence	(blank)	13.25		13.25
5			Mkt recharge	TC staff costs	3,482.36		3,482.36
6	02/09/2024	BSPM16	Vodafone	Phone charges	26.49	5.30	31.79
7	04/09/2024	BSPM15	Nicholsons	Hygiene Items	160.38	32.08	192.46
8			SWW	Water / sewerage charges	106.03		106.03
9	09/09/2024	(blank)	Triangle	Broadband / line	61.66	12.33	73.99
10	17/09/2024	(blank)	EDF (995)	Electricity	168.18	8.41	176.59
11	26/09/2024	(blank)	Bideford Cobblers and Keys	Key cutting	59.00		59.00
12	02/10/2024	(blank)	RGB	Maintenance Items	3.85	0.77	4.62
13	03/10/2024	(blank)	Tamar Trading	Maintenance Items	707.60	141.52	849.12
14			EDF (985)	Gas	18.99	0.95	19.94
15	04/10/2024	(blank)	J Fisher	8 x secure bldg	300.00		300.00
16		BSPM19	Vodafone	Phone charges	26.49	5.30	31.79
17	11/10/2024	(blank)	Realideas	Report Stage Payment	2,925.00	585.00	3,510.00
18	24/10/2024	(blank)	Lloyds	Service Charges	12.05		12.05
19	Grand Total				8,349.04	791.66	9,140.70

Bank Balances at 24/10/2024 - Current Account £ 9,711.28
 Bank Balances at 24/10/2024 - Deposit Account £ 39,033.17

Pannier Market Expenditure Against Budget

<u>Income</u>	<u>Budget</u> <u>2024/25</u>	<u>As At</u> <u>24/10/2024</u>	<u>Budget</u> <u>2025/26</u>
Market Stalls	4,000.00	-	
Market Shops	-	2,394.60	4,000.00
Butcher's Row	34,157.65	19,088.44	32,717.52
Perimeter shops	29,400.39	14,667.58	33,811.78
Deposits	-	1,552.00	
Other Events	10,886.65	6,879.62	8,000.00
Services	2,000.00	1,552.17	4,000.00
Interest On Investments	1,375.00	287.94	400.00
General Income	2,500.00	8,238.01	10,000.00
Total	84,319.69	54,660.36	92,929.30
Expenditure			
Re-charge	42,179.48	33,078.18	43866.66
Advertising	200.00	1,043.14	500.00
Equipment	2,000.00	2,163.25	4,000.00
Cleaning/Maintenance	20,000.00	16,031.45	20,000.00
Services	5,000.00	3,370.80	7,000.00
Bank Charges	475.00	267.05	475.00
Insurance/Rates/Rent	5,500.00	162.75	5,500.00
General (incl. Memberships)	2,575.00	941.95	2,575.00
Training	700.00	-	700.00
Promotions/ Special projects	5,500.00	4,140.00	13,500.00
Total	84,129.48	61,198.57	98,116.66
Balances			
Profit/(loss)	190.20	- 6,538.21	- 5,187.36
RoS	0.2%	-12.0%	-5.6%

AHC

9 (7)

8

1

1

4

1

	Rent	2%	plus ridd	BR	Peri
Single Unit	£135.00	£2.70	£138	£ 964	£ 275
Double Unit	£216.00	£4.32	£220	£ 1,763	
Store Room	£162.00	£3.24	£165		£ 165
Triple Shop	£566.40	£11.33	£578		£ 578
Shop front	£343.00	£6.86	£350		£ 1,399
Shop front + single unit	£392.00	£7.84	£400		£ 400
				£ 2,726	£ 2,818
				£ 32,718	£ 33,812

inc AHC expen



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18	24/10/2024	(blank)	Lloyds	Service Charges	12.05		12.05
19	Grand Total				8,349.04	791.66	9,140.70

Bank Balances at 28/11/2024 - Current Account
 Bank Balances at 28/11/2024 - Deposit Account

£ 6,090.40
 £ 39,306.57

Bideford Pannier Market

FINANCIAL UPDATE



30/11/24 Performance Reporting 2024/25

Budget Monitoring - Revenue

Pro Rata Budget £	Actual Year To Date £	Function	Full Year Budget £	Full Year Projection £	Adverse To Budget Favourable To Budget	Status
28,120	40,043	Recharge	42,179	60,064	(17,885)	🔴
133	1,043	Adverts	200	1,565	(1,365)	🔴
1,333	2,735	Equipment	2,000	4,102	(2,102)	🔴
13,333	16,717	Cleaning Maintenance	20,000	25,075	(5,075)	🔴
3,333	3,643	Electricity / Water / Communicati	5,000	5,465	(465)	🔴
317	280	Bank Charges	475	421	54	🟢
3,667	0	Insurance	5,500	0	5,500	🟢
1,717	193	Memberships	2,575	289	2,286	🟢
467	658	Training	700	987	(287)	🔴
3,667	0	Projects	5,500	0	5,500	🟢
0	4,648	General	0	6,972	(6,972)	🔴
(2,667)	(2,707)	Income-Market	(4,000)	(4,061)	61	🟡
(22,772)	(25,271)	Income-Butchers Row	(34,158)	(37,907)	3,749	🔴
(19,600)	(15,697)	Income-Shops	(29,400)	(23,545)	(5,856)	🟢
(7,258)	(8,230)	Income-Events	(10,887)	(12,344)	1,458	🔴
(1,333)	(1,913)	Income-Services	(2,000)	(2,870)	870	🔴
(917)	(2,145)	Income-Interest	(1,375)	(3,218)	1,843	🔴
(1,667)	(8,252)	Income-General	(2,500)	(8,378)	5,878	🔴
(127)	5,745	TOTAL	(190)	12,618	(12,808)	🔴

Includes £10k not charged FY 23/24.

Budget Monitoring - Earmarked Reserves

Reserves	Balance on April 1st £	Receipts to date £	Spend to date £	Transfer +/-	Proposed Allocation of 24/25 Underspend	Balance £
Market Reserve Account	46,738	0	15,432	8,000	0	39,307
Earmarked Revenue Reserves	46,738	0	15,432	8,000	0	39,307

Investments

Short Term Deposits	Amount £	Trade	Ethical Investment Y/N	Notional Cost
Account 07153511 (Commercial Instant Access Account)	39,307	1.30%	N	0
Subtotal - Short Term Treasury Deposits	39,307			
Account 0421383 (Market Current Account)	6,305	0.00%	N	0
Subtotal - Short Term Current Accounts	6,305			
Total on Deposit	45,611			

Options & Basic Feasibility Study Bideford Pannier Market

Stage One Report – Initial Finding

Real Ideas Organisation

September 2024



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1.0 About this Document

This document is the first initial output of the Options & Basic Feasibility Study for Bideford Pannier Market, commissioned by Bideford Town Council.

Having experienced a period of decline, there is an ambition to reimagine and reinvigorate the Pannier Market. Alongside more traditional market uses, the ideas of “creating additional space for creative start-ups, cultural activities and events, and a communal place for people to eat, work and connect” have been discussed.

Over Stage One, Real Ideas have undertaken the following activities.

User group analysis and market assessment – largely based on a review of existing current research and development materials and augmented by a number of direct structured conversation engagements with identified key stakeholders.

Strategic fit and complementary development – again a smaller work package that largely draws on existing literature and local knowledge, and underlined with a number of key conversations, this will be important to situate the development thinking within the town’s wider evolving plans and aspirations.

