

## CULTURE & HERITAGE FINDINGS

1. This is a summary of the key findings from Totnes Neighbourhood Plan public consultation data in relation to culture and heritage. It draws data from Workshop 1, Workshop 2, the Housing Needs Survey and the KEVICC workshop. Both the KEVICC and Workshop 2 articulated a Vision for culture and heritage in Totnes.

### 1.2 KEVICC's Young people's vision for culture and heritage was as follows:

- A town that has pride in its culture and heritage. Keep what makes Totnes special
- Keep old buildings
- Unique
- A place of celebration towards people of all backgrounds / continue to be multi-cultural / hold social events and festivals. A social community for all generations. Bigger population including refugees
- For shops and food outlets to also meet the needs of young adults. Sitting alongside independent shops
- Shops for local people, not just tourists.

### 1.3 Workshop 2: The emerging Vision for Culture and Heritage:

#### TOTNES 2030 – a Postcard to the future: Culture & Heritage table

Totnes is a better, more cared for and more sustainable, unified, diverse (in culture and population) town, where all ages have access to quality housing, livelihood, transport, health care, and fun!

## 2. KEY FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

### 2.1 Totnes Neighbourhood Plan Workshop 1:

**Workshop one was attended by 150 people on July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at the Mansion.**

Culture and heritage was the third most commented on theme at our first public workshop receiving 42 comments.

## 2.2 Cultural uses of public open spaces

Using open spaces for cultural public events, including town festivals, fetes, markets and public art was the top priority for workshop one participants in terms of culture and heritage: Examples of the comments and ideas are below:

- **'have an annual open spaces event where community/artists animate them over a weekend so see spaces differently and integrate into town'**
- **'seasonal markers of events/celebrations in spaces - need people to animate spaces not just things'**
- **'link up open spaces through annual festival, public arts trails, programmed events, way marking that involves the community'**
- **'a South West festival in Totnes is needed'**
- **'A more diverse and cultural festival is needed that would bring lots of people to the town'**
- **'more village seating & village fetes'**
- **'Emphasize beauty - lots of local artists to call on - to commission sculptures/ banners (see Moretonhampstead as an example of this)'**
- One participant suggested a way to improve public events and public art in the town was to: **'Build a coherent public art and community events strategy for Totnes that celebrates what is and converts people in those spaces.'**

## 2.3 Improving the Civic Hall & Civic Square

- This links clearly to 2.2 (above) and findings **from workshop two**, (page 4 & 5) where the number one priority was improving the civic square and hall. If this space were optimised, it could presumably provide a venue for many of the activities listed under 2.2.

**'The market area needs such a careful revamp - how about some plane trees to create a green space/canopy (without the trees in the plains area it wouldn't have such a beautiful ambience - easy to recreate that in the market square & still have plenty of room for the markets'** said a participant from workshop one.

- It was also the view of KEVICC students that the Market Place and Square was in need of improvement and their vision for the future included more social events including festivals.
- This is also a finding from other consultations the town council have undertaken in recent years through the town team specifically January 2014 Workshop and subsequent Strategy
- A further study by Plymouth University presented in 2013 set out similar proposals.

## 2.3 Broadening the entertainment offer in Totnes

- Improved entertainment facilities were mentioned by four participants, suggestions were a cinema (now happening), a community arts centre and **'more evening and night events in the summertime i.e. like Christmas market in Totnes'** (this links to 2.2).

- The need for entertainment for young people was also mentioned once: **‘Such a shame our young people go clubbing in Torquay - we need a Totnes alternative in the early hours on weekends.’**
  - The lack of places to go and activities to do for young people was also mentioned as a weakness of the town by KEVICC students.
  - Culture for young people was also a top priority for workshop two: **‘Culture for young people – inclusive facilities – specifically for teenagers and young people.’** Said one participant.
  - This also links to part of the vision from workshop 2 which highlights that **‘everyone of all ages should have access to fun.’**

#### **2.4 Capitalising on our heritage**

There were comments about looking at our history, heritage and traditions as a way to build on the culture and heritage of Totnes:

- **‘Let’s do a cultural heritage project that tells the story of the industry of the town and links with ex-workers’**
- **‘Social history to public spaces through digital que codes’**
- **‘Relook at traditions for today, create new traditions’**

#### **2.5 Making better use of the castle.**

Two people commented on this at workshop one:

- **‘Use Totnes castle more actively - suggest free access on weekends’**
- **‘Make more use of the castle as a visitor / event space’**
- KEVICC students also felt that the Castle and its history should feature in key events including re-enactments and that more information and education about the town’s culture, history, and heritage was needed. It was felt that there was also the opportunity to feature history more prominently throughout the town. Students also put forward the view that some of the town’s old buildings should be renovated.

