



Growth Through Culture

A Public Art and Cultural Activation Toolkit

Broadmead and City Centre Extract





Wonder Pavilion, Glenfron Primary School, Bristol, 2014
Image credit, Max McClure

Contents

Executive Summary	6
Introduction	8
– Introduction and Purpose	
– What is Public Art and Cultural Activation?	
City Centre	12
– Area Background and Context	
– What Have People Said?	
– City Centre Principles	
– Menu of Ideas	
Making it Happen	30
– Delivering Projects	
– Glossary	

This document is an extract from **Growth Through Culture – A Public Art and Cultural Activation Toolkit for Bristol City Centre and Frome Gateway**.

This document is specific to Broadmead and the City Centre and is designed to provide a digestible summary.

For the full document please visit www.aprb.co.uk/resources

Documents available in other formats:

You can request alternative formats of this document by contacting

CityCentreRegeneration@bristol.gov.uk

Front cover image

Of Riders and Running Horses
by Still House at Mayfest 2016.
Produced by MAYK. Image credit,
by Paul Blakemore.

Document Version

Revision B
June 2025

Help us to transform Bristol's City Centre and Frome Gateway neighbourhoods to be filled with public life and creative activity for everyone. Celebrating what's already here, welcoming communities and visitors of the present and future, nurturing nature, and growing skills and opportunities.

Be part of an ambitious, collaborative growth through culture approach bringing together developers, cultural organisations, artists and local stakeholders to deliver creative projects for positive change.



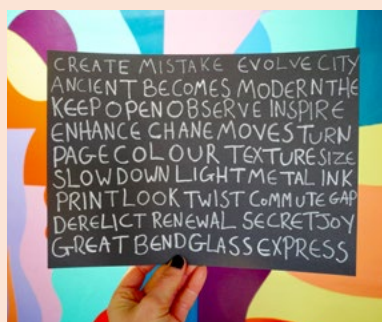
ATSP29, Emma Smith, KHBT, Travelling Light Theatre, Bristol Old Vic Young Company, Wapping Wharf, 2016. Image credit, Camilla Adams

Executive Summary

The purpose of this toolkit is to demonstrate how public art and cultural activation will add value to developments across the City Centre and Frome Gateway regeneration areas as part of a joined up approach, and maximise and co-ordinate developer contributions by proposing a ‘menu’ of public art and cultural activation ideas that developers can deliver or contribute to.



Studio Weave, Sea Mills School, 2013. Image credit, Max McClure.



EQ Building, process image, Molly Hawkins, Bristol, 2023, Image credit, Molly Hawkins.



Theaster Gates, Sanctum, Bristol, 2016. Image credit, Max McClure.

The toolkit includes smaller, quicker to achieve ideas alongside broad brush ambitious concepts with the aim of encouraging wider strategic partnerships and co-investment in the future. It is for an audience which includes developers, strategic partners, and local organisations and entities wanting to initiate and fund raise work with artists and creatives on their own projects.

The toolkit contains a set of ‘project opportunities’ at a variety of levels of investment, including temporary and permanent artworks, artist-led design, creative and cultural happenings, and new creative and community spaces.

Be part of an ambitious, collaborative approach to deliver growth through culture for positive change.



This document focusses on two areas, Bristol City Centre, and Frome Gateway.

**Transforming
Bristol's City
Centre and
Frome
Gateway
neighbourhoods
to be filled with
public life and
creativity for
everyone.**

What are the toolkit objectives?

- Set out an approach for public art and cultural activation that addresses the strategic regeneration visions and objectives of the City Centre Development and Delivery Plan (DDP) and Frome Gateway Framework
- Identify area-specific opportunities, connections and synergies through engagement with local and regional stakeholders
- Propose approaches to public art and cultural activation designed to contribute to economic, social and environmental value relevant to the two areas
- Provide guidance to developers regarding public art policy to de-risk and expedite delivery and maximise its impact
- Catalyse collaboration with wider strategic partners and investors with shared values and priorities in culture-led regeneration
- Inspire delivery by a range of different stakeholders and partners
- Deliver growth through culture

Introduction and Purpose

This toolkit document:

- Outlines the value and opportunity of developer investment and collaboration as a catalyst for wider, long term strategic partnerships and investment in the Bristol City Centre and Frome Gateway areas
- Proposes an ambitious, joined up approach to public art and cultural activations over the next ten years to mitigate the impact of large scale development and accelerate new housing delivery
- Includes artist-led projects which are smaller ‘quick wins’ alongside broad brush ambitious concepts deliverable through longer term co-investment

About the process

This toolkit document has been made possible through Homes England investment and has been created through a collaborative engagement process with local stakeholders and developers. It builds on and intends to amplify engagement work already undertaken by Bristol City Council and the local community for the [City Centre Development and Delivery Plan](#) (DDP) and [the Frome Gateway Spatial Regeneration Framework](#) (2023)

“Culture is the heart of placemaking, it is the joy that creates a sense of belonging. In regeneration, a culture driven approach ensures inclusive, vibrant, healthy places where people and nature coexist sustainably.

