Bangor Waterfront

THINK | INTERACT | BELIEVE
MIND | BODY | SOUL
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.
BACKGROUND

Ards and North Down Borough Council is progressing ambitious plans to redevelop a 2 mile stretch of the seafront to help establish Bangor as a thriving town and prime visitor attraction in Northern Ireland.

We want to uplift the Waterfront route so that it encourages more people to enjoy Bangor as a whole and creates an inspiring environment that can attract further commercial opportunities to the town.

PROGRESS

The Council, along with its consultants AECOM, has been consulting, researching and developing the plans for 18 months and is now preparing to submit proposals to Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) in October. These proposals are bidding for circa £40M of BRCD funding*. The outcome of the bid will be confirmed by the end of 2020 and if successful the Council will contribute a further £20M approximately and the private sector £4M approximately to the project.

These proposals include:

• An overall ‘Development Framework’ that outlines a long-term masterplan (15-20 years) for Bangor Waterfront. It provides a sound basis for investment in the Waterfront area, supports wider strategic projects including Queen’s Parade and the Council’s Greenways proposals, and helps create the conditions for further private, public and community investment. It identifies the rationale for creating a necklace of developments as this will deliver more sustainable growth and regeneration throughout the town.

• The details of 5 key projects that will be the catalysts towards achieving that long-term vision and for which we are seeking funding from the Belfast Region City Deal.

* Both the UK Government and the NI Executive have reconfirmed their commitment to deliver on the Belfast Region City Deal, despite the additional financial pressure arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.
CATALYSTS – OUR 5 TRANSFORMATIONAL PROJECTS

Public Realm

Bangor’s coastline and stunning sea views have been referenced time and time again during our consultations as the town's most significant selling points – but they should be enhanced sympathetically, sustainably, beautifully and in ways that people of all ages can have the opportunity to embrace and enjoy them.

We recognise that and so propose to make a significant investment in new public realm features along this 2.2 miles stretch, making the everyday spaces that people move through, and linger within, as attractive as they can be; ‘instagram-able’ to use today’s social media language.

Travelling from Skippingstone in the west to Ballyholme in the east (or vice versa) should be a real voyage of discovery and we intend to use creative signage, pathways and artistic features to encourage more people to enjoy the journey.

Particular attention will be given to: Skippingstone Beach (multi-use pods for beach activities, accessibility features, feature lighting/benches), Kingsland (café kiosks, skate park) and Ballyholme (watersports opportunities, feature lighting/surfacing).
Bangor Marina

Bangor Marina is the largest 5-star marina development in the Island of Ireland, which attracts a considerable amount of vessels and has achieved Blue-Flag status. Some of the associated infrastructure is critical for the Marina to operate safely and effectively and cannot be moved, however a level of redesign will enable us to increase the number of seafaring visitors to Bangor and to open up the space, making it easier for people to enjoy the sea views.

Our proposals recommend redeveloping Bregenz House as a mixed-use development in a new cluster with iconic and high-quality architecture.

The redesign will include additional public access with dropped boardwalks, seating and viewing areas and the opportunity for cafés/restaurants integrated into the Marina.

There is also an opportunity to integrate with the plans for the private sector-led Queen’s Parade development, to create a new marine gardens with formal and informal spaces for events and activities, further supporting the leisure and creative sectors within Bangor.
Pickie Family Fun Park

Pickie holds a host of great memories for families from the Bangor area and beyond. The giant Pickie pedal swans have become an iconic feature on the Waterfront landscape. With some enhancements and new features we think it can continue to attract and delight families for many more years to come.

We are proposing the development of new all-weather attractions for both children and young adults, and feature landscaping along the coastline.

An extension to the Pickie Puffer [train ride], that will take visitors from Pickie to the Queen’s Parade area is also part of the proposals.
Kingsland/ Ballyholme Yacht Club and Water Sports Centre

We believe this peninsula affords the opportunity to create a state-of-the-art destination for sports, accommodation and relaxation; a waterfront park to rival the best in Europe.

It is home to Ballyholme Yacht Club (BYC), which has been identified as the preferred location within Northern Ireland for major sailing and water sports events by the Royal Yachting Association. The redevelopment of BYC would provide Bangor with a world class facility for water sports and the ability to host international events.

Supporting this, we propose to enhance the area as a hub for residents and visitors alike.

We envisage waterfront tourism accommodation pods, café kiosks, and a skate park (now an Olympic sport) set in landscaped gardens.

There is also potential for a small cluster of high-quality residential development to the south of the area.

Please note: images used are for illustration purposes only.
The Music Hub

The creativity of its people, from earliest times to present day musicians and producers, is a key part of Bangor’s DNA. The borough inspires and supports many key influencers within the music industry including Van Morrison, Snow Patrol, Two Door Cinema Club, Foy Vance, Hannah Peel and Lowden Guitars. Ards and North Down is also home to several successful companies involved in TV/film music production.

Independent charity, Open House, has ambitious plans to regenerate Bangor Court House as a permanent home for the Open House Festival and a much-needed multi-purpose venue serving the town.

Through grants and crowdfunding activity, Open House had secured the funds for their plans, which we can describe as Phase 1.

Having considered a range of options for a music hub as part of the Waterfront Development, we are proposing further developing and building on the Open House plans to create a Phase 2. This will see the capacity of the Court House building double in size to include additional event and performance spaces and creative work spaces that will further ensure the sustainability of the venue as a significant music and creative hub for the borough.
BENEFITS
The reason for progressing these ambitious plans is to deliver benefits for Bangor and the people who live there. These will include:

- The creation of direct and indirect jobs
- New commercial opportunities
- Additional visitors/footfall
- Extension of the tourism season with more attractions suitable for wet/winter conditions
- Sustainable development that will improve the environment and promote wellbeing for residents
- Improved image and perceptions of Bangor, better connecting people with the sea
- Opportunities for the wider borough. Bangor is our largest town. The more visitors that chose to visit it, the more opportunities we have to invite and encourage them to explore further – along our coastline in particular.

FINANCIAL BREAKDOWN

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funder</th>
<th>Potential Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belfast Region City Deal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ards and North Down Borough Council</td>
<td>£20M</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private Sector</td>
<td>£4M+</td>
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WHAT HAPPENS NOW?
We are sharing these proposals at this time because we are submitting them to the Belfast Region City Deal for consideration in October.

We hope to have confirmation of Belfast Region City Deal’s financial contribution by the end of 2020.

This will allow us, during 2021/22, to develop full business cases for each of the five key projects. This will include the development of detailed designs, securing planning approval and further public consultation.

Subject to financial/project approvals and planning permission, work ‘on the ground’ will begin in 2023 (phased) with the projects delivered over a 5-7 year period.
Bangor Waterfront

‘Bangor by the Sea’ where public spaces, creative events, activities, attractions and experiences speak of local stories to a global audience.

Follow the journey at: ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/BangorWaterfront