2.0 User Group Analysis and Market Assessment

In line with the brief, existing research reports, strategies and data for Bideford and in cases Torrridge and the sub-region, have been reviewed. A high-level summary of this literature is listed below.

2.1 Literature Review

Though not fully comprehensive, the principal existing research, documents and data reviewed as part of this exercise are listed in Table 1. below.

Table 1. Summary of desk-based research

No.	Document	Date of issue
1.	Lightcast Data – extract: Arts and Culture Occupations Torrridge (owner and occupiers)	Jan 2024
2.	Lightcast Data – extract: Arts and Culture Industry Overview Torrridge	Jan 2024
3.	Lightcast Data – extract: Arts, Culture & Digital job postings Jan 23 – Jan 24 Torrridge	Jan 2024
4.	Bideford Methodist Church Feasibility Study	May 2024
5.	Bideford Library & Town Hall Vision and Feasibility Report Draft	Nov 2022
6.	Bideford Regeneration Strategy	Oct 2022
7.	Flourishing Culture The Northern Devon Cultural Strategy	Sept 2022
8.	Bideford Cultural Strategy	May 2024
9.	Onion Collective FHSF Community Engagement Findings	May 2023
10.	Hilton Barnfield Issac’s Yard Proposal	2021
11.	Discover Bideford Website	N/A
12.	Issac’s Yard Commercial Brief	2019

13.	Bideford Regeneration Strategy Economic Development Officer's Report	March 2023
14.	Bideford Profile of Associational Life	July 2021
15.	South Molton Profile of Associational Life	April 2021
16.	Index of Multiple Deprivation	Sept 2019
17.	Bideford North, East and West Ward Profiles	N/A census 2021
18.	Pannier Market existing design/layout, tenant list and P&L data	Aug 2024
The above reports reference data from a range of primary sources. In places this data has been accessed more directly, where primary sources include ONS Census 2021, and 2024 data, The Audience Agency, Torrridge Employment Space Analysis, Jooble, ILiveHere and Polimapper, Mosaic and a range of organisational website.		

2.2 Analysis & Summary of Existing Material

As illustrated in Table 1, a substantial body of data, strategic documents, and studies has been developed in and around Bideford. Much of this material remains current and significant.

Research, stakeholder engagement, consultation, and subsequent evidence-led planning are essential for crafting informed and robust shared plans for communities like Bideford. Such efforts are fundamental in unlocking the necessary funding and investment required to transform plans into reality and to effect the desired changes.

While comprehensive data and effective engagement are critical for addressing the challenges and opportunities faced by rural coastal towns like Bideford, the success of initiatives—such as the aim to revitalize the Pannier Market—depends equally on partnership, leadership, vision, inclusivity, and innovative market stimulation. These initiatives must not only respond to existing market needs but also proactively create demand.

This report does not seek to reproduce all findings, data, tables, and graphs from existing reports, as that would merely reiterate what is already known. Instead, a selection of relevant points are referenced and highlighted below. Additionally, consideration is given to the complexity of the research landscape and the potentially contestable nature of the data.

2.2.1 Culture and Creative Industries

According to the 2023 Bideford Cultural Strategy, culture—encompassing arts, heritage, sport, food, and other elements that enrich the local experience—is vital for Bideford. The creative industries, which include the making, producing, designing, digital and selling of products and services, also play a crucial role. While it is important to view culture and creative industries through an economic lens—considering job creation, skills development, business growth, Gross Value Added (GVA), and visitor footfall, etc.,—it is equally valid to assess their impact and value from a social perspective. This perspective encompasses contributions to learning, well-being, community cohesion, and placemaking, all of which have downstream economic benefits.

However, when examining culture and creative industries in Bideford, Torrridge, and Northern Devon, a duality emerges, presenting a potentially contestable picture. On one hand, there is a strong sense of community, bolstered by a vibrant annual events programme, high levels of independent shops and self-employment, and the presence of robust NPOs such as The

Burton. Furthermore, the local artist and maker community, reportedly numbering around 400, is said to have one of the highest densities in the UK, second only to London and Cornwall. The PEC Mapping the UK's Creative Industries report of 2020 recognizes 117 creative businesses in Bideford.

While these aspects present a significant opportunity and are worth celebrating, there are also vulnerabilities. There are a few NPOs driving development, there are challenges related to skills development, career pathways, and broader educational attainment. Additionally, concerns exist regarding the commercial viability of some cultural activities, compounded by ongoing cost of living issues. Many makers report difficulties, particularly related to the affordability of studio space, and there is a widely noted lack of cultural spaces or hubs that facilitate innovation, making, selling, collaboration, learning, and experiencing culture and the creative industries.

Documents such as the Bideford Cultural Strategy, the Flourishing Culture Report, the Bideford Library and Town Hall Feasibility Study, the Bideford Regeneration Strategy, consultation efforts by the Onion Collective, and recent sector analyses recognize that culture and creative industries present both significant opportunities and pressing needs for practitioners, the sector, businesses, the town, and the communities of Bideford.



2.2.2 Enterprise, High Streets & Economy

Building on discussions about the value and needs of culture and related industries, existing documentation—particularly the Bideford Regeneration Strategy—provides valuable insights into the current state of Bideford's town centre, high streets, and broader business environment. This context again reveals both opportunities and challenges.

The changing nature of the nation's high streets is well-documented, highlighting the growth of out-of-town and online shopping driving an increase in high street vacancies and declining property conditions. Bideford is not exceptional in this regard; in 2022, the reported vacancy rate was 10.2%. While this figure is below the national average, it is understood to be a modest estimate that masks the significant impact of larger vacant units. Previous research has also identified challenges related to the cost of living and a limited evening and nighttime economy, as well as a disproportionately high level of out-commuting.

The broader socio-economic picture indicates that Bideford is underperforming on various economic indices. According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), Income Deprivation, Employment, and Education in Bideford North rank better than only 15%, 9%, and 18% of areas nationally, respectively. Employment sector data shows that, aside from the usual significant rural employment sectors of health and education, the largest sector in 2020 was wholesale

and retail trade (including motor vehicle repairs, etc.), followed by accommodation and food services, which are disproportionately high compared to other regions in Devon.

ONS Census data from 2021 reveals that the economically active but unemployed population constitute 2.8% and 3.0% of the populations in the West Bideford and North Bideford wards, respectively. These figures are slightly higher than the Torridge average of 2.4% and the Devon



average of 2.3%, with these groups predominantly comprising of long-term unemployed individuals.

Despite this challenging economic landscape characterized by lower skills and lower wages, there are positive aspects, including job creation, local wealth, and tourism. While specific visitor numbers for Bideford

are not readily available, northern Devon attracts approximately 6 million visitors annually, benefitting Bideford. Additionally, the built-up area has a resident population of around 20,000 plus, providing a local customer base. Significant developments around the Appledore Clean Maritime Innovation Centre, offshore wind and the associated economic benefit also represent a substantial opportunity.

Regarding occupational distribution, the North Bideford Ward exhibits a reasonable variety of occupations, arguably better than Torridge but falling behind the Devon average. Skilled trades and caring, leisure, and other service occupations represent 29.8% of the workforce, while higher-paying roles—such as managers, directors, senior officials, and professionals—constitute 34.3% of occupations (ONS Census data, 2021).

A cursory review of job postings on Joodle indicates that the average annual salary for positions advertised in Bideford over the past week is £30,057. While this figure is lower than Barnstaple's average of £34,886, it is considerably higher than South Molton's £25,280, a relevant comparison that is returned to later.

