

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH

August 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

You are hereby invited to attend a hybrid meeting (in person and via Zoom) of the Place and Prosperity Committee of the Ards and North Down Borough Council which will be held in the Council Chamber, 2 Church Street, Newtownards on **Thursday 7 September 2023**, commencing at **7.00pm**.

Yours faithfully

Stephen Reid
Chief Executive
Ards and North Down Borough Council

A G E N D A

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Draft Urban Masterplan Review: Presentation by James Hennessey, Paul Hogarth and Co (report enclosed)
4. Port Marine Safety Code – Presentation by K Baird, Boatfolk (*no covering report*)
5. Ards and Bangor Business Awards (report enclosed)
6. TNI Market Led Product Development Programme Delivery Review (report enclosed)
7. Visit Belfast 12 Month Overview 2022/23 (report enclosed)
8. Armed Forces Day 2025 (report to follow)
9. Tourism Growth Events Fund and Bid for Events Fund (report enclosed)
10. Project 24 – Infrastructure (report to follow)
11. Small Settlements Regeneration Programme – Greyabbey Community Park and Viewing Platform (report enclosed)
12. Urban Regeneration Projects (report enclosed)
13. Place Directorate Budgetary Control Report – June 2023 (report enclosed)
14. Prosperity Directorate Budgetary Control Report – June 2023 (report enclosed)

15. Proposed Rural Projects for Development (report enclosed)
16. Redevelopment of Steps at Princetown Road, Bangor (report enclosed)
17. Footpath Provision at Shore Road, Ballyhalbert (report enclosed)
18. Response to Notice of Motion - Safety Concerns at Kircubbin Harbour (report enclosed)
19. Any Other Notified Business
20. Notice of Motions

*****IN CONFIDENCE*****

21. Pickie Q1 Report – April-June 2023 (report enclosed)
22. Exploris Q1 Report – April-June 2023 (report enclosed)
23. Bangor Marina Q1 Report – April-June 2023 (report enclosed)
24. Northern Ireland Enterprise Support Service - (NIESS) Update (report enclosed)
25. Belfast Region City Deal, Bangor Waterfront Update (report enclosed)

MEMBERSHIP OF PLACE AND PROSPERITY COMMITTEE (16 MEMBERS)

Alderman Adair	Councillor Kennedy
Alderman Armstrong-Cotter	Councillor MacArthur
Alderman McDowell	Councillor McCracken
Councillor Ashe	Councillor McCollum
Councillor Blaney	Councillor McKimm
Councillor Edmund	Councillor McLaren
Councillor Gilmour	Councillor Rossiter
Councillor Hollywood	Councillor Smart

Unclassified

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ITEM 3

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	07 September 2023
Responsible Director	Director of Place
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Regeneration
Date of Report	25 May 2023
File Reference	RDP43
Legislation	n/a
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Draft Urban Masterplan Reviews
Attachments	Town and City Masterplans

Background

As previously reported the Paul Hogarth Company has been appointed to review the Town and City Masterplans with a view to create a more focussed, achievable and measurable 'Place' plans to assist in the delivery of realisable regeneration projects for each Town/City.

Process

Prior to the appointment, the Council facilitated a Town/City 'Conversation' giving the residents and businesses an opportunity to exchange information on their aspirations for the Town/City Centres. A significant number of surveys were completed and this information was shared with each Advisory Group and subsequently used as the backdrop for the work carried out by Hogarth's.

Since the conversations, Hogarth's has been engaging with statutory bodies, had internal workshops across the Council Departments and also re-engaged with the public by hosting a number of public engagements sessions. These not only analysed the existing Masterplans, but also looked at the direction of travel for any new Place plans. There have also been several key meetings with the TAGs/CAG to analyse findings and present new proposals going forward.

Unclassified

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As this process is now concluding, the Paul Hogarth Company will present the draft new plans as a culmination of all the consultations to date. The new plans will be the basis to develop new achievable projects, as well as outlining how to monitor and review the plans and outcomes going forward. The new plans will also help inform the strategic direction for regeneration in the Town/City Centres and inform the Regeneration Service Plan for the future.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council approves the new Town/City Centre Masterplans as presented by the Paul Hogarth Company.

the paul hogarth company

mcgarryconsult.com

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Ards and
North Down
Borough Council



Bangor
Masterplan Review

Draft - August 23

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5. New Priorities for Bangor City Centre
6. Engagement
7. Priorities
8. Action & Delivery

Introduction

This report has been prepared to summarise the findings of a review of the Bangor Town Centre Masterplan (2011). It has been researched and prepared by The Paul Hogarth Company, with McGarry Consulting and also informed by a public engagement exercise undertaken by Ards and North Down Borough Council.

Much has changed since the masterplan was produced in 2011, both locally within the study area (including achieving city status) and more widely in terms of the social, economic, and environmental landscape.

The following section sets out an understanding of current projects and initiatives, an overview of conversations with stakeholders as well as a fresh analysis of Bangor.

It is followed by revised priorities and actions for Bangor City Centre to be delivered over the next 8 years.





What has happened since the masterplan was written?

The Bangor Town Centre Masterplan was produced by URS Scott Wilson in 2011 through a collaborative process led by the Department for Social Development with North Down Borough Council.

Much has changed since then, including the formation of Ards and North Down Borough Council in 2015 and the granting of Bangor's city status in 2022. National and global circumstances have also changed, the Covid 19 pandemic and the emerging severity of the Climate Crisis.

A summary of projects delivered since 2011 is provided in the following section.

a. Masterplan Delivery

Bangor Masterplan - Projects	Progress			Notes / Comments
	Uncompleted	On-going	Completed	
High Street/Hamilton Road				
Mills Road/Hamilton Road Development Opportunity Site	✓			
40 Mill Street			✓	Hamilton Road Community Hub
Bank Lane (off Albert Street)	✓			
High Street – Environmental Improvement Scheme			✓	
Mills Road – Environmental Improvement Scheme	✓			
Hamilton Road – Environmental Improvement Scheme		✓		Partially complete
Mills Row Lane – Environmental Improvement Scheme	✓			
Frontage of the Flagship Centre 'Façade Frontage Enhancement'	✓			Recent new private sector owner of Flagship with plans for the centre
Gateway Features – High Street/Hamilton Road	✓			
Green Corridor – Hamilton Road	✓			
Abbey Street/Main Street				
Queen's Parade Development Opportunity Site		✓		Project received planning approval Sept 2022
Lands to the Rear of ASDA Car Park Area	✓			
Existing NDBC Leisure Centre			✓	Site of Premier Inn
Shop Frontage Enhancement Scheme			✓	

Bangor Masterplan - Projects	Progress			Notes / Comments
	Uncompleted	On-going	Completed	
Abbey Street/Main Street – Environmental Improvement Scheme			✓	
Road and Traffic Proposals at Main Street/Hamilton Road			✓	Traffic study complete
Abbey Street 'Decked Car Park'	✓			
Public Realm Improvements – Abbey Street			✓	
Abbey Street – Gateway Feature			✓	Heritage public art
Waterfront Development				
Theatre Development/Hotel Development –Commercial and Leisure		✓		Site part of Queen's Parade Development
The Long Hole – Sailing Centre		✓		Sailing Centre planned at BYC
Waterfront Promenade Redevelopment		✓		Queen's Parade Development / Bangor Waterfront
Waterfront Boat Yard Boundary			✓	Will be further reviewed as part of Bangor Waterfront Development
Gateway Features		✓		Bangor Waterfront Development
Focal Points for the Pier and Long Hole		✓		Bangor Waterfront Development
Queen's Parade/ Bridge Street – Environmental Improvement Scheme		✓		Site part of Queen's Parade Development
Refurbishment of Pickie Fun Park			✓	Will be further developed as part of Bangor Waterfront Development
Marine Gardens Area		✓		Site part of Queen's Parade Development
Civic Plaza		✓		Site part of Queen's Parade Development
Jetty and Public Access to the Waterfront		✓		Site part of Queen's Parade Development/ Bangor Waterfront

b. Other Successes





How is Bangor today?

