

## **Bangor Waterfront Vision Identity Framework**

*Bangor: we can-not be satisfied with wanting to be considered as being one of the best of the best. We must strive to be the only ones at what we do because this is what will give us differentiation and make us both appealing and competitive in being a great place to live, work, visit, study and invest.*

### **The Opportunity**

The Belfast Region City Deal Bangor Waterfront project, combined with plans for the re-development of Queen's Parade and Ward Park offers a unique opportunity to create a new destination, encouraging more visitors and residents to enjoy the captivating coastline in new and different ways.

### **The Context**

Bangor can trace its roots back to the Bronze Age with early Christian Settlements within Bangor Bay and the Ballyholme area. It has been a thriving resort and commuter town since the introduction of the rail links in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and has a rich architectural heritage including high quality Victorian buildings overlooking the seafront. Due to various factors the town's popularity as a holiday resort has declined in recent years. The character of Bangor Bay radically changed following the development of the waterfront as a high-quality marina area. While the marina development helped stimulate Bangor's seafront, due to lack of supporting inward investment the vitality of Bangor town and linkages to the wider coastal waterfront has stagnated in recent years. It is also believed that the creation of the car park at Marine Gardens 'cut off' the new promenade and Marina from the rest of the town and the waterfront.

### **Approach to Development**

The vision is to turn Bangor into a 'destination of choice', both as a place to live, work, visit, study and invest. We will do this through a series of interconnected developments and experiences. These developments will be both connected via themes and narratives, as well as physically connect through good placemaking design, public realm, signage and well thought through transport solutions using state of the art digital and technology solutions.

*The analogy of a 'necklace' with a braid, (represented by the theme of the sea), holding together a series of 'highly attractive gem stones or beads', (represented by specific developments and experiences) that, collectively make up a wonderful piece of jewellery, is the aspiration for Bangor. This sets a presumption in favour of a series of well-funded attractions and attractors with different functions and focus dispersed throughout the waterfront and the rest of the town, rather than one large-scale single attraction.*

### **The Aim**

To promote and ensure an ambitious, sensitive, site-specific waterfront development for Bangor that reflects the individuality of our community, the location and our shared collective heritage and culture in a sustainable, unique and distinctive manner. Bangor's future is to be a highly attractive, healthy and inspiring place where people, especially families, can flourish and prosper.

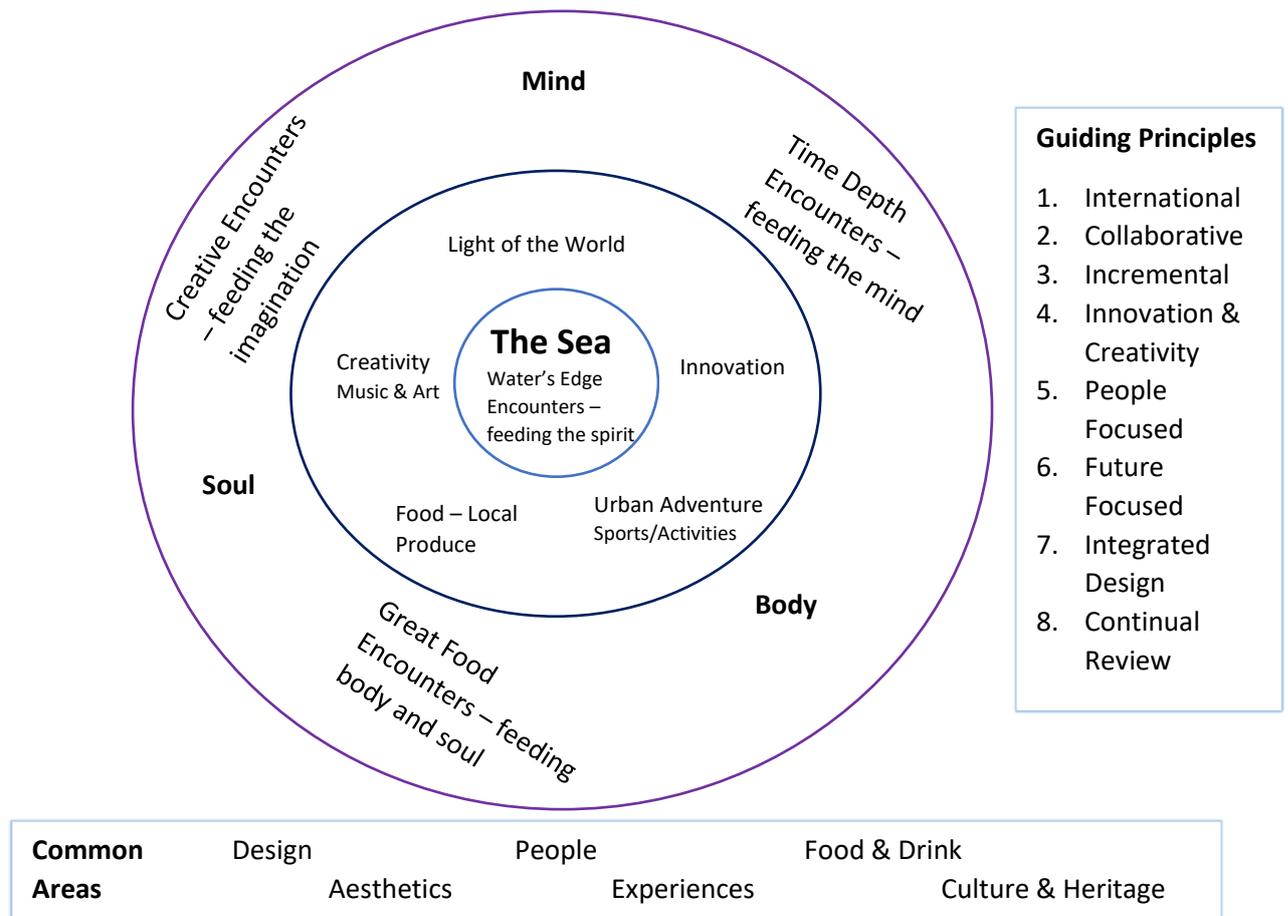
*Our Vision is to seamlessly connect the waterfront to the rest of the town and, in so doing, provide a unique range of opportunities for residents and visitors to have their lives and businesses enriched by a mix of public spaces, creative events, activities, attractions and experiences that speak of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