Reports, including the Bideford Cultural Strategy, project an increase in the Northern Devon population by 2043, particularly within the 65+ age bracket. This raises questions about to what extent this growth indicates an influx of retirees with disposable income.

Historical data from the ONS (2020) suggests an increase in business births from 200 to 360 annually between 2015 and 2020. However, the sustainability of this trend, especially in the post-COVID landscape, remains uncertain, with further data being sought. Anecdotal evidence from Torridge District Council (TDC) points to a waiting list for offices and units at the Caddsdawn development, indicating a limited stock within the town centre and a lack of prominent office offerings.

The overall economic landscape and trends affecting Bideford's high street reflect challenges faced by many coastal towns across the UK. This complex picture of opportunity and need highlights the contested nature of the data available. In such circumstances, data-driven

approaches often fail to reveal a clear market gap that initiatives can easily address. However, Bideford's strategic responses indicate a positive direction.

The Bideford Library and Town Hall Feasibility Study emphasizes the town's relative lack of "third spaces," which are crucial for social, leisure, cultural, and community activities in the town centre. These spaces are increasingly important, as high streets such as Bideford's, are driven by a need to shift towards more experiential and social offerings, in response to established online and out-of-town shopping trends.

The study references previous plans that call for a broader range of rentable spaces for community workshops, cultural events, and evening activities. It makes strong conceptual recommendations for creating flexible workspaces for the creative industries, alongside cultural and educational programming, community areas, and food and beverage options. This approach aims to provide an 18-hour offer that appeals to a diverse range of users, spanning different ages and interests. These proposals align with calls in the Bideford Cultural Strategy for increased cultural spaces.

Further recognition is found in the Bideford Regeneration Strategy, which notes a specific lack of activities and experiences in the town centre, as well as a need for indoor event spaces and opportunities for more people to work in the town, either from home or in co-working spaces. The Pannier Market is mentioned multiple times, identified as under-utilised and with potential for greater use as a venue for events, markets, and retail experiences.

The consultation and engagement conducted by the Onion Collective has highlighted community concerns and opportunities related to underused assets like the Pannier Market, focusing on agency and enterprise, particularly social enterprise. The lack of entrepreneurial activity and associated enterprise spaces is identified as a collective issue, with proposed solutions emphasizing start-up support and the creation of co-working spaces, specifically for social enterprises that address wider social issues.

These arguments were further reinforced by the stakeholder engagement process, enhancing the richness of the data and beginning to point toward practical actions. Additionally, a significant theme in the existing literature relevant to the Pannier Market is the importance of community.

2.2.3 Community, Society & Social Value

Here the review of existing material, data, past and current plans and studies, continues to paint a mixed picture of challenges and opportunities for Bideford and its wider environs – again this is not unusual.

The challenges facing Bideford are well-documented. For instance, data on household deprivation—considering education, employment, housing, and health—indicates that Bideford North, East, West, and South generally score worse than both the wider Torridge and Devon regions. Notably, there is a higher proportion of households experiencing two or more dimensions of deprivation, as evidenced by the ONS Census 2021.

In response to these challenges, the Bideford Regeneration Strategy highlights opportunities for repurposing underused buildings to support "community functions" and the "wider promotion of community projects."

The importance of community is further underscored in the Town Hall Visioning and Feasibility Study. This study references the Coop Community Wellbeing Index, which scores Bideford below the UK average (52), at 39, specifically regarding relationships and trust. It emphasizes the need to view town centre heritage buildings as community assets and highlights the lack of community activities in the town centre, calling for the creation of spaces that foster community engagement. The study concludes with recommendations for developing a multi-use community hub that facilitates learning and activities.

While the Coop Community Wellbeing Index may portray Bideford unfavourably in some areas—an assessment that could be contested—the HJA Bideford Regeneration Strategy recognizes the town’s “close community” as a significant strength.

The Onion Collective's "Knowing Bideford" presentation (which is worthy of ongoing reference <https://bit.ly/KnowingBideford>), part of the Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) study, enriches this understanding by providing detailed insights into community dynamics. The presentation emphasizes the need to support social requirements, particularly for older and younger demographics, and advocates for the creation of multi-use, inclusive spaces that cater to a diverse range of organizations and activities.



It is evident that Bideford faces significant community and social needs, particularly in areas such as education, health, wellbeing, and community cohesion. These needs have negatively impacted the local economy, influencing factors such as skills development, job creation, start-ups, and community wealth. This creates a cyclical issue: neglecting social and community needs ultimately hinders economic growth, further compounding existing social challenges.

Conversely, while these challenges may necessitate intervention and investment, it is essential to recognize that communities themselves represent a valuable asset. When individuals are engaged and inspired, they participate, connect, learn, initiate projects, and contribute economically.

2.2.4 Literature Review Summary

In accordance with the brief, a comprehensive review of existing research and development materials has been conducted. The existing data, including graphs, reports, and studies, is extensive. With a particular focus on the Pannier Market, a selective summary has been provided above, which begins to delineate three complementary and overlapping thematic areas: culture, enterprise, and community.

Examples from East Quay in Watchet, Trowbridge Town Hall, Devonport Market Hall, and the Plot on Plymouth’s Union Street, illustrate how these three pillars have been instrumental in driving successful investments and fostering ongoing commercial success for community-facing social enterprises.

Notably, all these communities face significant socio-economic challenges, many of which are similar to, or in some cases, more severe than those experienced by Bideford. While several of these initiatives are based in larger communities, one is situated in a considerably smaller locale. A key commonality among these ventures is that none emerged from clear, incontrovertible local economic data indicating a straightforward market gap to address. Rather, they were developed in response to market failures that are evident in neighbourhoods, high streets, and towns across the country—issues that closely mirror the challenges currently confronting Bideford.

The success of these initiatives has also been characterized by key elements such as engagement, partnership, leadership, vision, social value, and entrepreneurship. These aspects represent less tangible, yet crucial, human concepts that require a qualitative, relational approach. An approach which we have begun to develop here, through a set of direct structured conversation engagements with key stakeholders. The outcomes of which are discussed in the following section.

3.0 Stakeholder Engagements

In addition to the review of existing current research and development materials, a good number of direct structure conversations and engagement were undertaken with key stakeholders. Stakeholders engaged are listed in Table 2. Below.

Table 2a. Stakeholders Engaged

Name	Organisation
Kim Tilbrook, Paschale Straiton* and Fiona	Red Herring Theatre. * Culture, Heritage and Arts Sub-Group of Bideford Regeneration Board
Rachel Clarke	Mayor - Bideford
Paul Swan	Town Clarke - Bideford
Richard Coombes	Deputy Town Clarke - Bideford
Andy Branston	Youth Worker Space Bideford
Phil Parker & Hilary Beecroft	Art Makers CIC and Culture, Heritage and Arts Sub-Group of Bideford Regeneration Board
Llinos Gale	London House Studio and Gallery
Karen Austin	Mother Clucking Farm & stall holder at Butchers Row
Mark Clarke and Rob	Up Close Theatre
Nick and Louise Wiseman	Appledore Music Fest
Carole Evans	The Burton
Dean	Shar-kade/Hadoken
Claire Gulliver and Kirsty Defranceski	Torridge District Council
Beki Sharples and Danny Owens	TTVS

Table 2b. Stakeholders reached out to, but not interviewed as yet*

Name	Organisation
Mark Wallace	Beaford Arts
Rupert Butcher	Grind Supply Co.
Naomi Beckwith Vice Principal, (inc. art teacher)	Bideford College

Abi	Sage Apothecary & stall holder at Butchers Row
Harriet Cooper	Newly appointed Director at The Burton.