By embedding cultural heritage, local voices and creativity we create spaces that are not only resilient to climate challenges but also equitable, accessible, inspiring and rooted in the communities they serve.”

Councillor Ani Townsend

Co-Chair of the Bristol One City Culture Board

Who is the toolkit for?

This toolkit is for:

- Developers looking to deliver public art and culture to meet Bristol City Council’s planning policy requirements
- Local entities and groups wanting to initiate and fundraise for their own cultural projects, and connect with regeneration area-wide ambitions
- Strategic partners and investors



Confluence Part One – Public sharing event at the Glassworks in Redcliffe, 2023. Image credit, Paul Blakemore.

What is Public Art and Cultural Activation?

Public art and cultural activation create imaginative and meaningful experiences that put culture at the heart of place. It enriches the physical and social fabric of the city.

Considering creative opportunities early enables an investment in people and sustained engagement alongside high quality urban design, creating successful places to live, work and move through. It also builds relationships between the built environment, public realm and the city's creative sector, employing and engaging thousands of residents and visitors each year.

Public art might traditionally be seen as permanent sculptural works, but a more open approach – encouraging the commissioning of a breadth of projects, tangible and intangible – has the potential to resonate with people and communities and enhance character and identity. Public art and cultural activation in this context includes a diversity of creative practice and cultural experience, including:

- Temporary and permanent artworks
- Artist-led functional design
- Creative and cultural happenings
- New creative and community spaces emerging from the Bristol City Centre Community and Cultural Space Report

In each case:

- The work is site or community specific, with a clear purpose and support from the community
- It engages an artist/s, and invests time and money in creative people and processes
- It is led by a curator/producer to bring expertise and support to the commissioning process
- It benefits from a deep understanding of the physical, social and cultural context of the site
- It encourages collaboration between design teams, delivery areas, service users and communities to achieve accessible and engaging outcomes.

What do we mean by public art?

Art that is in the public realm, regardless of whether it is situated on public or private property or whether it has been paid for with public or private money. For Bristol City Council our priority is public art that is experienced in public space and accessible to all.

It is underpinned by a belief that public art:

- Is not a particular art form but a way of working which holds place and people at the heart
- Should not be an 'add-on' but considered as early as possible to maximise impact
- Whatever the output it has emerged through an artist/s involvement in the process
- Artists and their creative process have a specific role to play in meaningful place-shaping
- Should align to, and benefit local value and needs and health

What do we mean by cultural activation?

Activity that contributes to the culture and conviviality of existing and new places. This might include events and happenings, as well as activating spaces for meeting and gathering. Often bringing people together, providing a sense of shared identity and belonging, and empowerment; encouraging participation in civic life. It is underpinned by a belief that cultural activation:

- Can include art and artists to address broader cultural activators such as food and sport.
- Whatever the activation it has emerged through working with creative partners/cultural producers and/or artists, and through engaging with local stakeholders and assets
- Has a specific role to play in building a sense of neighbourhood and social capital
- Should align to and benefit local social value and needs



Morning Meet Up Workshop,
Dorcas Casey, Bristol, 2025. Image
credit, Ruby Turner



Arch by Kaleider, Mayfest, 2024. Image credit, Paul Blakemore



Undercurrents, Libita Sibungu, Bristol, 2023, Courtesy Bristol City Council



Of Riders and Running Horses by Still
House. Image credit, Paul Blakemore



Fog Bridge, Fujiko Nakaya, Bristol
2015.



The Orchard, David Thorpe,
2012– 15.
Image credit, Max McClure



Dorcas and Octavia Casey, Castle Fine Arts Foundry, 2025.
Image credit, Faye Hedges

City Centre

- Area Background and Context
- What Have People Said?
- City Centre Vision
- City Centre Principles
- Menu of Ideas

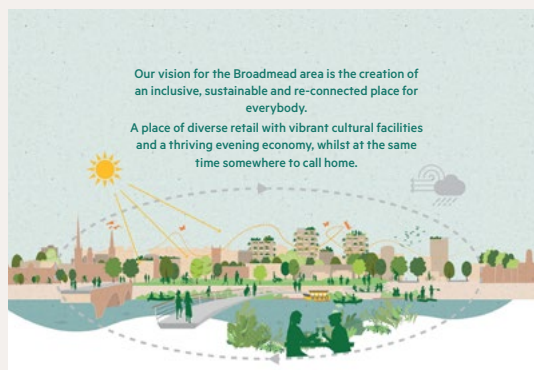


Broadmeadow, Sylvia Rimat and Charli Clark, Bristol 2023. Image credit, Paul Blakemore