Overview

Bangor, granted City status in 2022, has a population of 64,596 (2021 Census). It is 13 miles east of Belfast along the coast and has good transport links. A modern rail and bus hub lies close to the city centre and Bangor City Hall. Both NI's main airports are within 40minutes, and almost 1 million people live within an hour's drive.

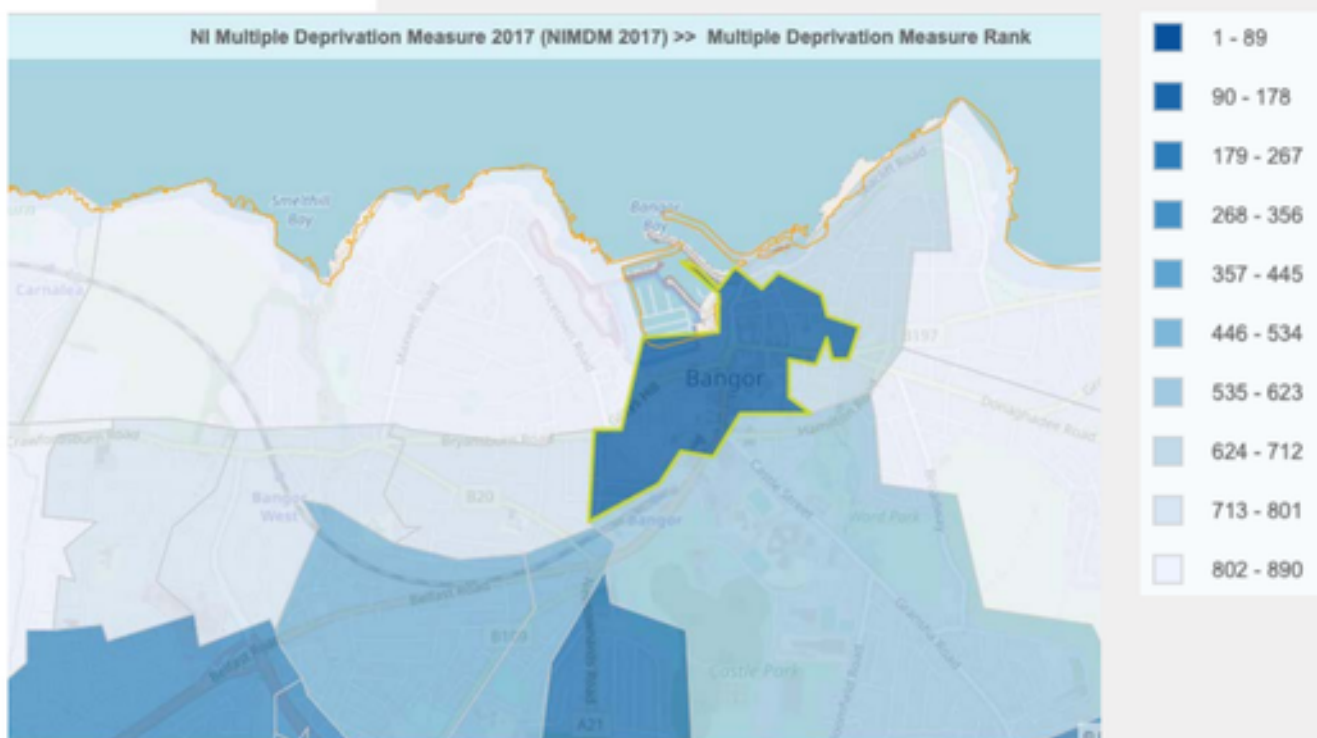


a. Socio-Economic Profile

City & City Centre Profile

(Bangor Central A, F & C Super Data Zones)

The city centre has a population of 4,200 and grew by 2.14% between 2010 and 2020, which was less than half the NI average of 5.02%. Bangor city centre has an older population (56-72% over 40, v NI average 49%) and fewer children (10-13% 0-14 year olds, v NI 19%). Leading to smaller households (72-85% 1-2 person households v NI 61%). In many parts of the city centre, flats make up half of all accommodation (v ANDBC average 11%) and roughly 2 in 5 have no access to a car or van (v ANDBC 15%). City centre residents have high levels of qualifications (39-55% at Level 4 or above, v NI 34%) and low unemployment (4%) with at least 2 in 5 economically inactive. Almost half travel to work by car, with 11-18% walking or cycling (v ANDBC 6%) and 6% use the bus or train (v ANDBC 3%). Active travel for those travelling to study is 22-38% walking or cycling (v ANDBC 20%) and 18% getting the bus or train (v ANDBC 23%). Between 21-31% work from home (v NI 19%, ANDBC 23%), with between 23-33% travelling less than 5km to work (v ANDBC 21%). 'Harbour 1' within the city centre is considered among the 20% most deprived areas (super output areas) in NI, and amongst the 2% most deprived areas in NI in terms of 'Living Environment' and 'Crime and Disorder'.



b. Sectoral Profile

Property Profile

Bangor has 674 properties within the city centre, of which 145 are vacant (21.5%). This is a slight rise from 2016 (20.7%) but is in line with the NI average of 23.7% and is significantly lower than Belfast (34.2%). However, along Main Street there are some notable large empty properties, a number of which sit within the Queen's Parade and Flagship redevelopment plans. There is 17,017m² of office space in the city centre across 158 properties. However, shops, supermarkets and showrooms dominate accounting for almost three-quarters (73.5%, 68,966m²) of the city-centre floorspace.

Business Profile

In 2021, there were 385 businesses in the city centre, 50 (11.5%) fewer than in 2013. Employee numbers are down 8.9% (365 jobs) over the same period, led largely by a fall of 395 jobs (37.7%) in 'Wholesale & Retail'. The top 3 sectors are 'Wholesale & Retail' (652 jobs); 'Accommodation & Food Services' (589 jobs up 11.3% from 2013); and 'Human Health & Social Work' (340, up 7.2%). There has been a notable increase in Art, Entertainment and Recreation Jobs from 30 in 2013 to 104 in 2021 (136 in pre-Covid 2019).

A decline in Finance and Insurance (172 to 96) jobs has been balanced out by a similar rise in 'Professional, Scientific & Technical' (145 to 228) jobs over the same period.

Despite a 17% fall in 'Wholesale & Retail' job numbers between 2015 and 2019, sector turnover increased by over 50% over the same period. Rising from £62.6m (2015) to £94.0m (2019). Over the same period Accommodation & Food Services turnover fell by 42% from £49.8m to £35.1m with steady jobs numbers. Overall, turnover fell by 7.2% from £213m to £198m between 2015 and 2019, despite a notable quadruple jump in 'Administrative & Support Services' turnover (£4.6m in 2018 to £17.9m in 2019) and retail rise.

Tourism Profile

As of June 2023, there are 3 hotels within the city centre, 2 of which are open to the public and 1 that is currently publicly closed due to a government contract. The Nines Hotel offers 33 bedspaces/15 rooms, and the Premier Inn Hotel offers 170 bedspaces/85 rooms. There is also 1 Bed & Breakfast offering 3 bedspaces. Additionally there is a total of 18 Self-Catering properties offering 124 bedspaces.



c. Policy Context

National and Regional

The Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS)

The RDS puts in place spatial planning, transport and housing priorities that will support and enable the aspirations of the Region to be met.

Within the RDS, Bangor is identified within the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area (BMUA) as an important retail and commercial centre, with the potential for its development centred on its modern marina, creating activities around the promenade area, and widening its economic base as a means of reducing its role as a dormitory commuter town.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement 2015 (SPPS)

The SPPS supports positive place making as a people centered approach with the key to successful place-making set out through identifying the assets of a particular place as well as developing a vision for its future potential. Successful place making promotes accessibility and inclusivity for all, acknowledges the importance of creating hospitable and safe places, and emphasises the contribution of vibrancy, adaptability, and diversity of use and how it plays a role in contributing to vitality of place and how it will endure into the future.

Living Places - An Urban Stewardship and Design Guide for Northern Ireland 2014

The Urban Stewardship Design Guide establishes the key principles behind good place-making and recognises the wider economic, cultural and community benefits of achieving excellence in the stewardship and design in these places, be they existing or proposed.