* Given the nature of the brief, particularly the sub-aim of “creating the possibility of surfacing early-stage partners and collaborators”, it is arguably counter-productive to pursue and chase potential contributors too hard. Furthermore, a number of other contacts have been suggested and/or have contributed. How these additional stakeholders are managed and engaged, can be the subject of further discussion and agreed future action.

3.1 Stakeholder Engagements Process

The stakeholders engaged as part of this process are detailed in Table 2a above. This list, while loosely informed, was not fully prescriptive; by nature, it was exploratory and partially organic, with contributors frequently recommending additional stakeholders for consultation and facilitating new connections.

Overall, the response rate was satisfactory, though several concerns merit attention. A number of stakeholders did not respond to the outreach efforts. While it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions from this, there was a subtle indication of what may be characterized as a lack of confidence, goodwill, or trust among some participants. It is important not to overemphasize this observation; however, several respondents explicitly noted feelings of “consultation fatigue”, citing their involvement in numerous similar discussions in the past. This sentiment appears valid, particularly in light of the substantial existing local research and studies that have been explored here.

The engagement process utilized structured conversations to help ensure that all participants were broadly addressing the same key topics. This approach facilitated the development of a more collective understanding of the issues at hand.

The questions that guided the conversations are as follows.

- 1) Tell me about your work/work in Bideford?**
 - a. What are the current challenges and opportunities?**
- 2) What do you know about Bideford Pannier Market?**
 - a. What works well?**
 - b. What could be better/improved (what doesn't work?)**
 - c. What are the barriers to improvements? (physical/capital, policy, etc.)**
 - d. How could it be improved?**
- 3) How could greater access to the Pannier Market for you/your organisation/beneficiaries be of benefit:**
 - a. For your work?**
 - b. For your beneficiaries/customers?**
 - c. For the town? (blue sky thinking!!)**
- 4) Would you be interested in being involved in further conversations?**
- 5) Who else locally do you think would be good/useful to talk to?**

While the structured conversation format was not entirely applicable to all participants, and with people making the points they want to make, a bulleted summary of all conversations is provided in Appendix I.

Throughout the engagement process, a Chatham House Rule-like approach was adopted towards openness and confidentiality. Consequently, individual statements have not been clearly attributed to specific participants or organizations, except in cases where attribution is necessary or unavoidable.

In light of the themes that emerged from the literature review, a set of key points has been extracted from the feedback received during the conversations. These findings are outlined and discussed in the following section.

As with the literature review process, the feedback from stakeholders presents a substantial amount of data. However, vitally, this engagement has begun to move the process from a very broad breadth of information to a narrower focus and increasing depth and insight.

An interpretation and selection of the most salient points are given below.

1. **Enthusiasm:** Despite some "consultation fatigue," nearly all participants expressed a strong desire to engage further in the process. Many voiced a commitment to actively shaping the future of the Pannier Market, highlighting the cultural, community, and enterprising retail sectors as valuable assets and essential partners moving forward.
2. **History.** There is a reported history of poor-quality interventions (play area) and missed opportunities (Created Festival), which have dented quality and confidence. A more imaginative, "can-do" approach is needed going forward, where "yes" should be the default position.
3. **Performance:** There is a vibrant local performance scene, including music, theatre, and talk-based events, which could enhance the Pannier Market's appeal. There is also collective need. Need for space for performance, creative development, training, and workshops, requiring both relationship and operational development and capital interventions.
4. **Makers.** There is a very significant local community of artists and craft makers, with varying degrees of commercial retail potential. As with more performance-based arts, this also presents an opportunity and a set of needs. Questions of affordability and commercial viability need to be considered.
5. **Churn:** The current mix of tenants in Butchers Row and the surrounding shops is viewed in a very mixed way. While some businesses are strong and well-managed, others are perceived as "hobbyist" ventures with less customer engagement. There are more concerning reports from past and current tenants' social media activity, a lack of presence and some negative behaviours. Moving towards a more positive curation, churn and retail/tenant mix is complex and sensitive.
6. **Community.** As with the local cultural and creative industries sectors, Bideford's community and its associated sector present both a real opportunity and a set of needs. There is a good sense of community and community services, much of which blends with the cultural sector, through events and celebrations. There are also clearly a set of local social challenges and associated issues of deprivation, and corresponding needs within the voluntary sectors for space, resources and for closer working and ideas of a community hub. These organisations, in addition to solving problems, bring people together and animate spaces, they can also access additional and different forms of funding. Again, this

presents an opportunity for the Pannier Market, within which sits the possibility to further develop the more socially enterprising end of the sector.

7. **Partnership:** Stakeholders reported positive examples of collaboration across public, private, and third sectors. Yet, issues of reported disconnection and insufficient communication still persist. Strengthening partnerships and fostering trust will be crucial for the Pannier Market's success.
8. **Skills:** The need to improve the local skills and training offer, and educational outcomes, is well made and clearly apparent through the wealth of recent research data and studies. What is less clear within these reports is the wealth of local skills and potential providers, particularly within the cultural and creative sectors and the good work already happening. While this is a resource and service to be developed, again there is also need, particularly around areas of business support, diversity of offer, entrepreneurship and social enterprise.
9. **Action:** While commendable work is underway regarding Bideford's regeneration, there is a sentiment that discussions have been overly focused on talk rather than action. An action-research approach, emphasizing "test and learn" strategies, could be beneficial.
10. **Design.** Evidently the current design, layout and facilities within the market hall do not currently work and do not work for the majority of the possibilities outlined above. A good list of challenges around the existing design of the space, as well as suggestions, have been offered. These include improvements and alterations to the heating, lighting, acoustics, sound attenuation, general ambiance, signage and interpretation have all been put forward. As has the general size and nature of the space. Consideration needs to be given to the possibilities of flexible sub-division, the creation of additional smaller spaces for working, workshops, training, meetings, activities and retail space have been highlighted.
11. **Marketing:** While efforts are being made in marketing, participants noted the need for clearer messaging about what is being promoted. Defining the marketing focus remains a challenge.
12. **Markets.** Importantly, significant discussion was given over to the idea of markets, the potential challenges, examples of what works, the need for markets and the role of markets in community life. The mixed performance of the external and internal units within the building came through well from participants, and while these areas remain fixed, it was clear that the market hall was the area in need of change. What was also noted was the historical role the Pannier Market played as an economic engine, allowing for a space where many businesses started as market stalls, progressed to units, with many of them ultimately moving on to the town's high street. This economic pipeline felt important. What is also apparent from the responses in Appendix I is that the list of what doesn't work is considerably longer than the list of what does. A variety of positive suggestions were made for additional mixed and some more single uses. There was also a significant view that an exclusively commercial approach to reviving more traditional market usage was unlikely to be successful.

4.0 Can a Market Work?

The Bideford Pannier Market faces complex challenges that cannot be addressed through a singular solution. While further research may yield additional insights, the prevalence of complex and contradictory data often results in inaction among town councils. However, Bideford is committed to a proactive approach, emphasizing the potential for collaborative and complementary activities to rejuvenate the market.

What has emerged from the stakeholder engagement is a set of overlapping, complementary activities, that we know from other examples, can and often do work well together. Though, with a set of established retail offers within Butcher’s Row, and the exterior units, and good new practice in place and developing, where does the idea of a more traditional retail market sit within this? Can a market still work within the main market hall?