## Identity, Themes and Narratives

*Blue: Green, Creatively Connected* describes the ethos of our Borough, which has three particular strengths:

- The natural landscape of sea, loughs and land – a blue green space
- The creativity of our people, from earliest times to present day producers, artisans, designers and engineers
- Our proximity to places of opportunity – to Belfast, neighbouring districts, to the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain, to Europe and the world beyond.

Bangor’s identity is informed by the shared values of its community and the identification of its DNA. It is clear that ‘*the sea*’ is the thread to unify all the different storylines, elements and developments.



## Guiding Principles

In setting out the overarching guiding principles for the future design and development of Bangor we will:

1. Learn from international best practice in waterfront regeneration.
2. Ensure a partnership approach, wide ranging consultation and meaningful engagement with all playing a role.
3. Undertake a step-by-step approach toward the vision, ensuring a strong foundation upon which more ambitious projects can be built, including some ‘early wins’.
4. Embed Innovation and Creativity in everything we do and we won’t be afraid to take collective brave decisions and to pilot new ideas.

5. People of all ages, cultures and income levels must feel ownership of the space, both residents and visitors, adopting a 'pedestrian first' approach to all development.
6. We need to find a solution that is befitting and is the best for Bangor over the next 20 years and beyond. This means that the planning process must think long-term, be innovative, comprehensive, holistic and involve hybrid solutions. The fusion of economic, social, cultural and environmental considerations will be key to ensure a viable, sustainable and dynamic outcome.
7. Access to the sea is considered essential with the desire to see the whole town joined up to the waterfront regeneration.
8. We recognise this is a long-term development and will ensure the vision and implementation strategy is kept under constant review to ensure its relevance to current and future generations.

### **Measuring Success**

Tangible outcomes must be to support the targets as outlined within the Integrated Strategy for Tourism Regeneration and Economic Development:

- Support the creation of new and better jobs
- Increase number of overnight trips and visitor expenditure

The criteria for measuring the overall long-term success of this framework includes:

- ✓ Demonstrates tangible sensitivity of the overall design and its relationship with the sea and the community by making use of both the water and the waterfront.
- ✓ Clearly illustrates a quality and harmony of the design approach and its relationship to the natural and the man-made, incorporating the stories, narratives and themes in innovative and creative ways.
- ✓ Makes a very significant positive contribution to the sustainable, viable development and economic vitality of the community, boosting civic pride and bringing fresh, new positive awareness and perceptions of Bangor by the residents and the wider community (locally, nationally and internationally).
- ✓ Creates an agreed identity for Bangor which is evident to all who live, work and visit the town.
- ✓ Highlights how environmental values and sustainable development are respected and enhanced.
- ✓ Demonstrably enhances and enriches the well-being of the community and all who visit.
- ✓ Receiving international recognition for the regeneration and long-term success of the whole project.