Area Background and Context

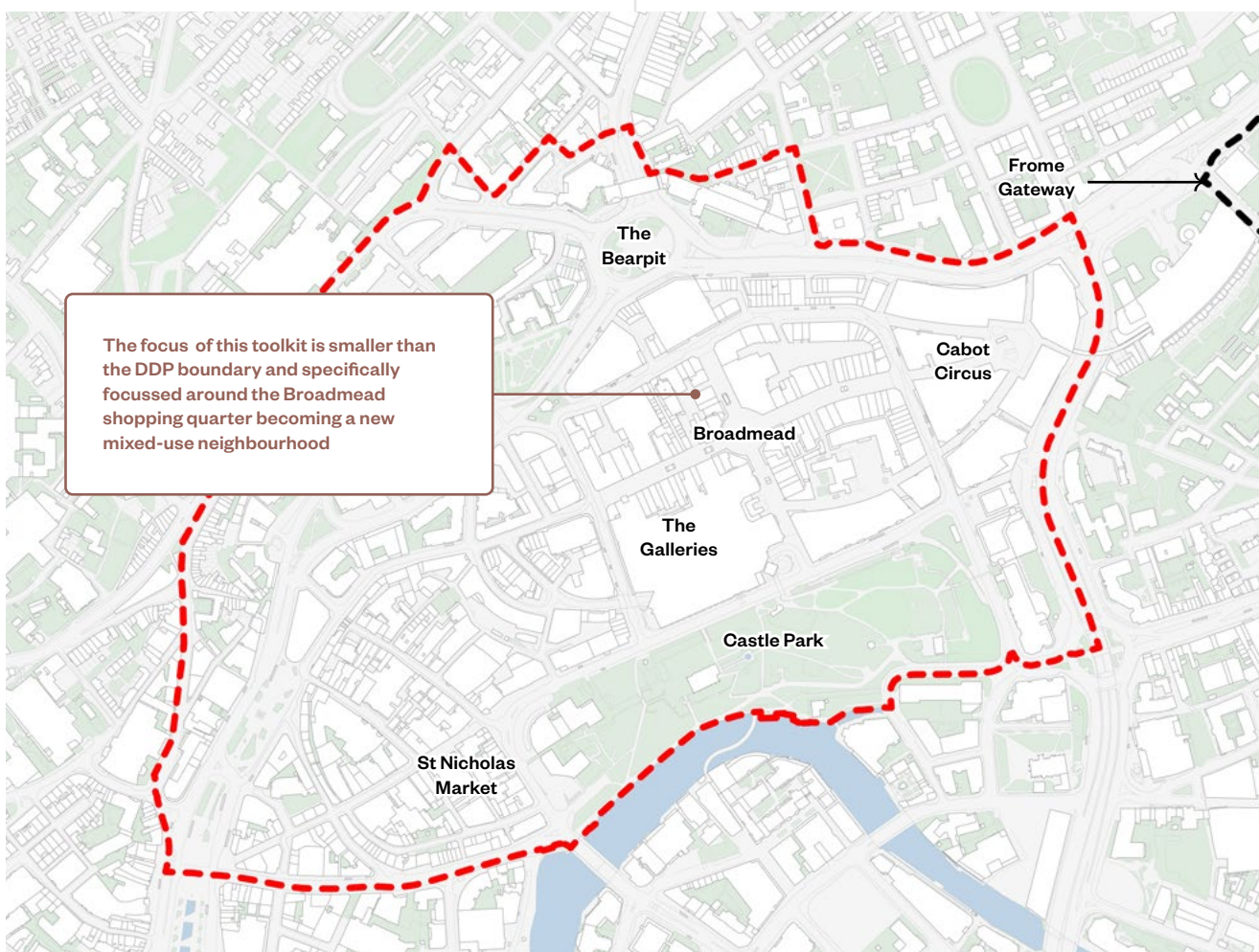
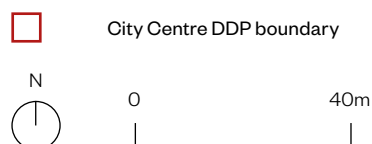
The Broadmead city centre area remains largely unchanged from the 1960s in places and is less representative of the character and feel of Bristol's distinctive identity than other parts of the wider city centre. The area is about to undergo massive transformational change through redevelopment to make it a more mixed-use, inclusive, sustainable and re-connected neighbourhood for everybody.

Relevant Policy and further information



The City Centre Development and Delivery Plan (DDP) ([Part 1](#) & [Part 2](#)) sets out a vision and strategies for the regeneration of Bristol city centre.