Local Context

Local Development Plan

The Council is now preparing the Local Development Plan. Until the LDP is adopted, planning decisions are made in the context of the following existing plans:

- **Ards and Down Area Plan 2015**
- **North Down and Ards Area Plan 1984-1995**
Due to the adoption of the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) being deemed unlawful and subsequently quashed the North Down and Ards Area Plan 1984-1995 is the statutory development plan for the legacy North Down area.

The Big Plan for Ards and North Down 2017 - 2032

The Big Plan sets out the vision for the next 15 years for Ards and North Down to be a vibrant, connected, healthy, safe, and prosperous place to be. The Plan sets out 5 outcomes to achieve the vision:

Outcome 1:

All people in Ards and North Down fulfil their lifelong potential.

Outcome 2:

All people in Ards and North Down enjoy good health and wellbeing.

Outcome 3:

All people in Ards and North Down live in communities where they are respected, area safe and feel secure.

Outcome 4:

All people in Ards and North Down benefit from a prosperous economy.

Outcome 5:

All people in Ards and North Down feel pride from having access to a well-managed sustainable environment.

Integrated Strategy for Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development 2018 - 2030

The Strategy presents a coherent vision for the pursuit of prosperity for Ards and North Down. It responds to the vision and outcomes of the Big Plan and is used as a common point of reference for the growth of the economy, the welcoming of visitors and the improvement of both urban and rural places.

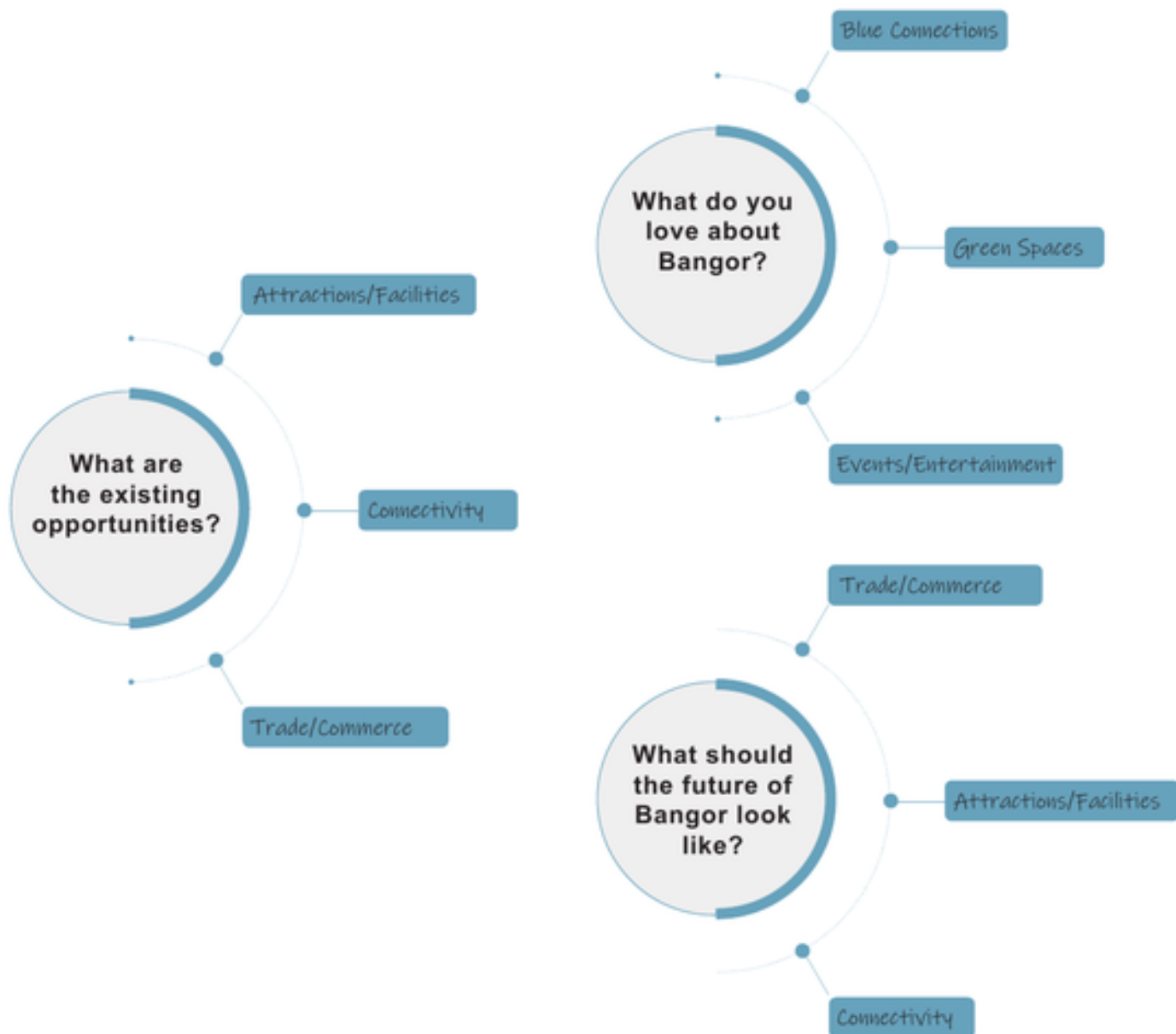
d. Bangor Today - Conversations & Perceptions

A series of conversations have taken place through the public engagement the Council carried out, as well as targeted workshops with the City Advisory Group, council officers and elected members.

The Council organised a drop-in event and on-line survey providing the opportunity for the community to engage with council officers and representatives from the Bangor City Advisory Group and provide their views and aspirations for the future of the city.

Drop-In Event:
198 comments

On-line Survey:
111 responses



Why live in Bangor?

- Blue Connections
- Green Spaces
- Family
- Connectivity

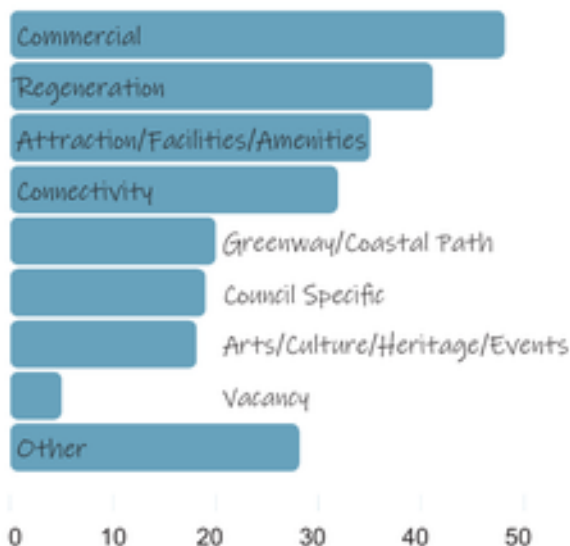
What are the undesirables about Bangor?

- Lack of Regeneration & Development
- Shopping
- Maintenance

What is a disadvantage for businesses in Bangor?

- Lack of Regeneration & Development
- High Rates

Areas for Improvement



The Future of Bangor?

Vibrant Desirable Exciting Smart
 Coast Tourism-led Energetic
 Attractive Thriving Bustling Exceptional
 Preserved Realised Seaside Hub
 Welcome Growing Regenerated
 Proud Inclusive Smart Sorted Pretty Cultural
 Unspoilt Modern Green Busy Cleaner
 Progressive Updated Interesting