Bideford Town Council (BTC), highlighted the example of South Molton Pannier Market as an example of success and best practice, recognized nationally for its successful food and craft markets held bi-weekly on Thursdays and Saturdays (<https://www.southmoltonpanniermarket.co.uk/>). What is also of note, and highlighted by engagement participant TTVS, is Skate Molton CIC (<https://skatemolton.co.uk/>), a partner community and cultural project, that brings a range of community additional services to the market hall and has recently secured additional Big Lottery Funding.

While a more detailed case study is beyond the scope of this exercise, this is worthy of some further thought. Particularly as skaters associated with Grind Supplies already make use of Bideford Pannier Market and with the Born to Skate project based a Bideford College. A preliminary comparison of Bideford and South Molton Pannier Markets is provided in Table 3 below. This analysis highlights key differences and similarities, facilitating a better understanding of potential strategies for Bideford’s market revitalization.

Table 3. Comparing Bideford and South Molton

Factor	Bideford	South Molton	Ref
Population (BUA)	19,490	6,225	1
Demographics	Relative higher population of younger and old, less working age, growing older.	Relative higher population of younger and old, less working age.	2
IMD score	3424	4181	3
Working age poverty	13.10%	10%	4
Levels of no qualifications	Bid (N) 18%, 20.5% Bid (W)	19.4%	5
Unemployment	Bid (N) 3% (W) 2.6%	2.4% (North Devon)	6
Avg. Advertised Salary Sept 24	£30,057	£25,280	7
Second home ownership	2.28%	3.11%	8
Advertised Airbnbs	43	9	9
Pannier Markets			
Location	Town Centre	Town Centre	

Accessibility	Largely accessible building, but barrier of the hill	Accessible building
Out of town shopping	Significant out-of-town shopping opportunities	Limited access to out-of-town shopping
Mix of uses	More limited cultural and community use	Mixed community and cultural use
Historical context	Port Town	Market Town
Websites	Reasonable website, limited content	Reasonable website, more up to date and better content
Facebook	Up to date, positive, 2.9k likes 3.6k followers, limited variety some variants	Up to date, positive, 4k likes 5.6k followers, more variety, Some variants.

1. Towns and cities, characteristics of built-up areas, England and Wales: Census 2021 - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk.)
2. Bideford Cultural Strategy & Profiles of Associational Life Bideford and South Molton.
3. Profiles of Associational Life Bideford and South Molton.
4. Profiles of Associational Life Bideford and South Molton.
5. ONS Census 2021
6. ONS 2024 & ONS Census 2021
7. <https://uk.jobble.org/salary/full-time/>
8. People Population and Community ONS 2024
9. Airbnb Sept 2024 5km area

The insights we draw from the comparison in table 3 are twofold. Firstly that, economically, Bideford and South Molton are relatively similar. While South Molton performs better in some respects, lower levels of general deprivation and working age poverty, conversely Bideford has a larger BUA population and current advertise salaries are higher. It is probably fair to assume the amounts of disposable income are not too dissimilar.

Secondly, the context and content of the Pannier Markets vary more, with South Molton having less accessibility issues, more content and wider community and cultural activity and a related better Facebook presence.

A conclusion could be that there is an argument to retain an element of traditional market provision. Not only could this have a degree of economic viability, but the presence of the fixed shop units partially requires this, and the way that the market has historically driven business development of the town's high street, emphasises the important role it plays as part of Bideford's economic infrastructure. Bideford's higher level of self-employment has been noted and its level of independent shops has been remarked on and is clearly valued. Furthermore, the option of pop-up, niche and destination markets and similar such festival events (i.e. Created) was drawn attention to during the process, which feels like an opportunity to develop and not preclude. Finally, the removal of cherished, albeit underutilized, shared social infrastructure—such as libraries and parks—often meets with significant community resistance, underscoring the importance of preserving and enhancing spaces that foster social interaction and economic activity.

However, a purely commercial approach to reestablishing sole market retail activity is not likely to be successful and will require significant investment, the type of which is harder to envisage. While funding opportunities of this type are currently less apparent, the cultural and community sectors offer different and additional investment routes. This creates the opportunity, and the need, to bring these provisions together, providing a synergy and creating the type of success that is seen in other places.

The question therefore becomes more one of *how* to begin to introduce higher levels of community and cultural usage, in a risk managed way, while retaining a sufficient element of optional market retail usage? And, how to effectively adapt the building to better allow for this in a flexible yet quality way?

The final part of this puzzle for Stage One is to consider Bideford's wider strategic capital programme, and to situate any emerging thinking around the Pannier Market within this. How can the Pannier Market strategically fit within Bideford, and complement other developments in the town's thinking, planning or current delivery? How to promote synergy, address gaps in provision and avoid unnecessary conflict and competition? This is particularly relevant when we consider how community assets such as the Pannier Market do, and need to, evolve over time.

5.0 Strategic Fit and Complementary Development

The literature review process, coupled with insights gathered from stakeholder conversations, reveals that there is a considerable amount of effective planning, community engagement, and informed capital development currently underway in Bideford and its surrounding areas. It is essential that any strategic considerations regarding the Pannier Market take these initiatives into account. This approach will not only help avoid potential duplication of efforts but also address any identified market and community gaps. Furthermore, it will facilitate the identification of opportunities where thoughtful developments at the Pannier Market can support, inform and advance future projects.

To do this, a number of capital developments have been considered and subject to some analysis, identifying potential overlaps and gaps. This has then been augmented by other perceived gaps, identified through the engagement process. From here a clearer set of unmet needs and opportunities have been identified.

These developments, market gaps and opportunities are presented in table 4 below.

Table 4. Capital Pipeline, Services, Gaps & Opportunities Matrix

Capital Projects & Pipeline	Delivery Stage	Services/offer
Bideford Town Hall & Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering: on site, capital delivery underway. • Business plan and operators in place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport/gym provision in library space, public offer operated by Active Devon. • Clean/dry co-working and workspace in town hall GF, inc. office kitchen and facilities. • Town council functions to be retained.
Methodist Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspirational: architecture-led scheme produced – RIBA Stage 1 Feasibility Report. • This is an inspiring and solid report, however, in the absence of the necessary, business and operational design and without a clear leader for the project, and capital funding identified, this remains at the conceptual stage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of complementary services and offers are suggested, including: immersive visitor experiences, performance space, co-working and makerspaces, gallery and games spaces, private office, editing suites, activity and event spaces, outdoor community hub and assumed food offer. • This is a slick, aspirational professional space, and while it has community facing functions, it feels characteristically “clean” and will be a substantial business to make stack-up.
The Burton at Bideford Arts Gallery and Museum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspirational: while largely at the aspiration stage, the Burton is particularly well regarded, their current building is full and they have plans for inspirational architectural developments and potential needs for additional and/or meanwhile space usage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gallery and museum exhibition. • Public and visitor facing. • Café • Creative industry programmes. • Limited retail
TTVS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspirational: while still at the aspirational conversation stage, it is clear from TTVS that their current building is reaching the end in terms of being fit for purpose. They 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of community facing services including: financial support, support for careers, training delivery, community developers, befriending support, volunteering, etc.