Key





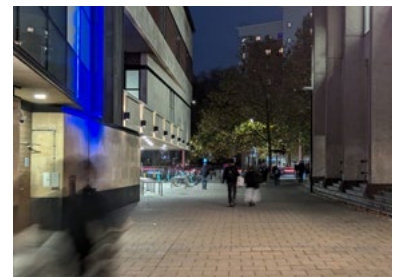
The former Greyhound Hotel, now an entrance to the Galleries from Broadmead



Former Norwich Union Building and St Mary-le-Port tower



The Galleries shopping centre, Broadmead



Castlemead



Brigstowe Street, Cabot Circus



The Island, Creative Youth Network



St Peter's Church in Castle Park

What Have People Said?

The following pages provide a summary of what people have said during engagement and workshop sessions that informed this toolkit.

What does the DDP say?

The City Centre Development and Delivery Plan (DDP) ([Part 1](#) & [Part 2](#)) outlines ‘the creation of an inclusive, sustainable and re-connected place for everybody. A place of diverse retail with vibrant cultural facilities and a thriving evening economy, whilst at the same time somewhere to call home.’ More information about the engagement work behind the DDP can be found on pages 15 and 16 of the DDP.

“Create a focal point/ landmark destination to draw people in.”

“Hold onto nature and water - create soft spaces and wildness, quiet spaces that are green and peaceful.”

“Make sure young people/ creatives have a voice in the future of the city.”

“Important feature of Podium is that it should host events.”

“We should be thinking at scale, do something different to inspire people to come into the city to shop, work and spend time.”

“Create spaces for live performance that are fit for purpose both indoor and outdoor.”

“Have ambition, beauty, be extraordinary, mind-blowing – the wow factor.”

Doing things differently.

Bristol should be pioneering in its approach to public art and cultural activation, setting it apart from other UK cities.

Not just objects.

It's important that the public art and cultural activation projects consider processes, skills and programming - not just physical objects. How projects can help address inequalities and bring social value through the lens of public art and cultural activation is crucial.

Diversify the pool of artists and producers.

Desire to provide skills and training to local people to widen the local commissioning pool for artists, designers and creative producers.

Deep listening.

How can BOC facilitate long-term 'embedded' engagement through artist-in-residence/engagement co-ordinator roles?

Early intervention is key to success.

Rather than shoehorn in public art once it's getting built, embed it in the development process and engage local groups in that.

Joined-up investment.

Providing a longer-term investment framework that can overcome short-term or single-project thinking to maximise positive impacts

Our Vision

In the City Centre, public art and cultural activation needs to shift perceptions from disruption to transformation.

Bringing local communities, businesses, residents and visitors on the journey as a shopping quarter evolves into a diverse and mixed-use city centre.

Projects should animate a joyful public realm and find places for culture on ground floors, provide significant moments of welcome and wayfinding, connect with nature, and hardwire in positive social impact approaches.



Windrush 75. Image credit, Lisa Whiting

What should projects in the City Centre achieve?

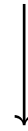
Guiding Principles

This page outlines guiding principles that public art and cultural activation projects should follow in the City Centre.

In the City Centre this means projects can deliver the guiding principles by:

A. Social engagement

Creatively engaging, informing and empowering our citizens, communities and stakeholders.



- Taking people of all ages on the journey during re-development
- Engaging communities and young people in the process of commissioning public art/urban realm
- Nurturing identity, independent spirit and creative culture as a key part of the city centre character and offer

B. Vibrant Placemaking

Imagining and contributing to liveable, loved, playful and healthy places to live, work and move through.



- Activating ground floor spaces with community and cultural uses
- Supporting the creation of new civic public realm spaces that foster health and wellbeing
- Repurposing heritage assets for cultural/community use
- Building vibrancy and sense of life to encourage dwell time and help animate spaces
- Creating a 24-hour destination, combining a diversified offer with a stronger evening economy
- Creating a distinctive and dynamic public spaces which provide a canvas for vibrant public life through the day and night

C. Sustainability

Supporting a programme of work that contributes to an environmentally and socially sustainable city.



- Supporting high street greening, the creation of a 'linear garden'
- Supporting the creation of new civic/park space
- Supporting the creation of 'Castle Park Civic meadow' spaces
- Supporting creation of permanent dedicated spaces which contribute to sustainability of cultural sector
- Designing for a changing climate
- Strengthening the blue and green relationship with Bristol's Floating Harbour

City Centre Principles

D. Quality urban design

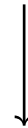
Embedding quality public art and culture into schemes as early as possible to maximise economic, civic and social value for developers, residents and users.



- Creating an equitable and inclusive city centre
- Supporting an enhanced ‘civic boulevard’
- Celebrating heritage and rediscover the character of the city centre
- Supporting meanwhile and pop-up uses which provide a sense of spontaneity and fun whilst supporting entrepreneurship
- Aligning to the Broadmead Public Realm Design Code

E. Cultural ecology

Nurturing Bristol’s cultural, creative ecology by commissioning artists and producers and providing space to allow their vision and ideas to thrive.