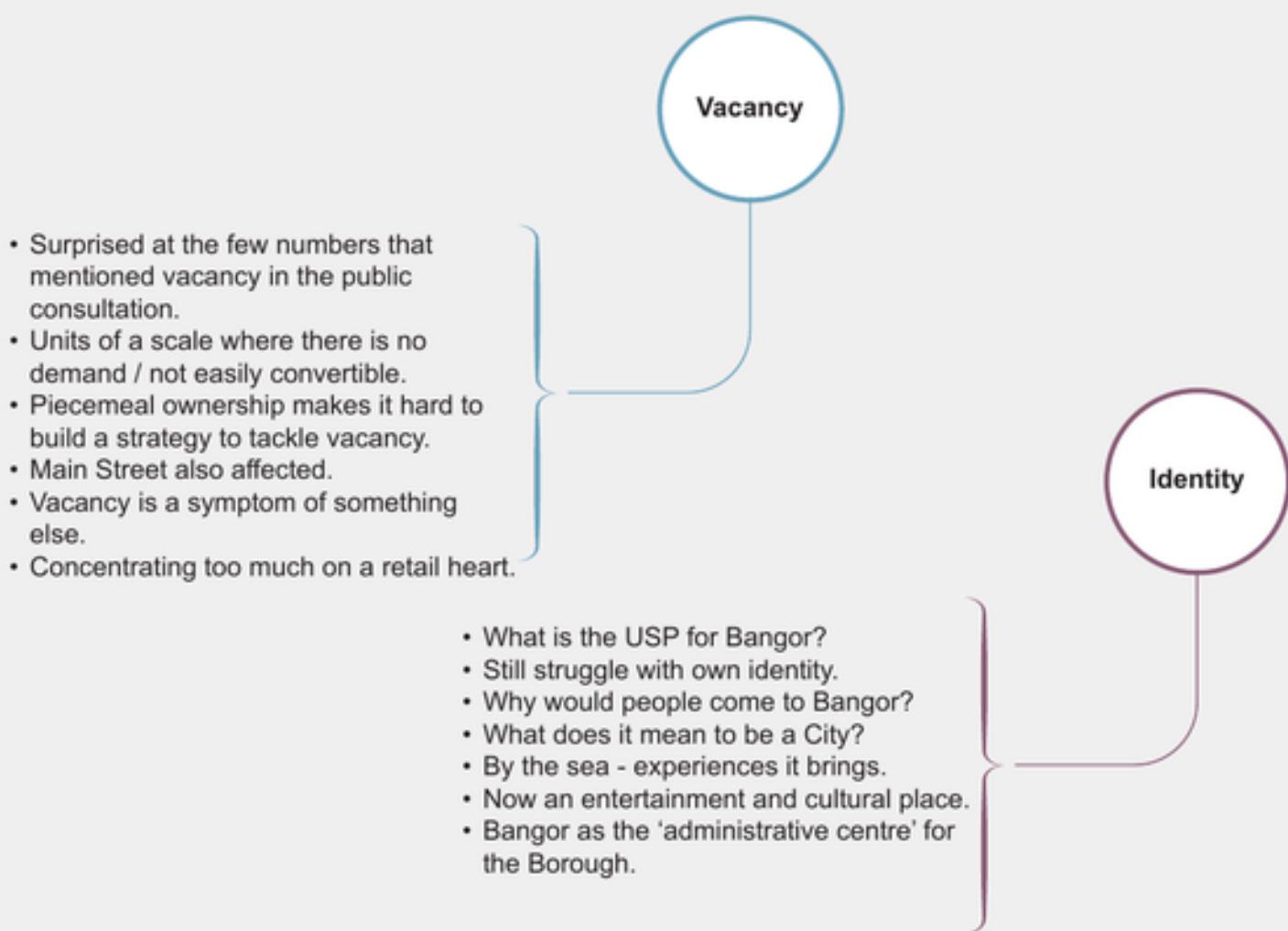
d. Bangor Today - Conversations & Perceptions

Further conversations have taken place through targeted workshops with the City Advisory Group, council officers and elected members.

Through discussions it has been identified that the city centre needs to add in a new mix of use to complement the current retail offer, helping to retain people within Bangor.

It was felt that a number of the physical building projects are either planned or completed, there is now a need to strengthen the connection between people and place to shift the focus to a city centre environment where people feel comfortable spending time.

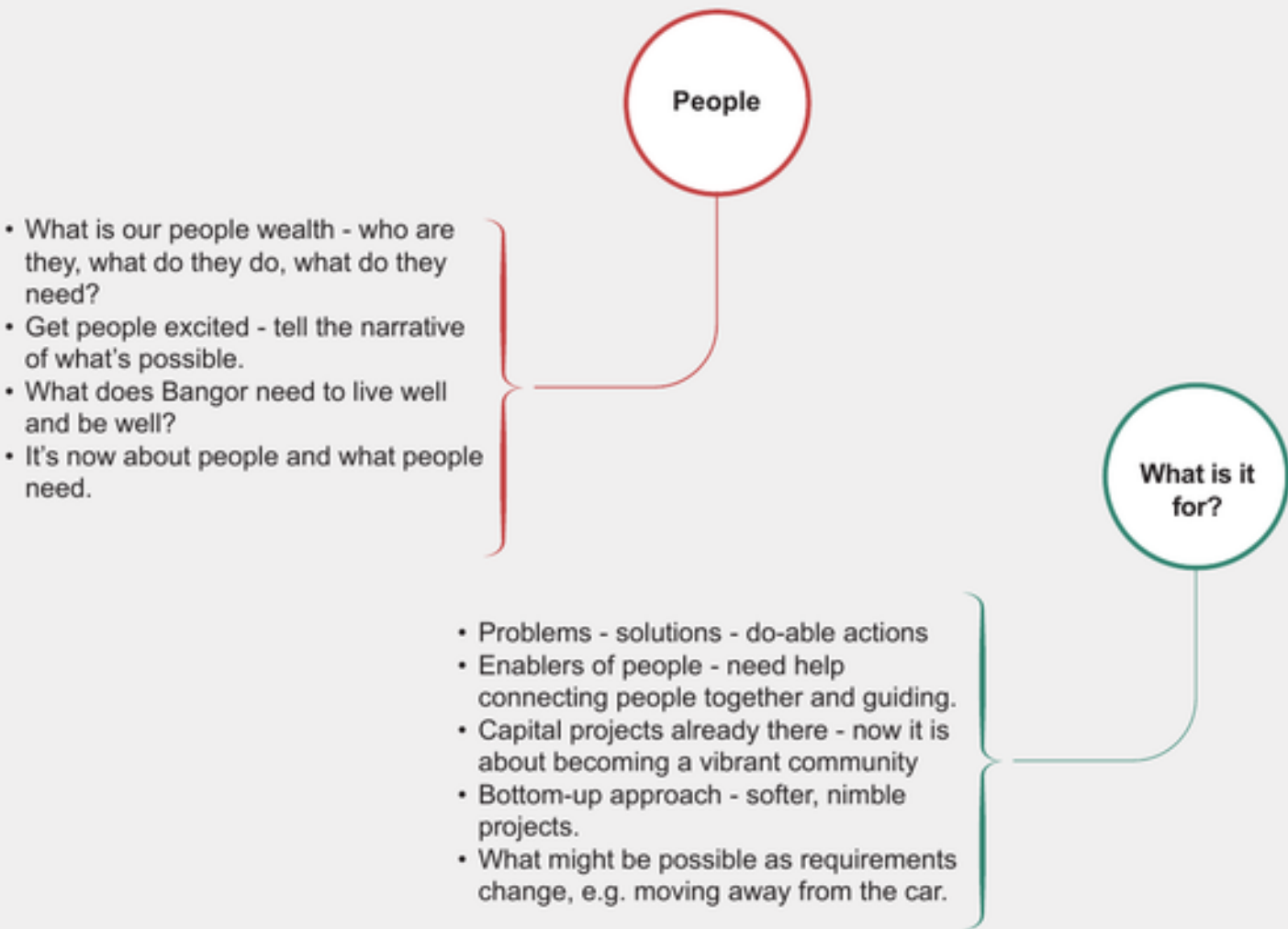
Life and vibrancy are key to a thriving city centre, where many businesses depend on footfall. In Bangor, it is important that efforts are made to attract people, encouraging them to spend time in the centre.



It was felt that shorter and more cost-effective time frames would be suitable rather than capital investment heavy projects. The masterplan was originally focused on bricks, pavement, and lighting but the focus needs to shift to what people need.

There was discussion regarding the identity of Bangor now it has achieved city status and a feeling that residents were unclear what this means going forward but that language should reflect this change.

Conversations led to questions regarding how the masterplan could be best used going forward. We will begin to use our streets differently and move away from the car. Is the masterplan a way to show what might be possible as requirements change? What do we need to live well through Bangor as a conduit? What do people need from their city to live well and be well?



e. Bangor Today - Urban Design Analysis

The largest settlement in Ards and North Down, Bangor sits prominently on the northern coast. The city has grown, changing roles from a popular tourist destination to a commuter town, owing to its proximity to Belfast, and has now been awarded city status.