	have aspirations for a larger multi-use town centre community hub.	
Caddsdwn Business Support Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered. Though the centre at Caddesdown has been open and operational for many years. It is worthy of note that the centre is full and there is a waiting list for business space. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studios and offices. • Work units. • Conference rooms. • Private business use only.
Gaps & Opportunities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative/social “wet” workspace: While the successful operation at Caddsdwn and the current delivery at the Town Hall make a good provision in terms of business space, workspace and co-working, these catered to the more traditional or dry/clean end of the business spectrum. In addition to a noted lack of business space within the town centre, more inclusive, community feeling or cultural/creative making space, for rougher making and social enterprising activity, represents a gap. • Evolution: While the aspirational architectural plans for the Methodist Church are impressive and ambitious, reportedly providing something for everybody and providing a solution to many of Bideford’s cultural needs, in the absence of apparent leaders, operational and financial plans, and the necessary significant capital investment, it is hard to envisage a project such as this coming forward within a minimum of the next five years. In addition to creating more immediate need, this creates real opportunity for the Pannier Market to play a developmental lynch-pin role, in bringing potential partners together, to learn and develop and to test new ways of working. Developing this mixed, cultural, community and enterprising approach now, may well prove vital in securing future ambitions. • Synergy: While some elements of community and voluntary provision, cultural activity and enterprising endeavours, do not blend together, many do – work with young people, tackling isolation, training, skills, employability, performance, music, creative, digital, enterprise, food and retail, etc, etc., can all benefit significantly from shared provision and co-location. The prior Evolution argument, equally applies to the needs and ambitions of TTVS and The Burton. • High Street Audit: The ongoing vacant unit audit being undertaken in Bideford is recognised and commended here. While this audit is a vital first step to understanding opportunities, taking effective subsequent action can prove more difficult, though innovative approaches are emerging. For now, it is important to recognise this process and to consider the redevelopment of the Pannier Market within it. 		

6.0 Preliminary Conclusion

The extensive body of existing research and the significant level of stakeholder engagement both indicate a compelling case for the introduction of increased cultural and community activities within the Pannier Market, while simultaneously maintaining the flexibility to continue complementary market trading. The concept of "creating additional space for creative start-ups, cultural activities and events, as well as a communal area for people to eat, work, and connect," is not only a sound strategy but also one that now has potential partners identified for its realization.

The Pannier Market needs to be viewed as much as social infrastructure, as it does a commercial asset. Viewing it exclusively through a commercial property lens may create barriers to its success. Conversely, adopting a perspective that incorporates social value and impact—especially in the short to medium term—may be critical to unlocking long-term commercial viability. This will mean partnering with a range of organisations. While some of these organisations have commercially successful elements, many will have models that depend and draw on forms of public funding. This is both a challenge and an opportunity, needs to be met as well as access to new sources of investment. TDC's current Place Partnership bid – Sea Change – presents one such example and opportunity. An ambitious largely revenue programme that draws a range of partners together to deliver on a set of shared ambitions.

The overarching question and challenge now lie not in identifying what actions to take, but in determining how to implement these actions effectively, with a focus on quality and risk management. The process must transition from a broad exploration of diverse information to a more focused collaboration with engaged partners. This entails shifting from a conceptual understanding of "what" needs to be done to a practical execution of "how" to achieve it—moving from scope to scale and from research to action.

How to achieve this seems increasingly clear, and there are useful examples to point to and experience practitioners to draw on. This will be given attention in Stage Two.

Appendix I

Stakeholder Engagement Feedback

Tell me about your work/work in Bideford.

- Outdoor performance and outdoor arts company.
- Runs annual Stepping Out Festival (Sept 2024)– exploring familiar places in unfamiliar ways.
- Funding from ACE £83k, £10k landmark, £4.5 Libraries unlimited
- Undertake national and international commissions.
- Building up local productions, links to ANOB and school projects
- Grow a good community cast in Bideford.
- Lots of work focussed on play – Egg Shack.
- Currently focussed on developing work for Mill Street and the Jubilee.
- Hair dressing super busy, good clientele base which creates plenty of new recommendations.
- Makes soap at the market, as well as sell been there for over a year.
- Combination of making, services and selling.
- Five Star Arcade Business
- Runs pin fest – pin ball festival.
- Big and growing demand for arcade activity/spaces.
- Only done two social media posts with 9k views and 5k subscriptions, with 7k views.
- Serious concerns about the water damage from flood, worried about going under if not sorted.
- Currently completing Phase 1 vacant shops audit, with Save the High Street.
- Looking into the feasibility study around the options for a community hub in Bideford.
- Capital scoping workshop planned in Bideford for the 9th Oct.
- Ongoing bid to the Places Partnership, focussed on making better link better green offshore developments and culture and heritage in the town.
- Work to the Town Hall and Library progressing and being delivered, with a gym offer with Active Torridge in the old Library space and a clean/dry workspace in the Town Hall ground floor with loos and service kitchen. First floor still being developed with structural and roof issues being resolved. Chamber and Town council offices to remain.
- Methodist Chapel has an aspirational architectural scheme, but not business plan or case or clear leaders in place.
- Burton has ambitions to connect better with the town and possible architectural developments.
- Market belongs to TDC peppercorn rent to BTC, with 1F/T staff member.
- Town rangers, look after market (maintenance etc.)
- Between then have over 40 years experiences of working in the community development space, from London, Stoke and Liverpool.
- Been in Bideford for 7-8 years
- Art Makers came out of a reaction to covid. Lots of artists and freelancers and need for gallery and social space.
- However, don't get paid for 15-20 days of work per month. Lots of voluntary which seems unsustainable.

- Feeling that commercial galleries cannot work in northern Devon, though just about working Ilfracombe.
- Though Northern Devon has a very large number of artists, 3rd after London and Cornwall(?).
- Background in teaching, technical college ceramics and art teacher.
- History of running newsletter, PR company and photography.
- Hotel Management Experience, lots of events, particular with London Underground.
- Combine creative and business background.
- Set up pottery studio in Bideford, adjacent to Pannier Market.
- Louise working since 18 now 66. Retired here, in 2020.
- **Away** and came back, been in Bideford for 35 years
- Work and run an amateur theatre company, I have a professional background, prominent plays but not that well known
- Use village halls and variety of small venues across region. Only sometimes in Bideford due to venues
- Have done 22 plays over 10 years – performed at Queens Barn and Northcott Theatre
- Lead youth worker. Run team and youth provision, three open access sessions that are age specific each week.
- We deliver 1-1 work, liaise between people and school, PCSOs to give young people voice.
- Work with referrals from PCC referrals and deliver targeted approaches to ASB.

What are the current challenges and opportunities?