- Supporting the city centre’s two new ‘community corridors’
- Supporting the creation of events and activation spaces in the town centre
- Bringing celebrated artists to Bristol and making it a destination for culture
- Creating a culturally vibrant and distinctive city centre which grows its cultural capital with Bristol’s communities



Menu of Ideas

Small Projects

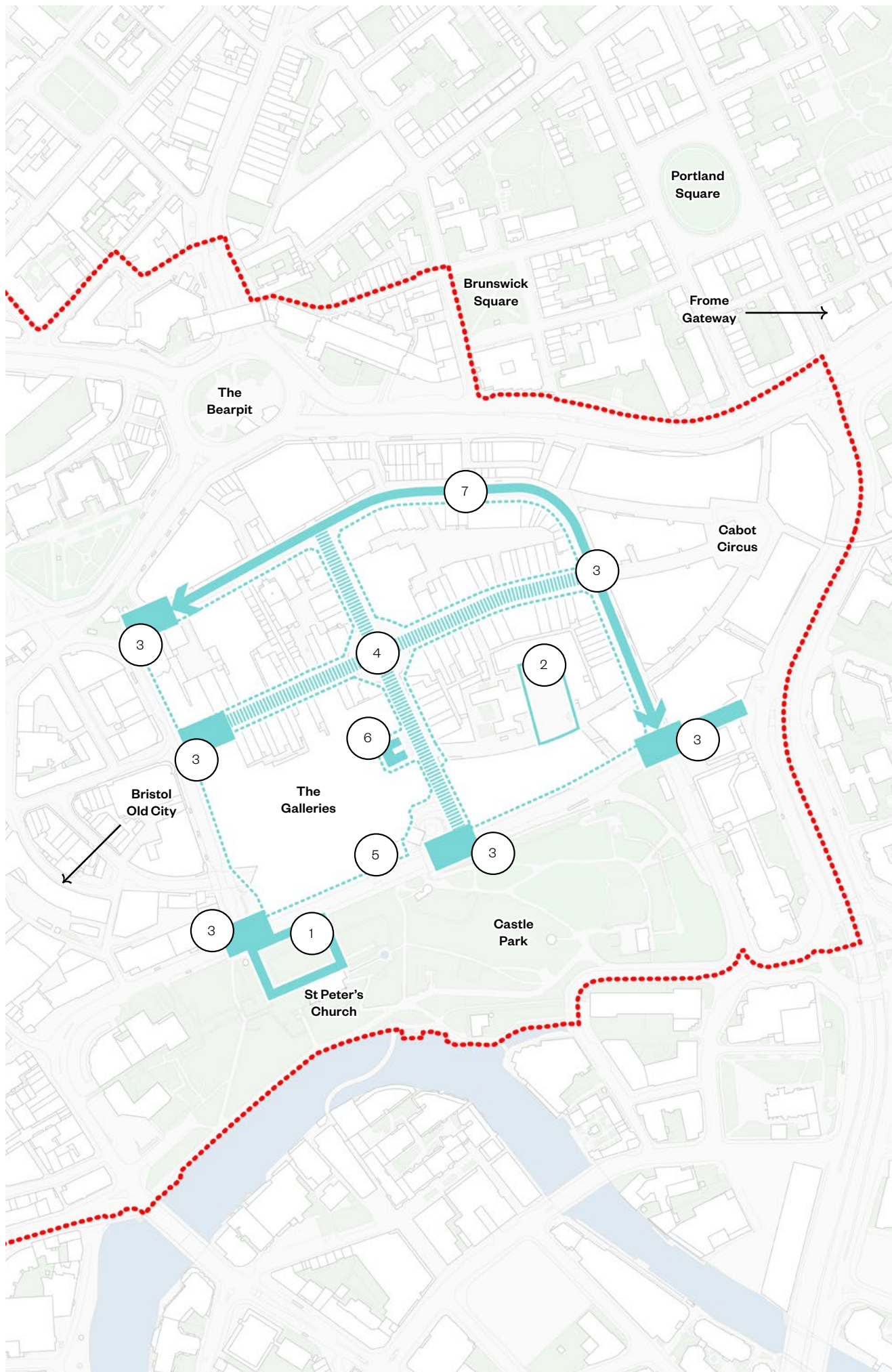
The map opposite presents a set of smaller projects which have the potential to be delivered individually or as a cluster.

Key

-  Identified opportunity areas
-  City Centre DDP boundary

See the following pages for 'Snapshot' and 'Spotlight' information on the 'Small' sized projects.

- 1 Activation of public realm in front of St Peter's church
- 2 Community event which celebrates multiple cultures through food
- 3 Mobile welcome moments
- 4 Co-design of temporary Broadmead street furniture range
- 5 Sculptural hoarding and flexible wayfinding system
- 6 Young creatives programme to link up across Bristol
- 7 Activation and testing of uses on Horsefair/Penn Street whilst in vehicular traffic transition



Menu of Ideas

Medium Projects

The map opposite presents a set of medium-sized projects which have the potential to be delivered individually or as a cluster.