The centre has remained relatively compact in nature, with its historic form still visible with built form fronting along Main Street towards the sea.

As the city has expanded inland a series of radial routes have developed connecting pockets of residential areas to the central core. Large footprints incorporating retail and administrative functions have clustered along the A2 route, competing with the city centre and creating a pull to the periphery of the settlement and making driving to these destinations an easy choice. This has had an impact on the arrival with little sense of a clearly defined welcome point into the city.



Bangor - Urban Growth





OS County Series 2nd Edition c.1860

OS County Series 5th Edition 1919-1963



City Wide Context

Street Pattern & Grain

The city centre consists of a grid of streets and continuous built form that frames the views in and out of the centre, providing glimpses across rooftops and change in topography and levels.

The compact nature of the city centre makes it easily navigable with streets leading towards the sea and a clear break in the urban form opening up views to the water and creating a draw.



Street Pattern & Heritage



○ Changes in levels ○ Framed views ○ Marina ○ Framed views across the city

Landmarks, such as the McKee Clock Tower and the spires of the Presbyterian Church and the Church of Ireland, provide visual wayfinding cues throughout the city centre.

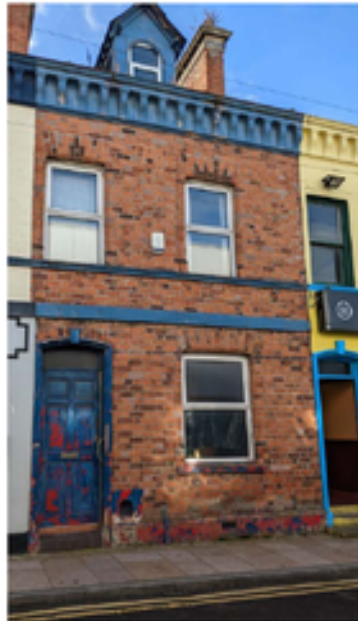
Heritage

The city centre has a number of Listed Buildings with a cluster centered around the junction of Main Street, Hamilton Road and Central Avenue.

There are several buildings which contribute to the city’s heritage and character, from the small scale 2-storey terraced residential buildings to the grander 3-storey Victorian terraces fronting onto Queen’s Parade, all of which tell the story of Bangor’s heritage.



Ulster Bank and Northern Bank - Main Street



Terrace - King Street



Contrast of Old and New

Movement

Much of the city centre is within a 400metre radius, approximately a 5-minute walk. Its compact nature has resulted in walkable core, with public realm improvements adding to the quality of the environment.

There is a strong pedestrian flow drawing people from the train station down Main Street towards the Marina. Cars have a detrimental impact on pedestrian movement with the arrival from the train station fronting onto a large and busy junction, making crossing the street challenging.

- Key Pedestrian Movement
- ↔ Significant Crossing Point
- ⊙ Point of Orientation
- On-Going Projects / Success
- Queens Parade Development Area
- ▨ Public Realm Improvements
- City Centre
- ⋯ Bangor Waterfront



Movement



Arrival from train station



Public realm improvements



Marina

The seafront and marina are popular areas for walking, providing a natural draw to the spectacular coastline but currently feels disconnected with the rest of the city centre, in part due to the volume of car parking along the waterfront, the vision of Queen’s Parade is to change this into a new waterfront Gardens.

Success & On-going projects

Since the Masterplan was completed in 2011 there have been several projects already taking place or planned for the near future:

- The Queen’s Parade Development is planned to include a mixed-use development and new public realm space.
- The success of Open House and the refurbishment of the Court House and the opportunity it provides for social interaction is an important addition to the city centre.
- A new use for the Flagship is potentially planned in the future.
- The Bangor Waterfront Development Framework was produced in 2020 providing a vision for the 2-mile stretch of waterfront.



Pickie Park



Project 24



The Flagship Centre



The Way Forward

Analysis Summary:

Car based city centre focused on vehicle movement	X
Compact and walkable city centre	✓
Retail and administrative function on periphery competing with the city centre	X
Poor sense of arrival	X
Older age profile than national average	!
City centre is heavily dominated by retail use	X
A shift in focus to people is needed	!
Several successful projects undertaken and planned	✓



Masterplan Vision (2011):

“Bangor Town Centre will be re-established as a high quality, vibrant competitive town with a distinctive and historic maritime character. This will be achieved through effective and strategic regeneration of its key maritime asset. The town will be renowned as a welcoming place geared to families, youth, and the elderly. The town centre will be a location where people want to visit, live and work in and where businesses are attracted to locate in and grow.”

Masterplan Aims:

Aim 1:
To make Bangor Town Centre a premier, high-quality destination in Northern Ireland

Aim 2:
Bangor Town Centre should reconnect with its waterfront

Aim 3:
Bangor Town Centre should have a strong unique identity

Following public engagement it was evident that the masterplan vision and aims are still relevant, but there is an opportunity to go further to create far reaching positive implications for the city. Building on the success of current projects there is potential to contribute towards Bangor becoming a place people want to spend time in.

With Bangor’s status now changed to a city there is an opportunity to reflect this new role with administrative functions having a presence within the city centre, driving forward footfall, and adding to the mix.

The masterplan has the ability to excite and inspire the people of Bangor by providing a narrative of what is possible in their city and placing the community at the heart.



New Priorities for Bangor City Centre

Five new priorities are proposed for Bangor City Centre, drawing upon the findings of the research and engagement process.



A. Develop and deliver the waterfront

Exciting plans are afoot and funding now committed for the Bangor Waterfront. It is imperative for Bangor that these transformative plans are delivered to the highest standard.

B. Tackle vacancy

Much concern has been aired regarding vacancy in Bangor City Centre. This requires a concerted and multifaceted effort to address each building on a case-by-case basis. A number of these sit within the plans for Queen's Parade and Flagship redevelopment.

C. Make the streets people friendly

Like many town and city centres, Bangor must work to readdress the balance between people and vehicles. A range of short and long-term interventions are therefore required.

D. Connect the centre

The development pattern of Bangor has been such that the car has become the primary means of connection to the city centre. Efforts are now required to forge stronger and more sustainable links between the city and its centre.

E. Development of the existing brand to reflect city-status

With its new city status, Bangor must further shape its identity, not only to attract visitors and investment, but also to nurture local pride and confidence.



Engagement

A second round of conversations have taken place through a public engagement exercise. By listening to the people of Bangor during the first round of conversations the proposed priorities have developed. The public were invited to view information both online and also at a drop-in event before providing their feedback through a short online survey. Community engagement was facilitated by members of the team, council officers and representatives from the Bangor City Advisory Group.

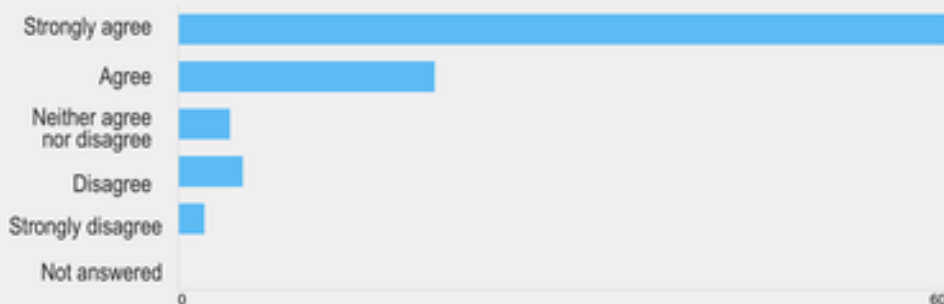
From this stage there was a total of **91 responses** to the survey with the results set out in the following section. In response to the feedback, the draft priorities for Bangor were revised.