#### **2.6 Community ownership**

There were two references to bringing buildings into community ownership under this theme:

- **‘Bring key public buildings into community ownership where feasible’**
- **‘The mansion would be ideal as a community hub - if it could be taken into community ownership that would be ideal’**

## **2.7 Public realm**

‘More coordination of the public realm’ came up in various ways including comments on banning fly-posters and improving signage and updating and tidying the town generally. **‘We need a walk-about to record things that need dealing with in the town (signs, street furniture, etc.)’ suggested one participant.**

### **1. Workshop two**

**3.1:** Our second public workshop held at the Totnes Civic Hall was attended by 65 people on November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016. The vision generated at this workshop can be found on page one of this document.

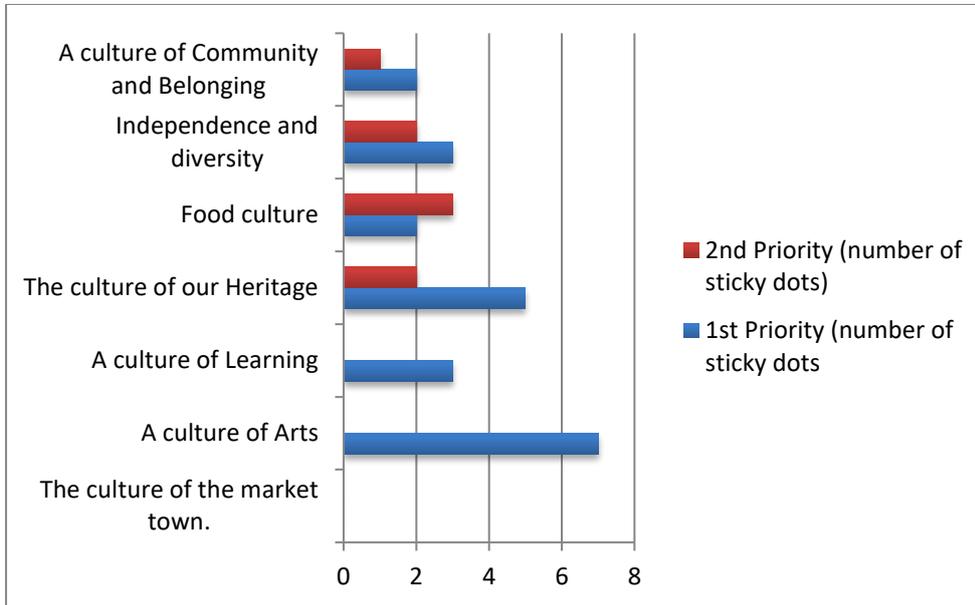
#### **3.2: Priorities drawn from workshop two:**

Using information drawn from recent projects that have been undertaken around the town and results of public consultation, the Culture and Heritage Task Group have identified seven key points and asked workshop participants what their **top priorities** were.