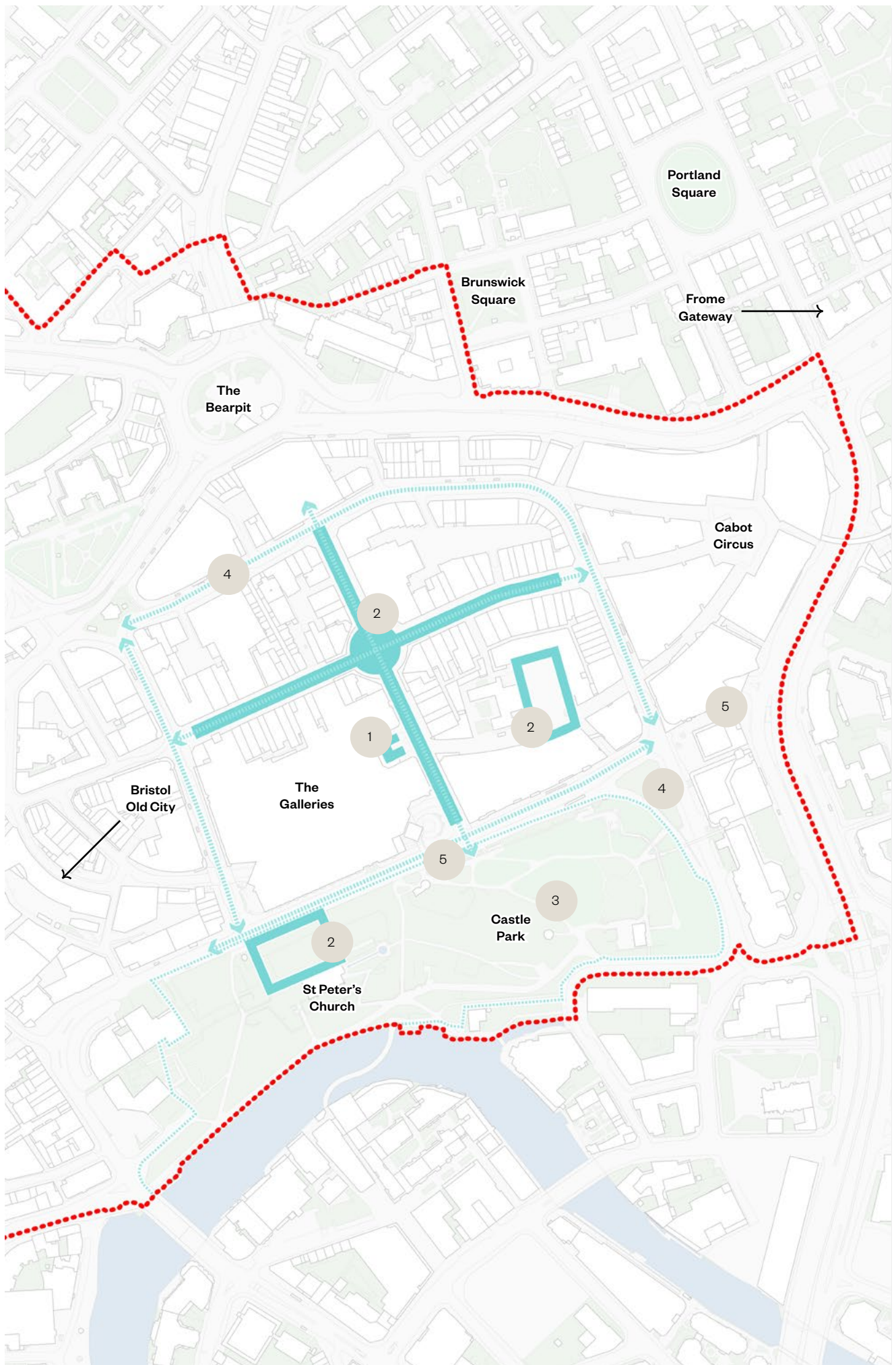
The delivery of these projects could be funded by smaller grants or funding pots and led by a range of different stakeholders.

Key

-  Identified opportunity areas
-  City Centre DDP boundary

See the following pages for 'Snapshot' and 'Spotlight' information on the 'Medium' sized projects.