Engagement Results

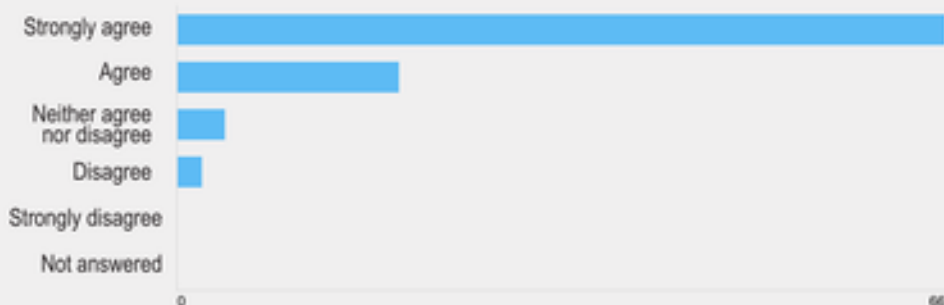
A. Develop and deliver the waterfront

To what extent do you agree with the priority: Develop and deliver the waterfront?



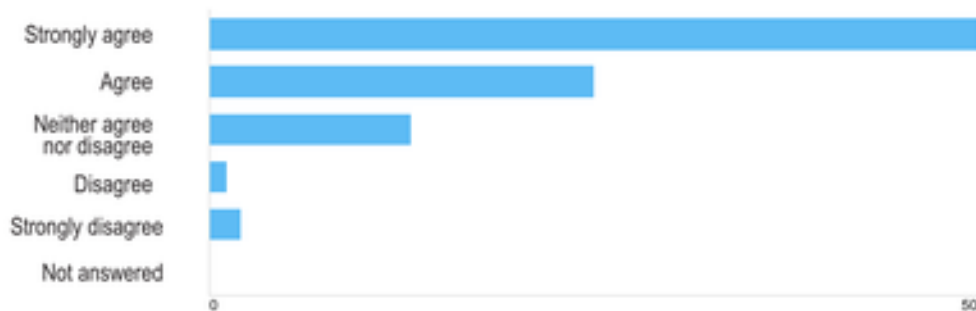
B. Tackle vacancy

To what extent do you agree with the priority: Tackle vacancy?



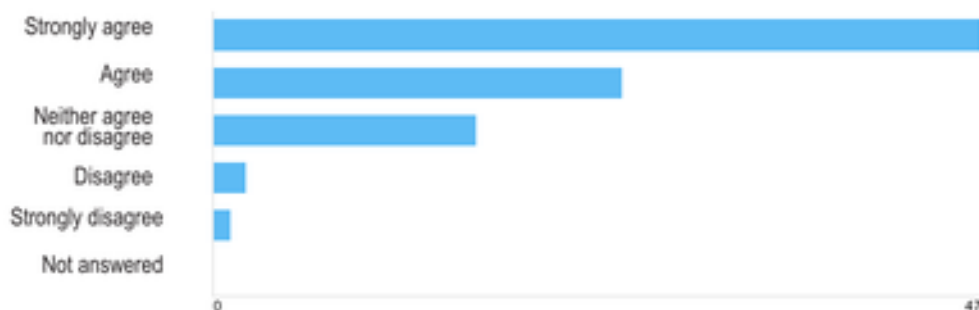
C. Make the streets people friendly

To what extent do you agree with the priority: Make the streets people friendly?



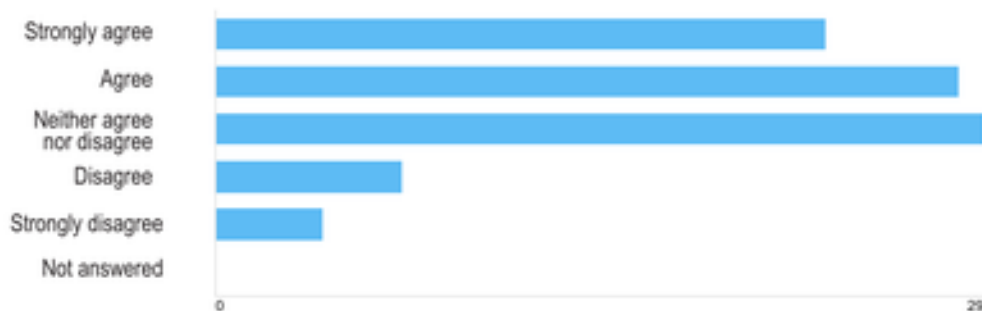
D. Connect with the centre

To what extent do you agree with the priority: Connect with the centre?

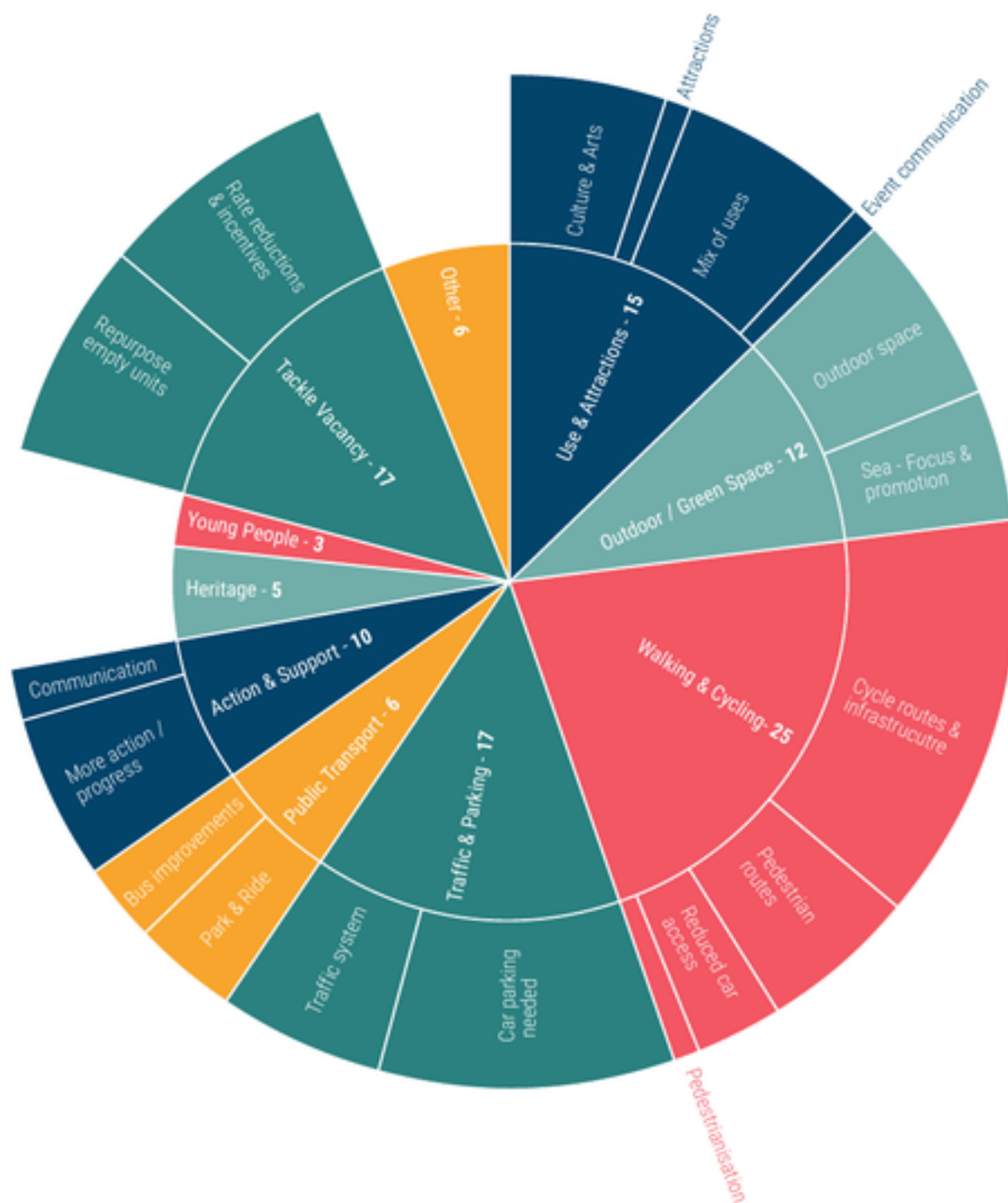


E. Development of a city-wide brand

Question 4: To what extent do you agree with the priority: Development of a city-wide brand



Other ideas for priorities for the City Centre 89 Responses



PRIORITIES

A. Develop and Deliver the Bangor Waterfront

Ensure the high-quality design and construction of committed waterfront projects, including Queen's Parade, Marine Gardens and City Deal Projects. Coordination between proposals will be key for consistency, developed through engagement with stakeholders and the public. Early consideration of management requirements and opportunities will also help to maximise the return on investment.

