How do we approach and understand abstract, global issues like climate change at the local level? BWK-BCN is a participatory art project exploring this question through a co-produced, fictional conurbation: a new place created by merging the cultures, values, languages and species of Barcelona with Berwick-upon-Tweed as an adaptation to climate change.

Through participatory activities and the development of a playful toolkit, members of the wider Berwick community collaboratively investigated what a merging of Berwick and Barcelona might be like. How does climate influence infrastructures, environmental systems, and socio-cultural activities? By exploring the relationships between climate and culture, we imagined how revisioning culture might play a critical part in our adaptation to climate change.

BWK-BCN created new learning and catalysed opportunities for stakeholders to reimagine Berwick. The project shed light on challenges and advantages of coordinating between institutions and communities, and the importance of drawing upon local experience and local expertise. Above all, participants shared the value they saw in how BWK-BCN brought together stakeholders from varying backgrounds in order to suspend disbelief and collaboratively reimagine how we address issues.

“This experience gave us permission to play, to remove restrictions. You made me think very differently.”