- 1 Temporary use of Merchant Taylors' Almshouses by Bristol artist collectives and/or as Urban Room engagement hub to test uses and host engagement
- 2 Activation of existing public spaces through regular programme of activity to establish new attractions
- 3 Commission new work alongside city wide cultural events
- 4 Programme night-time performances and events in public space
- 5 Temporary lighting commission throughout city centre focusing on key routes



Menu of Ideas

Large Projects

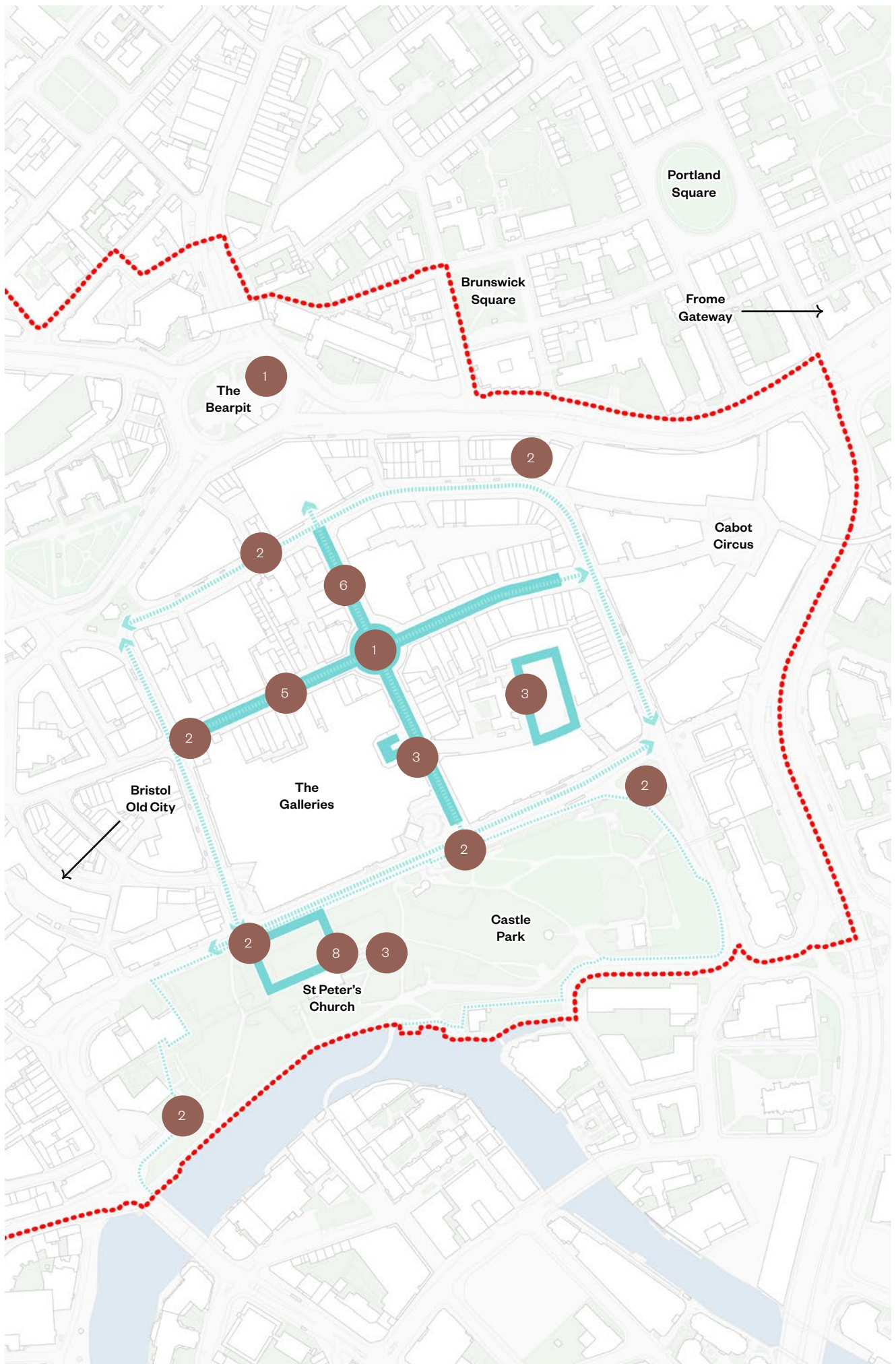
Bigger projects are an opportunity to be ambitious and to think at scale. Bringing different people together to bring long-term positive change to the City Centre.

Key

-  Identified opportunity areas
-  City Centre DDP boundary

See the following pages for 'Snapshot' and 'Spotlight' information on the 'Large' sized projects.

- 1 Create new focal point/ landmark commission for city centre
- 2 Celebrate key gateways to City Centre and into Castle Park
- 3 Activate listed building assets and adjacent public realm
- 4 Develop high quality public realm through action research
- 5 Artist-led high street greening and activation
- 6 Artist-led design of spaces along new civic boulevard
- 7 Permanent lighting commission along key routes through city centre or at junctions ie Podium to Merchant Street and Castle Park
- 8 Key artist commission in Castle Park, St Peter's Church square or a floating riverside walk



Making it Happen

- Delivering Projects
- Useful Contacts and Information



Community Launch, The Green Way, Bristol, 2020, Delivered by Design West, Image credit, Paul Blakemore

Delivering Projects

Alongside developments

If you are a local organisation, community group, artist collective or other stakeholder, you may want to deliver your own public art projects and cultural activations and get involved in an area-wide approach.