The Bangor Town Centre Masterplan identified the potential of the waterfront to drive regeneration and prosperity. Since that time much work has been undertaken to prepare a series of proposals, which now have funding secured through the Belfast Region City Deal, the Leveling Up Fund and a private sector development partner.

The development at Queen's Parade will see vacant buildings transformed into a mixed use quarter comprising apartments, office space, retail and hospitality.

Meanwhile Marine Gardens will be transformed into a high quality waterfront park and promenade, replacing car parking with extensive gardens and public spaces.

The Bangor Waterfront development focuses on realising the potential of a 2.2 mile stretch of the city's coastline. It is guided by the agreed Bangor Identity Framework as follows:

"Our Vision is to seamlessly connect the waterfront to the rest of the town and, in so doing, provide a unique range of opportunities for residents and visitors to have their lives and businesses enriched by a mix of public spaces, creative events, activities, attractions and experiences that speak of local stories to a global audience."



Visualisation of Queens Parade

The development comprises several projects including regeneration of the Marina, Pickie Fun Park, Court House and Ballyholme Yacht Club.

Together these projects represent a major opportunity for Bangor, fulfilling many of the objectives of the City Centre Masterplan. It is essential therefore, that all projects are planned, designed, delivered and managed to the highest quality. Furthermore, individual projects must be fully integrated with one another and the city as whole.

As importantly, the people of Bangor must remain closely involved with all projects as they develop, with opportunities to shape their direction and share in the excitement of their fruition.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

- A.i** Ensure high-quality design and construction of committed waterfront projects, including Marine Gardens and City Deal Projects.



Bangor Waterfront

PRIORITIES

B. Tackle Vacancy

Stimulate activity in the short-term, leading to long term change and attracting investment through a meanwhile use programme. Building on existing success of Open House and Project 24 by adding new use, such as arts and culture, reinvigorating the city centre, increasing footfall and dwell time, uses expanding the night-time economy and building pride.

Bangor city centre has previously been dominated by retail use, but by reconsidering and broadening the range of use an opportunity exists to begin to redefine the city centre while addressing and activating vacant buildings and spaces.

Meanwhile use has the potential to not only fill and activate vacant units but also support footfall, boost local spend, and test new workspace, leisure, creative and cultural uses, filling gaps within the city centre where traditional use may be in temporary or permanent decline.

The reuse of vacant buildings and bringing them back into positive use has the added benefit of providing opportunities that encourage and support local enterprise, employment, and start-ups.

Engagement is needed with owners to understand the reasons for vacancy, building condition, long-term plans and to gauge interest in temporary uses to fill vacant space. There may need to be interventions required for larger units such as subdivision.

Raising awareness and promoting meanwhile use to landowners of vacant property and land, start-ups and community groups will provide information, confidence and assurance to interested groups.



Pop-up shop



Temporary work space

Establishing and maintaining a database of vacant city centre properties will provide a useful tool to help facilitate the promotion of opportunities and procure solutions for vacant space.

Meanwhile use provides an opportunity to help re activate vacant space and prevent decline, requiring a co-ordinated effort, exploring delivery models and partnerships for opportunities to be realised.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

- B.i** Establish and maintain a map and database of vacant city centre properties and ownerships
- B.ii** Create a toolkit of best practice options for re-use
- B.iii** Engage with all parties to agree most appropriate option on a site-by-site basis
- B.iv** Support and promote delivery



Temporary art exhibition

PRIORITIES

C. Making the Streets People Friendly

Short term interventions towards a long-term solution, of a more pedestrian and cycle friendly city centre that is less reliant on the car. Reconfiguration of the street network to enable the temporary closure of streets for a range of events, creating space for pedestrians and opening up the city centre for all.

The streets in Bangor are largely dominated by vehicle use, impacting the quality of the environment and how they are used. The dominance of vehicles has shifted the focus of people to the edges, but the city's streets now need to be viewed as more than a space just to travel through.

Temporarily opening the streets and utilising space for recreation, play and interaction will work towards shifting the focus of the city's streets to people and the community.

Streets play an important role in our lives and it is possible to integrate temporary schemes where residents can feel positive impacts almost immediately.

Creating places where people feel safe and happy to walk and spend time will begin to reduce reliance on the car. Short term interventions can be used to test ideas and concepts that demonstrate possible changes, giving people the opportunity to experience their city differently and express their needs. A variety of temporary interventions is an efficient method and successful tool for sustainable, permanent solutions.



Play Street, Hackney



Tactical Urbanism Intervention, Milan

A city centre movement study is required to address a long term solution to rebalancing the transport hierarchy. An opportunity exists to strengthen connections between the waterfront and public transport, creating increased legibility and ease of movement when travelling between key destinations. New models of modal transportation shifts need to be explored with relevant Statutory bodies to ensure delivery in the medium to long-term, partnership will be key to ensuring effective delivery.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

- C.i Undertake city centre movement study rebalancing transport hierarchy in partnership with relevant Statutory bodies.
- C.ii Bring forward pilot schemes and pop-up events to test revised layouts.
- C.iii Deliver prioritised projects as funding becomes available.



Street events



Pop-up park, Budapest

PRIORITIES

D. Connect with the Centre

Enhanced walking, cycling and public transport connectivity linking people with the city centre. Focus on walking and cycling becoming attractive options, complimenting infrastructure through cycle proficiency, signage, mapping, contributing to improved public health and well-being and encouraging people to travel on foot and explore more of the city.

To make walking and cycling more attractive options the key routes into the city centre should be targeted with a series of interventions from clear signage and wayfinding to strengthened connections and the promotion of public transport services, in partnership with relevant Statutory bodies.

The city centre is serviced by a series of radial routes connecting to the wider settlement area. Focusing on these key routes and corridors to encourage more people to walk and cycle will work towards changing the way people travel around the city.

Communicating the many benefits of walking and cycling, such as:

- Quicker journey times - for shorter journeys within the city, walking and cycling can often be the fastest way to travel
- Exercise - walking and cycling contributes to improved public health and well-being
- Cost - walking is free and cycling is cheaper than travel by car or public transport

A new signage and wayfinding system can offer complete routes with clear information, journey type options and regular confirmation of routes for the user.



Adelaide - Wayfinding



This could be integrated with historical and heritage information, a digital solution may also be useful leading to augmented reality as the ultimate way of delivering important historical content.

Eye catching and an easy-to-read network of maps and directional signage has the potential to increase awareness and make journeys more attractive and efficient.

Where walking and cycling infrastructure leads from and to is just as important as the interventions and infrastructure. Connections with public transport and key areas of the city are vital, tying the centre to the surrounding residential areas.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

- D.i** Audit of existing city signage
- D.ii** Identify new signage and wayfinding systems, including public mapping
- D.iii** Develop green links to and from centre, working in partnership with DfI
- D.iv** Promote and develop existing public transport services in partnership with relevant agencies



Legible London - Wayfinding System

PRIORITIES

E. Development of the Existing Brand to Reflect City Status

New messaging and identity for the city that promotes it as a whole and more than just its waterfront. Potential for it to be rolled out across elements such as bus stops, signage, and lighting, creating a consistent visual identity.

With Bangor now a city, development of the existing branding and new messaging would help greatly in strengthening its identity, giving those that live here a new sense of pride and ownership.

This does not mean replacing the previously agreed Bangor Brand or Bangor Identity Framework, but rather ensuring it evolves to encompass the entire city with relevance to its residents.

Developing the existing brand will assist in linking and ensuring people feel more connected with Bangor as well as creating an appealing image for both tourists and investors. It will communicate Bangor's best characteristics, creating positive perceptions that extend beyond the waterfront to the whole city.

It will be important that the brand reflects the city's residents and the role it can play in strengthening the local identity and ultimately the well-being of those that live in Bangor, reflecting how they view their city and how they wish it to be perceived externally.