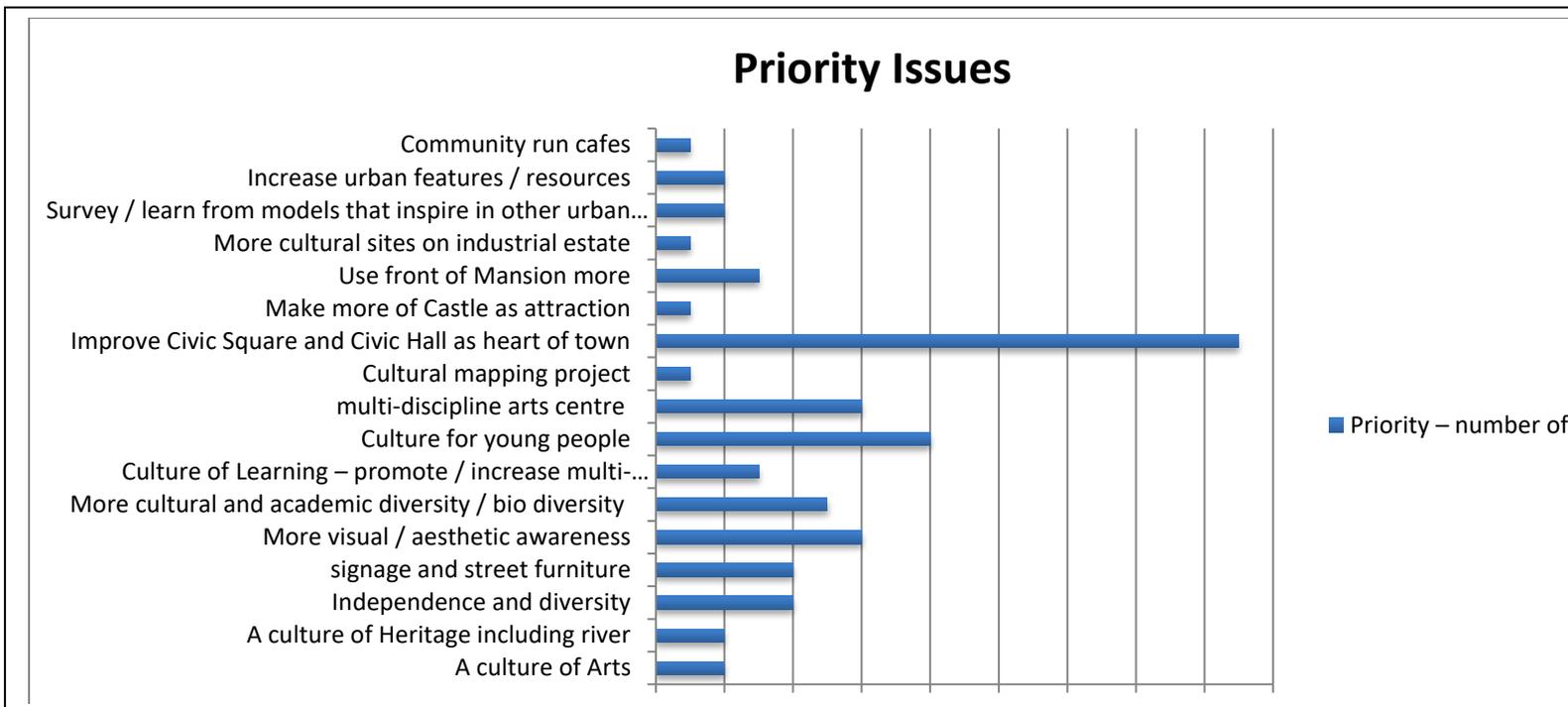
**Figure 3.3**

Priorities for culture and heritage group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The culture of the market town.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A culture of Arts: which includes performance art, artists, galleries, cinema, theatre and live music.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A culture of Learning: language schools, adult education, variety of primary and secondary education</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The culture of our Heritage: which includes the natural environment such as the River</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food culture: markets, cafes and food shops, local producers, organic and unusual produce.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independence and diversity – a perceived “quirkiness”, alternative therapy. Transition.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A culture of Community and Belonging</li> </ul>

**3.4: The results are displayed below in a graph:**



**3.5: At the end of the workshop people were asked to look across all the comments and generate the key messages that came from all the comments made that day. See the graph below for the results:**



### 3.6: Top three priorities:

- Improve the civic hall and civic square as the heart of the town (corroborates workshop one analysis) **links to culture of the arts and culture of heritage as identified by culture and heritage group**
- Culture for young people (as referred to under workshop one analysis there was one reference made to this in workshop one and it was a finding from our workshop with KEVICC)
- More visual / aesthetic awareness – **links to culture of the arts and culture of heritage as identified by culture and heritage group**
- Multi-discipline arts centre (scored the same as more visual/aesthetic awareness) - **links to culture of the arts and culture of heritage as identified by culture and heritage group**

#### 4-KEVICC workshop

#### 4.1: Working with Planning for Real, the Neighbourhood Plan ran a workshop with 110 year 10 students from KEVICC in November 2015

Culture and heritage was a low priority for KEVICC students and had the least comments made against it. That fact that there is a perceived lack of cultural activities for young people could account for the sparse comments made in relation to this theme.

#### 4.2: Summary of findings from KEVICC students:

- The culture and heritage of Totnes was seen as something to celebrate, promote, and use to attract tourists. It was felt that the Castle and its history should feature in key events including re-enactments and that more information and education about the town's culture, history, and heritage was needed. It was felt that there was also the opportunity to feature history more prominently throughout the town. Students also put forward the view that some of the town's old buildings should be renovated.
- The findings from the business survey support these views (see below)
- Students felt that art should feature more prominently – Totnes style and culture – and displayed around the town. Another idea was to feature "In Totnes" creativity and tie this in to the schools and culture with exhibitions around the town. In relation to art, students also wanted to see the Art College reopened. **'A culture of the Arts' was also a priority from workshop two.**
- It was the view of the students that the Market Place and Square was in need of improvement (a few finding from workshop one) and that the Christmas Market should be

held over a longer period and spread over a larger area. It was felt that a better and bigger market would attract tourists.

➤ **As we saw in section one, more markets was also a suggestion from workshop one.**

**4.3:** When asked to list strengths of the town, several strengths relating to culture were listed as follows:

**Key strengths of Totnes:**

- The community – the people, diversity, community spirit, non-judgemental; multi-cultural, and the many local groups and clubs.
- The independent / locally owned shops and cafes which inject money into the local economy.
- The town’s uniqueness.
- A tourist attraction – history and heritage.
- Known as a “green” / “eco” town.