- The organisation often appears in lots of photo/local publicity, but not credited.
- Locally feels like there is a level of disjointedness (between organisations, councils, etc., though good working relationship with Claire Gulliver).
- Good link with Burton and Space.
- Really keen to keep developing training locally, better training offer for performance/skills, etc. Increased Devon development focus.
- Lots of amateur theatre, keen to develop a more professional sector.
- Need training and development space to develop work/performances.
- Needs storage space, training spaces, office and play space.
- There is a strong tradition of community events, while this is a positive, there is a lack of professional work and a wider public expectation of not paying for things.
- Historically a good new-years events, looking to revive, however issue with fireworks (scaring birds?) and drunk people in the river.
- Bideford still feel like the high street has enough of an independent feel. Its unique, with not too many chains – this could be built on?
- Already has bit of an arty identity, this could be built on?
- Events tend to be siloed from everything else – not enough cross working.
- Arts/Heritage/Culture group within Regeneration Board is good.
- Higher level of high street vacancies.
- Wider issue of Bideford feeling like the poor cousin to Barnstaple – overlooked.
- Town used to be bigger hub.
- Mill Street is good.
- Though more widely, lots of empty shops with many in disrepair/look poor

- New Look left.
- Lots in private ownership, no maintenance and is killing the high street.
- Eat Festival (Oct) – Really good/food – why not in Pannier Market? Some events cancelled due to poor weather.
- Good local community/cultural programme: Bideford's got Talent, Soapbox Darby, Regatta, Cardboard boats, Light Switch on (£8k pa with 4000ppl).
- Bideford is still in decline, with big franchises moving out.
- Low-income area, in bottom 20% IMD
- Torridge often gets overlooked in the North Devon conversation.
- Though good/better record of lobbying to get a focus on Torridge.
- Gallery largely runs on volunteers with bigger programmes developed through grants.
- Wider collective of arts is undertreat, with only between 20-30 surviving professionally on artwork.
- Sector needs more studio space (but not affordable)
- Better marketing
- Have issue with footfall, less bus routes.
- Lack of coordination between marketing activity and bus routes/services.
- Need and opportunity to develop the Methodist – needs to link here.
- Only a low-level additional demand for artist studio, due to affordability, and growing offers in Barnstaple Boutport Street. Current 6 – 8 spaces locally.
- Bridge House – developing co-work
- Creative community struggling in Bideford.
- People like us are often requested to contribute to plans/studies, but all for free.
- Arts Heritage and Culture Board, good but too much talking.
- Appledore village, small and lively, unlike some other places, three pubs with music with free music, and a church hall,
- Appledore social club has unfortunately closed down, Bideford palladium and Big Sheep do gigs through the year.
- They are both involved in organising events
- Most musicians are armatures, there are a few that make a living.
- The Appledore music festival first happened this year and the book festival seems to attract people from all over the county.
- Suggested that Barnstaple works better for music and culture as more spaces exist.
- There are some good little shops in Bideford
- There is a good number of folk musicians, blues in the area and other mixed genre of music, such as friend that plays jazz New Orleans Sax players, Peter Hay – Torridge Cllr, plays Blues, there are some punk and R&B bands.
- Music festival – had an "introducing" stage,
- Pub – the Cham – Appledore, Adrian is the owner – worked with young people, and come along to open mic night,
- Nick parker, folk, daughter does music therapy – now away to uni
- We have a lack of members due to no venue – need a venue to survive
- TDC sold the library that could have been a venue – that's a real shame
- No theatre groups – just 1-2 now that are community run in the area
- Have to tour due to cost and lack of viable Bideford venues

What do you know about Bideford Pannier Markets

What works well?

- Doing cross promotions with other business, contra deals and sell each other's products.
- Work with Abi, good example of working together.
- Marketing committee very supportive.
- Harry/potter, John/wood and sweet shop – all good and do well/ok.
- Some events work well up there: boxing, soapbox derby, etc.
- Pannier Market available for hires, including weddings £75-£100/day £350 weddings
- New vetting dragon's den style approach to curating shop is good and some good outcomes: Abi (herb shop).
- Good destination and experiential businesses: Karen/Motherclucker and hairdressing, Skarkade and Hakoden (bookable only?)
- Skaters book every Weds evening – good.
- Historically, the Pannier Market has been an important business development route for shops on the high street. Frequently, business have started with a market stall in the hall, progressed to the shops and Butchers Row and then progressed onto the high street. Many market hall alumni still have shops in Bideford. However, the entry end of the pipeline is now broken.
- Historically, back 2018, lots of great artisans' shop in front of building: potter, blacksmith, stained glass.
- Some traders well marketed, making and selling work.
- Some events popular as tie into crowds, boxing, some small traders are useful.
- Space is nice, could work well for the right purpose.

What could be better/improved (what doesn't work?)

- Not sure what happens there.
- Don't understand the relationship between, Butchers Row, the market and different managers?
- Passing trade very limited.
- Few traders very negative on social media – making things worse.
- Poor events/markets at market hall, have made things worse and now spiralled down too far. Not great organisation.
- Wider lack of people working together.
- Some traders don't come in regularly, not open every day, not there. This creates a bad experience for people, creates a compounding circular problem.
- Elements of bullying? Other traders. Get some out?
- Markets alone, in traditional sense never going to happen.
- Needs something people want.
- Stop crap one off ideas, needs programme of activity.
- Market needs better imagination and creative programming.
- Was struggling before covid, but that killed it off. Efforts but some stall holder to revive market has not gone well.
- Market Area not working – tinsel and tat
- Butchers Row – mixed, some business which don't attract footfall (sweetshop, v negative)
- The big issue is the hall.

- Café opens sporadically and not a great offer
- Rates/rents are low – are they too low?
- Café offer in main hall is poor and rarely open.
- Can't see Pannier Market on its own – linked to local shops.
- Needs to be seen as a must see/visit venue.
- Not just retail but social.
- Ongoing negative voices from past traders.
- Sought to put on Crated Festival at Pannier Market, council not interested, so took it to Big Sheep.
- Photo exhibition by the Burton was good, but poor coordination with a market event that came in. Tables position badly.
- The space is very big and very tall.
- Even with 40 stalls/table, still feels empty, need at least 70 to feel busy.
- Now overly dominate by lower end of arts market.
- Got worse since Italian restaurant moved downhill.
- Needs better quality images and permanent display.
- Lacks quality interpretation.
- Need meeting room space.
- It's underused and dead most of the time, with little promo or advertising.
- Barnstaple seems to be trying to do more, things like drumming workshop, or North Devon symphonic at last night of the proms were in Barnstaple, music like that could be one way to make the most of it
- Main area could work well with a good crowd – acoustics probs ok, but power and lighting would be needed
- Lots of disregarded community assets
- The space would need partitioning to be used
- If mixed use is offered, there is often no time to set up.
- It is expensive – Landmark is £750 pd and they do all the marketing and ticketing – need that level of rate
- Seating is flat – not so good for all theatre
- There is no lighting rig.
- Cold outside of summer months – even with heating.
- Pillars in the way of audience.
- At top of very steep hill with not much other recreation space around it.
- No identity - is it niche for tourists or a hub for crafts.
- Access is limited and off putting.
- Geography, and given where is. People don't want to go out of way. Off beaten track.

What are the barriers to improvements? (physical/capital, policy, etc.)

- People cite the issue of the hill being a barrier.
- The offer (shops) up there is mixed – some low quality, some good, some of it feels more hobbyist/retired people and not much of a public offer.
- The hill should not be seen as a problem – if there is something people want they will go there.
- Some traders lack online presence.