Porto, Portugal - city branding



A successful brand will live in the hearts of the people who live here, telling the collective story of Bangor's history, culture, community, and future aspirations, evoking a sense of what the city is like and what it has to offer.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

- E.i Develop refreshed city-wide brand identity
- E.ii Deliver prioritised actions, including appropriate public realm interventions and signage



Norwich - city branding



Bath - wayfinding design

Making it happen

PRIORITIES	PROPOSED ACTIONS	COMMENTS
A. Develop and Deliver the Waterfront	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ensure high-quality design and construction of committed waterfront projects, including Queen's Parade, Marine Gardens and City Deal Projects. 	<p>Coordination between proposals will be key for consistency, developed through engagement with stakeholders and the public. Early consideration of management requirements and opportunities will also help to maximise the return on investment.</p>
B. Tackle Vacancy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Establish and maintain a map and database of vacant city centre properties and ownerships ii. Create a toolkit of best practice options for re-use iii. Engage with all parties to agree most appropriate option on a site-by-site basis iv. Support and promote delivery. 	<p>Toolkit likely to promote:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status quo and meanwhile use • Use in whole unit • Sub-division with multiple tenants <p>Potential to create a more resilient city centre through diversification of use while enabling landowners to benefit.</p>
C. Making the Streets People Friendly	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Undertake city centre movement study rebalancing transport hierarchy with relevant Statutory agencies ii. Bring forward pilot schemes and pop-up events to test revised layouts iii. Deliver prioritised projects as funding becomes available 	<p>Explore opportunities to temporarily open the city centre to people and close it to cars.</p> <p>Study must take into account committed waterfront projects, the Car Parking Strategy, and facilitate modal shift and examine the ongoing appropriateness of one-way systems.</p>

PRIORITIES	PROPOSED ACTIONS	COMMENTS
<p>D. Connect with the Centre</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Audit of existing city signage ii. Identify new signage and wayfinding systems, including public mapping iii. Develop green links to and from centre in partnership with DfI iv. Promote and develop existing public transport services in partnership with relevant agencies 	<p>Long term plan is required for the city centre for consistent delivery in phases.</p> <p>Provision of information on routes and options with a refreshed appearance to aid navigation across the City.</p> <p>Opportunity to enhance evening economy through promotion of transport services.</p>
<p>E. Development of the Existing Brand to Reflect City Status</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Develop refreshed city wide brand identity ii. Deliver prioritised actions, including appropriate public realm interventions and signage 	<p>Something the people of Bangor can be proud of and emotionally connect with.</p> <p>Message city-wide and more than just the waterfront.</p>



Delivery

Introduction

Central to the success of any masterplan is its ability to affect positive change on the ground. As documented in this review of the original town centre masterplans, the rate of project delivery has been varied to date when compared against the intentions set out in the published Action Plans. Reasons for this include the availability of funding, the buy-in of key stakeholders and changes in political context. It is therefore imperative that a clearer understanding is established on how the new regeneration priorities for each town can be taken forward in a manner which fulfils their potential, builds on public support, and actively contribute to the improvement of the settlement in question.



Action Plan Lifespan

Through this review process it has been agreed that the remaining lifespan of the updated town and city centre masterplans is 8 years. This will correlate with two terms of elected Ards and North Down Borough Councillors. Yet unlike the original town centre masterplans, it is not advised to produce a single action plan that will remain unchanged over that period. Rather, the Actions Plans must be considered 'live' documents that are subjected to regular reviews and updates, with a major review and update taking at the halfway stage, in 4 years' time. This will allow for delivery progress to be accurately recorded and for reprioritisation of actions to happen in response to inevitable changed circumstances. After the 8 year period in 2030 it is recommended that new 'place plans' are commissioned for each town centre, based on multidisciplinary research and extensive public engagement.

Monitoring of Progress

Every project takes time to deliver, and an effort has been made here to identify initiatives that can be brought forward relatively quickly, while other more complex actions will inevitably take longer. In recognition of this, all actions are broken down into 14 stages as shown here. This will enable a more accurate and transparent plotting of project progress to take place. A regularly updated masterplan 'dashboard' will show the current state of all projects, helping to inform decision making accordingly.

		Delivery Stages													
		A Project Definition			B Project Development				C Project Funding			D Project Delivery			
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Bangor	A Develop and deliver the waterfront														
	B Tackle Vacancy														
	C Making the streets people friendly														
	D Connect with the centre														
	E Development of the existing brand to reflect city status														

(A) Project Definition

1. Identify Online Project idea & Scale (and ideally case study to help visualise)
2. Identify Project Lead
3. Identify Initial Community/Statutory Support
4. Identify Potential Funding (both to develop and deliver project)

(B) Project Development

5. Determine Land Issue (land ownership, options, access, ability to acquire, likelihood of planning)
6. Identify Potential Project Partners (who, why, how)
7. Outline Key Issues: Need/Demand, Objectives/Aims, Project Management, Financing, 'Net Zero' Impact and Sustainability
8. Detailed Investigation - Proportional Economic & Technical Feasibility Study

(C) Project Funding

9. Detailed Funding Case - Proportional Business Case, Designs, Costing
10. Land ownership/access confirmed, planning permission secured and working capital/project financing in place,
11. Funding Application(s) Submitted

(D) Project Delivery

12. Managing Funding - Letters of Offer, Procurement, Construction, Delivery
13. Post Funding Delivery - Adaptation, Delivery, Launch and Official Sign-Off
14. Project Evaluation Complete

Town and City Advisory Groups

The town centre masterplans identify the regeneration needs of each town centre and consequently do not neatly fall to the responsibilities of one organisation (public or private), council or government department. Furthermore, the process of developing viable projects requires the continued input of town centre stakeholders and the public. To reflect this complexity, Ards and North Down Borough Council constituted Town and City Advisory Groups in 2019. These groups, originally known as Town Steering Groups, comprise local representatives of business, community, youth and faith organisations, as well as councillors and officers of Ards and North Down Borough Council. The groups meet regularly through the year, convened by Council officers and led by an appointed chair.

The existence of such groups is to be commended and reflects current best practice being emulated elsewhere in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Yet the effectiveness of the groups requires review to ensure they play a fuller part of the delivery of masterplan priorities. A key area for review is examining how the groups can be given greater levels of responsibility in a manner that is compatible with the functions of both council and government departments. It is recommended that an independent review is undertaken by an external consultant to work with all the advisory groups to review governance and processes with the view to recommend changes and reference best practice models.

1. Strengthen – Make more representative by inviting more members and volunteers and ensure more regular representation from different council sections and relevant NI Executive departments (eg DfI).
2. Simplify – assign specific tasks to sub-groups, comprising members and invited parties.
3. Support and Signpost – provide training, secretarial support and professional advice when required.



Locally Based Organisations

There is a need to support strong and capable locally based organisations both existing and new, such as Donaghadee Community Development Association and Comber Regeneration Community Partnership. The success comes from dynamic, driven people coming together and making projects happen for their community. Often one project leads to another, and locally based organisations become crucial partners for the public and private sector, promoting a shared understanding of place and the need for a more integrated approach to delivery.

Potential Funding Streams

A range of funding sources are likely to be available for delivery of action plans. These include committed council budgets, and DfC regeneration funding, although noting the challenging fiscal environment at present.

A key issue is the current use of NISRA Town Centre boundaries for the allocation of regeneration funding as those areas do not align accurately with the generally recognised town centre areas. It is advocated that this means of funding allocation is reviewed and ideally changed.

A range of other funding sources not restrained by these boundaries should be proactively explored as follows:

- Community Ownership Fund
- Levelling Up (future rounds)
- Shared Prosperity
- Peace Plus
- Shared Island Funding
- National Lottery (Heritage Fund)
- Ulster Garden Villages
- Groundworks
- Social Finance (e.g. Community Finance Ireland, NESTA)

Outcomes / Indicators

It is proposed that arrangements are made to measure the success of masterplan delivery through the measures of outcomes or key performance indicators. This will require the commissioning of baseline surveys where existing data is not available.

Potential indicators are:

- Town centre footfall
- Town centre cycle journeys
- Biodiversity of key sites
- Animation
- Purple Flag Accreditation
- Residential Accommodation/Housing units within Town Centre
- Population numbers
- House prices (and/or rate income)
- Jobs
- Civic Pride/Perception, Business Perception