Key considerations might be:

- If you are within, or adjacent to, the City Centre or Frome Gateway areas, do any of the opportunities in this document resonate with you or cross over with your own values, expertise and plans for the future?
- Might your organisation be able to provide a developer with the resource (management and/or community participants) that they require to fulfil their own public art obligations?
- Does your organisation have a creative function? If so might you be able to assist a developer in delivering their public art and/or cultural activation plan? Could you act as their public art producer? Or as the artist or creative organisation that delivers or

- co-delivers a specific artwork or cultural activation project as listed in the opportunities?
- Or do you provide activity or represent a particular community or user group that a developer or strategic partner might wish to engage with in order to deliver one of the opportunities? As a future visitor, resident or business?

Contact Bristol City Council's Regeneration Team or Art and the Public Realm Team and let them know you are interested – and what you can provide.

They will be able to add you to the mailing list for regular updates, and connect you to any relevant opportunities to get involved.



Seeds of Change - A Floating Ballast Seed Garden, Bristol, 2012-17. Image credit, Max McClure #2

Delivering Projects

Useful Contacts and
information

**For more information about
delivering Public Art and
Cultural Activation projects in
Frome Gateway and the City
Centre, you can get in touch
with Bristol City Council using
the following contact details:**

citycentreregeneration@bristol.gov.uk

artandthepublicrealm@bristol.gov.uk

fromegateway@bristol.gov.uk



Hollow, Katie Paterson with Zeller & Moye, Bristol, 2016. Image credit, Max McClure

Glossary

Public Art

The term 'Public Art' refers to art that is in the public realm, regardless of whether it is situated on public or private property or whether it has been paid for with public or private money. Please see section on typologies above for the different ways of interpreting public art.

Public Art Plan

A Public Art Plan should always be written by a Public Art Producer/ Consultant. It lays out a developer approach to public art that meets Bristol City Council's definitions and principles, and the needs and opportunities of a specific scheme. Amendments and additions can be made/added to this document and signed off by the Public Art Officer as the scheme passes through the planning pathway. The public art programme should then be delivered against the details of the Public Art Plan.

Culture

Culture means many different things to different people including music, art, history, heritage, events and experiences where Bristol's diverse citizens can share, celebrate or learn. Culture also relates to how we understand, explore and inhabit places and contributes to how the communities that live there thrive.

Cultural Activation

Activity that contributes to the culture and conviviality of existing and new places. This might include events and happenings, as well as activating spaces for meeting and gathering. Often bringing people together, providing a sense of shared identity and belonging, and empowerment; encouraging participation in civic life. Cultural activation involves working with creative partners/cultural producers and/or artists and engages with local stakeholders and assets. It does not necessarily lead to a permanent outcome; it could be an experience, event or temporary intervention.

Social Value

Social value is a way of understanding and measuring the benefit to society from the delivery of goods and services. It is an approach used to broaden thinking about 'value for money' beyond financial cost or price, by considering the value of social, economic and environmental benefits too.

Cultural Strategy

A Cultural Strategy in a place shaping context takes a connected, cohesive approach across a defined physical area to ensure a strong and appropriate cultural life can be safeguarded and encouraged to grow to contribute to welcoming, distinctive and attractive places.

Section 106

A legal agreement between an applicant seeking planning permission and the local planning authority, which is used to mitigate the impact of the development on the local community and infrastructure. Funds agreed through the S106 process are held by the council and ring-fenced for that specific purpose.

See more at bristol.gov.uk/council/council-spending-and-performance/section-106-money

Planning Condition

Planning Conditions are attached to granted planning permissions, enabling development to proceed where it would otherwise have been necessary to refuse planning permission. Conditions can enhance the quality of development and enable development to proceed where it would otherwise have been necessary to refuse planning permission, by mitigating the adverse effects. The objectives of planning are best served when the power to attach conditions to a planning permission is exercised in a way that is clearly seen to be fair, reasonable and practicable. It is important to ensure that conditions are tailored to tackle specific problems, rather than standardised or used to impose broad unnecessary controls.

Bristol City Centre Community and Cultural Space Report

This is a report being produced following the emerging Local Plan policy DS1A. It outlines how Bristol City Council can diversify the character of the city centre (and Broadmead in particular) through the effective activation, allocation, and management of new ground floor city centre units created through development.

Broadmead Public Realm Design Code

A document produced to guide public realm and landscaping improvements happening alongside the transformation of streets across the Broadmead area to improve active and sustainable travel infrastructure

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