

Future High Street Fund- Bideford

Bideford is part of the final 101 towns through to the final phase of the Future High Street Fund, a £1 billion government town centre regeneration programme. Direct conversations with the Ministry for Housing, Community and Local Government (MHCLG) have made it clear that a town the size of Bideford would be more appropriate to be seeking a maximum of £5 million. Full submission is required by 31st July.

There are 3 clear gateway criteria that the fund requires.

- 1) Investment will achieve at least a 2:1 Benefit Cost Ratio. Without that economic figure the bid will not be considered for appraisal except in exceptional circumstances. This figure will set the potential financial ask from the fund.
- 2) Strategic fit
- 3) Deliverability

Isaac's Yard project

Total Future High Street Fund ask = £4.3 million

- To include:

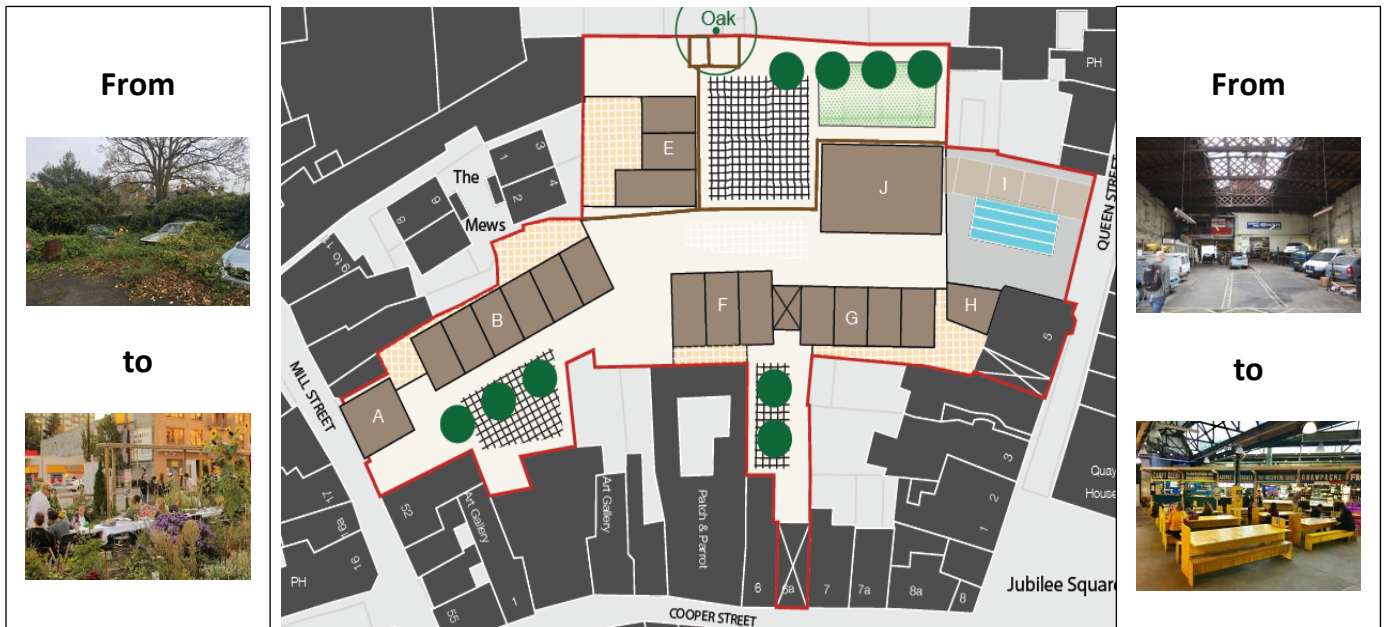
- Site acquisition
- Archaeological works
- Site preparation and cleansing, including to prepare access for Meanwhile uses

Total co-funding required = £5.4 million

The redevelopment of Isaac's Yard presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity for Bideford. Heard's Brothers Garage, which fits between Cooper Street, Mill Street, Bridgeland Street and Queen Street, is the largest single developable space within the town centre. It will involve repurposing what is currently a decaying car graveyard into an inspirational, enjoyable new anchor attraction as the town shifts away from a pure retail focus. It will create slow time in the heart of the town yet will be accessible from three main streets and respectful of the town's proud heritage, supporting residents and addressing significant economic and wellbeing blockages whilst also providing for tourists. Crucially it is about creating aspiration, opportunity, growth and change, addressing many of the issues which have long held our community and local area back.

Progress so far

- Detailed community consultation, conducted by The Onion Collective
 - Workshops with a variety of groupings, including local businesses, young entrepreneurs, Bideford College year 10 students, tourism, retailers, elected Members, charities, leisure providers and an open workshop.
 - Findings focused on;
 - Lack of community bridging spaces
 - A lack of pride in the town as the town does not cater for enough of its actual community's needs
 - Limited "experience" offer yet real enjoyment of those events which do take place and are high quality
 - A real desire to engage more actively in activities and to feel more empowered
 - Lack of exciting / engaging town centre employment and residential opportunities (also highlighted through Indices of Multiple Deprivation / Bideford being a net exporter of workforce)
 - Full findings can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/KnowingBideford>
- Initial agreement for site purchase (dependent on FHSF funding) agreed with owner of the site. Agreement has also been reached with the owner of a retail unit on Mill Street in order to provide 3 access points- Mill Street, Cooper Street and Queen Street
- Responsive architectural work, stemming from the community engagement work.



The project looks to create dynamic, flexible spaces which interact and create a multiplier effect rather than exist in isolation. The intention is for Isaac's Yard to ultimately be either wholly or partially in community ownership, building pride and engagement, and to include;

- be carbon neutral, with environmental principles at its core.
- engaging co-working (G) and grow-on spaces (A, B and E, in total creating 695m² of employment space) which will allow a generation who are now familiar with working from home to feel better-connected and networked at a time when expensive fixed offices are likely to decline. These interconnections have long been lacking in the town yet will also reduce the need for 34% of the district's working population to commute to outside of Torridge.
- a community hub (F) driven by One Northern Devon (New Devon CCG /NHS) and 361 Energy which will foster community bridging, improve health and charitable coordination and address health deprivation in the town. This will interact with, rather than being isolated from, the shared workspaces and cultural anchor. Allowing the people of the town and wider community to feel part of a bigger picture and to build our place together.
- re-purpose the current garage building and celebrate its stunning roof to provide a home for a vibrant food and drink incubation hub (I), improving the evening economy and providing a starter point for local entrepreneurs, adding churn and interest to the site. Not only will this connect the community to its agricultural heritage but also have a strong social and educational perspective, learning from projects such as Mercato Metropolitano.
- 16 new residential units, including 5 affordable homes, setting a new standard for town centre living in a ward ranked at 363 on Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2015) for Living Environment.
- A vibrant, technology-savvy cultural anchor (J) to not only make people smile but also learn and keep coming back to the town in all weather conditions.
- re-purpose a Grade II Listed Heritage Asset in extremely poor condition and enable the private sector-led restoration of a Grade II* Listed building, 28, Bridgeland Street.
- provide public access to, and control over, a heritage courtyard garden (hatched), currently closed-off and overgrown. This is a true oasis in the heart of the town which will come alive with a range of events.

The project will be delivered on a phased basis over 4 years, bringing elements of the site back into public use from the summer of 2021, with Meanwhile uses bringing the space to life and add a real sense of enjoyment back in what should be the beating heart of our town and community.