- Calling it a “Market Hall” is a barrier, people only think it’s a market – which doesn’t work/happen. Don’t call it a market!
- How to get the community to fall back in love with the Pannier Market?
- Hall too big – feel like a barn, too overwhelming.
- Can’t make money, without money, needs investment
- Previous interventions and investments have been poor disappointing i.e. play area.
- There is a tension, there are a set of more “hobbyist” offers at the market, which don’t have much of a commercial, customer facing offer. While this is arguably less helpful when it comes to wider footfalls and visitors, they are paying tenants – how to resolve?
- Lots of shut doors and storage use – leather working?
- Lower income economy.
- Visitors good over summer, but only 8-10 weeks
- Higher/increasing second home ownership.
- Lack of imagination from council towards Pannier Market
- No/limited curation of traders
- Some traders post of Facebook but are often not there with closed shops.
- Markets, in the old way, don’t really work, but more pop-ups and event markets do.
- Lack of consistency.
- A disconnect between business, retail and community, not understanding each other.
- Need to understand how to curate events and offers, how to combine community activity and professional retail.
- Too many strategies and too much talking not enough action.
- Who is/are the leaders going to lead this?
- Issues with lighting, acoustics, heating.
- Security lights on at night, kills atmosphere.
- Potential price for tickets and space hire.
- Away from the shops and up a hill.
- Hard for parking and less abled.
- Not kitted out for amplified music.
- Costs to hire are too high
- Access to the Pannier Market – on a hill and puts people off.
- No ownership option, might take on if given to run and manage.
- Need to be able to do two performances in one day to make worthwhile.
- Needs to be 70-80 seater for viability.
- There is a lot of local opposition to youth spaces. Perception of young people and young peoples’ perception of others. Skate Park used well, self-policed. Not needed to be policed it, is where YP are visible.
- No young people in town as cannot afford to rent or buy places. 300k and upwards.

How could it be improved?

- Not much in the way of a music/performance venue locally. This is generally lacking and a low offer.
- Acoustics are bad – very hard – need softening – wooden floor?
- Needs consistency.
- Flexible sub-division.
- Create two event spaces.

- Need softening inside.
- Walls too bare – need interpretation, big map of Bideford?
- Add Tourist information (TIC?)
- Needs warming up – better more efficient heating.
- Need for smaller, workshop spaces – to make and to do things with people i.e. workshops. i.e. I am Cultured (food, fermentation, gut health, etc, based on Mill Street.
- Include working/useable kitchen.
- Poor negative facebook pages, need to go.
- Redecorate stairway.
- Provide ambient music.
- Enable more pop-up in empty units, curated with lower rents.
- Possibilities – natural dog food shop. Creature comforts shop, florist shop.
- Business support programmes, link to Princes Trust (£3 funding?).
- Open up to free events – scouts, men’s sheds, etc.
- A bigger soft paly area would work, be popular.
- Live bigger arcade space – sole use? Would only need 2-3 good days per week to be successful.
- An overly singular commercial approach to the building is barrier. Can’t work as a purely commercial asset.
- Market Committee, too council heavy, needs a re-think.
- What about youth/social enterprise challenge programmes?
- Needs programming capacity and curating space.
- Need better reputation around food – i.e. a local top chef.
- Focus on events/performance/theatre
- There is a big music scene local – music and Appledore every night. Champ Pub, Beaver Pub.
- Make better use of local talent – Josh Widdecombe.
- Jazz in the UK, currently very big.
- Needs coordinating activity, programme lead and partnership lead.
- Some examples of good markets: Dapper & Suave (Surry), Dan Goode (<https://www.makinggoode.com/>), West Quay Market, Portsmouth, Cabot Square Market, Craft and Famers Market (Hartland, https://www.facebook.com/HartlandFarmersMarketUK/?locale=en_GB)
- No cinema, only in schools.
- Don’t need more consumer offers, but better opportunities for people to connect.
- More test and learn approach, to develop what works
- Free or funded performance or rehearsal space for local musicians, as there are few in town.
- A model where artists are paid – 1-2 hours for min £100 pp.
- Evening set artists would expect/ hope for £250 upwards
- Needs to attract decent audience, already possible.
- Right set up – power, stage, lighting, water, etc – Infrastructure
- Should be accessible for all – price wise
- Shuttle bus and transport – drive less from town?
- The Joiners Arms – musicians play there next to the Pannier Market – use this as a starting point?

How could greater access to the Pannier Market for you/your organisation/beneficiaries be of benefit:

For your work?

- Interested in what the rent would be and what the restrictions could be?
- A place for master classes and workshop, developing work, rehearsals and productions.
- Storage and office space need – would need to balance private use with public access.
- Interested in touring/trail-based show, could include Pannier Market.
- Would need sole access for a good block of time, would not work with hourly/daily/weekly bookings.
- Would be interested in access to office space – spaces above shops in Butchers row.
- Need to understand the utility costs for market – what are these – can we add solar?
- The issue with having lots of regular hourly classes, is that they block out time and prevent bigger more spectacular shows.
- Gaming and comi-con events/cos play and street performance. Could fill market, charging £10/hd entrance. Look at putting on shuttle bus.
- Lots of enthusiasm to explore/get involved, but limited capacity.
- Sea shanties are popular with two local groups, that could use the Pannier Market
- Pannier Market is a great space for a Ceilidh – there is a local group
- Christmas market would work well in their opinion
- Cheila's would work well.
- It would work for rehearsals but would need good rate.
- Need to have ownership for us to take on.
- Could work for community radio that we run.
- Something like Brassed Off could work.
- Make it a centre with good facilities, with funding to do some proper street drop in sessions run by youth workers.
- To be able to deliver youth work in the building, cool and funky stuff, at no costs, some sort of sustainable street-based provision, like a YES centre, well-staffed, NEETS welcome,

For you beneficiaries/customers?

- Need it to be welcoming, non-judgemental, interesting, something that is aspirational, FAB-lab, curated hub, skills, make stuff yourself.
- Small business start-up, sustainable approaches for things, connecting with mens shed, tool library, library of things, sewing, reuse, remake, space.
- Opportunities for enterprise and training, part-time work for young people, spaces to hang out where this is allowed.
- Not about taking YP off the street, allowing YP to hangout in a respectful way. Infrastructure of small town is only for working age or retired. Nowhere be out and about and allowed.

For the town? (blue sky thinking!!)

- Local farming events, local producers
- How can we facilitate meat and veg boxes, a perception the people do want to buy fruit and veg in a market.
- India in a Jar is a great business.
- Example: Nottingham Arcade Club – started in corner shop – now massive

- Example: Arcade Palace and Westward-Ho!
- South Molton still has successful market – Thursday and Saturdays – why?
- Possibilities of ice ring, but issues with chiller outside.
- Ready, ripe for a NLHF bid.
- Young people / emerging artists, space for practice – need to develop the pipeline of artists and places to rehearse and play.
- There are lots of artists in town and around. Creative people, better if the Pannier Market was set up better, as not advertised very well, pannier market profile is not high currently.
- Use local talent, e.g. Andy Brown ceramic artists.
- More activity in town for locals and visitors – needs more happening to make people go there.
- Musical shuttle bus, in the town, driverless shuttle busses.
- Needs more venues for culture – stop selling them off.
- Real need to bring people into town – various reasons.
- Town needs an open conversation about massive rise in estate agents, window space dedicated to selling houses that no one can afford - big housing problem.

Would you be interested in being involve in further conversations?

All participants are interested to engage in further conversations

Who else locally do you think would be good/useful to talk to?

- The Burton, showed an interest in the space in the past?
- TTVS
- Abi at Sage Apothecary
- Plough Arts
- Sunshine and Snow, India Snow – knows how to host an event and blend retail and experiential offer, attracts the right demographic.
- Evolving events, Sheila and Jules. Creative led events.
- Contact some musicians mentioned above.
- The person that runs the Palladium – Ben
- Jean Cann – Appledore Social Club
- Adrian – The Champion Pub in Appledore.
- KALIO – have a look. Run through Dartington design labs (Exe Uni, UCL) How to make co-designed work that is not tokenistic. Some interesting ideas. - [About | Kailo](#)
- Space at bottom of town, ground behind Herds garage. Near Jubilee square, big-covered garage workshop space. TDC did consultation on this. Worth looking into this for youth space.