**Flags placed on large map of Totnes for cultural places students would like to see:**

- .A young people’s café: Jubilee Road
- A place for teenagers to hang out and be sociable: High Street / South Street
- Activities / activity clubs for the elderly: Bridgetown area; Totnes Pavilion; Town Centre area
- Advice and Information Point: High Street / Fore Street; Bridgetown area
- Band practice space: Dairycrest site
- Children and Young People’s Centre: Coronation Road; Dairycrest site; Borough Park.
- Community Hub with access to computers: High Street / Fore Street; Dairycrest site; Leechwell Street.
- Ensure local facilities are accessible for all: Totnes Pavilion; Dairycrest site; Western By Pass, Plymouth Road; New Road.
- Feature and encourage art and cultural art. Maybe display art around town: High Street
- Include Castle (and history of Totnes) in events e.g. Christmas and Halloween: Castle Street
- Make / renovate museum to be more interesting and interactive: Fore Street
- More authentic, nice quality cultural food: Coronation Road area
- More things to do for young people e.g. events, skate, and sport: Borough Park
- Updated / new Leisure Centre: Bridgetown area

## 5. Links to Economic findings

**5.1:** In the economic findings paper and business survey, there are various references to 'strengths' or 'selling points of Totnes' that link closely to culture and heritage.

### Business survey – summary of key findings

#### **Assets to build on:**

- The unique character of Totnes - in terms of its setting and historic character
- The unique character of Totnes - in terms of independent retail/business diversity
- The unique character of Totnes in terms of the people and community ('green-centre' / 'eco-town')
- Totnes has a strong appeal for visitors and tourists (as-well as its geographical location in terms of being a hub for rural village and being well linked via the train)
- **Most of the assets listed above were also listed as 'strengths' of Totnes by KEVICC students.**

## 6. Summary of Key Findings Emerging from Public Consultation Data

### Building a culture of the arts

- Public art
- Arts centre/community arts centre?

### Improving public spaces for cultural activities:

- **Better use of/improvement to open spaces for cultural public events**, including town festivals, fetes, markets and public art was the top priority for workshop one participants in terms of culture and heritage
- In direct relation to the above, renovate and upgrade the Civic Hall and Civic Square

### Improving culture and entertainment:

- Improve evening entertainment offer in Town, particularly for young people
- Improve cultural offer for young people generally
- Build on/create a culture of Arts: *which includes performance art, artists, galleries, cinema, theatre and live music*

### Protect and enhance the towns assets

- Build on/protect the towns unique heritage assets (in terms of its setting and historic character, historic buildings including the castle) **also priority in economy**
- Build on/protect the towns unique character and reputation (in terms of the people and community/green-centre, eco-town) **also priority in economy**
- Build on/protect the towns retail/business diversity- **also priority in economy**
- **In relation to the above, put an economic value on the culture of the town to strengthen policy arguments for protecting and enhancing it? Asset mapping?**

<p><b>How might we integrate these priorities into the Neighbourhood Plan?</b></p>
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**Protect and enhance the towns assets (there is a strong overlap with the economy and many of the suggestions below can also be found on the economy findings analysis)**

- Include policies on preserving and renovating conservation areas (Culture & Heritage group)
- Enhance the visitor experience of the town by including policies on better signage and street furniture (Culture & Heritage group)
- Include policies around protecting the market town setting (i.e green-belt) as per Natural England suggestions in their 2015 report (relates to culture and heritage)
- Make better use of the castle (*can this be done within the Neighbourhood Plan?*)
- Build on the 'green' 'ethical' reputation of Totnes (*can this be done within the Neighbourhood plan – perhaps through the vision and objectives?*)

### Protect and encourage retail diversity and vitality

- Include policies on retail diversity (see CPRE food webs report- Economy Group & Environment Group)
- Include policies on vitality (see CPRE food webs report – Economy Group and Environment Group)
- Include policies on markets (see CPRE food webs report – Economy Group/Environment Group/Culture and Heritage Group)

### **Create more 'cultural' spaces for young people (links to economy in terms of keeping younger people in the town)**

- How can this be done within the Neighbourhood Plan? Would upgrading the Civic Hall/Square contribute to this?



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**Key questions/issues to address**

- How do we address the issue of young people feeling excluded from shops/cafes/culture in the town? (clear links to culture and heritage)
- How can we make better use of the castle? Is it within the remit of the Neighbourhood Plan?
- Can the neighbourhood plan address the lack of 'practical shops for locals' (see economic paper)