

Millisle 2024 - Moving Forward



Village Plan July 2014



Cover Image: Concept Masterplan
Above: Millisle Community Garden

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Millisle Strand, Co. Down.

1 Introduction

Millisle 2024 - Moving Forward sets out a programme of initiatives for improving Millisle Village over the next 10 years. It is an ambitious programme which has never been set out before and challenges everyone with an interest to make Millisle a better place.

Millisle & District Community Association in commissioning the plan were keen to hear from everyone who had a stake in the village, who had ideas to improve the village and who wanted to make it a better place to live, work and visit. **A place that is welcoming, vibrant and filled with opportunities.**

I would like to thank Millisle Village Renewal Steering Group for their hard work (mostly unseen), to Down Rural Area Partnership and Northern Ireland Housing Executive for funding the initiative, to Groundwork NI who facilitated the consultation, to Mrs Patterson for use of the Primary School and engaging the children in the process, members of Millisle Youth Forum for engaging in the process, to Mura Quigley Ards Borough Council and Frances McCormick County Down Rural Community Network for their patience, advice and support, to local Councillors - particularly Councillor Eddie Thompson, MPs, MLAs, local and government agencies - your input was extremely important to us.

And last but by no means least I would like to thank everyone from the village who participated in the consultations. Clearly we have a lot of talent in our community and you showed your determination to make Millisle a better place with many creative suggestions and ideas and I look forward to working with you to make the plan become a reality in the future.

The exciting and challenging task of putting the plan into action now begins and I'm sure each and everyone of you will play your part.

Tommy Beck
Chairperson
Millisle & District Community Association

2 Background

2.1 Introduction

This Village Plan is a versatile tool which identifies the needs of the local community and can be used by residents, statutory authorities and developers to plan for the future of Millisle.

Groundwork Northern Ireland was commissioned by the Millisle Village Renewal Steering Group to prepare a 'Village Plan' for Millisle to guide its development over the next 10 years.

Through consultation and research an 'Action Plan' has been agreed which includes a variety of projects and initiatives to benefit the whole community.

The village improvements vary between smaller projects achievable in the short term to larger more ambitious projects which will require further feasibility investigation.

2.2 Purpose of the Plan

The Village Plan is funded by the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

As a community tool, the plan helps community groups make informed decisions about the suitability of development. It also can be used to focus efforts onto particular projects when applying for funding.

The Village Plan is a non-statutory document but aligns with other plans and policies for the area. Because the Village Plan has been consulted on and reflects the views of Millisle, it can be considered by statutory bodies for policy making.

This can be particularly useful in the context of the formation of the new Councils in 2015.



Millisle Village Renewal Steering Group

2.3 Summary of the process

To ensure the Village Plan gives an accurate picture of the needs and aspirations of the residents of Millisle, it was compiled including a number of different elements. This included consultation with representatives from the Millisle Village Renewal Steering Group, residents, business owners and relevant statutory agencies as well as baseline mapping of the village and surrounding area.

Research

A detailed analysis of the village has been carried out through gathering existing data on the area as well as site visits and photographic records. This has been interpreted onto maps to give a clear representation of the village's assets, land uses, opportunity sites and problem areas. A brief overview of relevant statutory agency documents that have a bearing on Millisle are summarised in section 8.2.

Community consultation

An initial meeting was set up with the Millisle Village Renewal Steering Group to confirm the scope of the project. Following this it was agreed that the consultation would be done in two stages; an interactive village mapping event based on the 'Planning for Real' format followed by a village survey. This day-long community mapping event gave residents the opportunity to identify issues within the village which were then interpreted into a survey and circulated throughout the village. Online tools such as Facebook together with the option of completing the questionnaire on Survey Monkey strengthened the consultation process in an aim to reach as many people as possible.

Development of the Plan

Following the consultation, all the data from the questionnaire and community mapping day was collated and analysed to form the basis of the Action Plan. To maximise collaboration with the local and statutory stakeholders, representatives were invited to a stakeholder meeting where the concerns of the community were presented and discussed.

Draft initiatives consultation workshop

A follow up meeting was held with residents to review the results from the questionnaire and to discuss the draft Action Plan. This helped give feedback to the village and Steering Group, ensured items had not been missed and that initiatives were in accordance with community needs. Levels of priority for each initiative were discussed within groups divided into the different themes in the Action Plan. The results from the consultation evening helped the Steering Group to decide which project should be developed as the priority project.

Further statutory consultation

Following agreement of the initiatives in the Action Plan, the relevant statutory authorities were contacted to discuss the feasibility of each initiative and the processes which would need to be employed in order to take them forward in conjunction with the relevant stakeholders. Results from these discussions are included in the relevant initiative. (Section 7)

Completion of the Village Plan

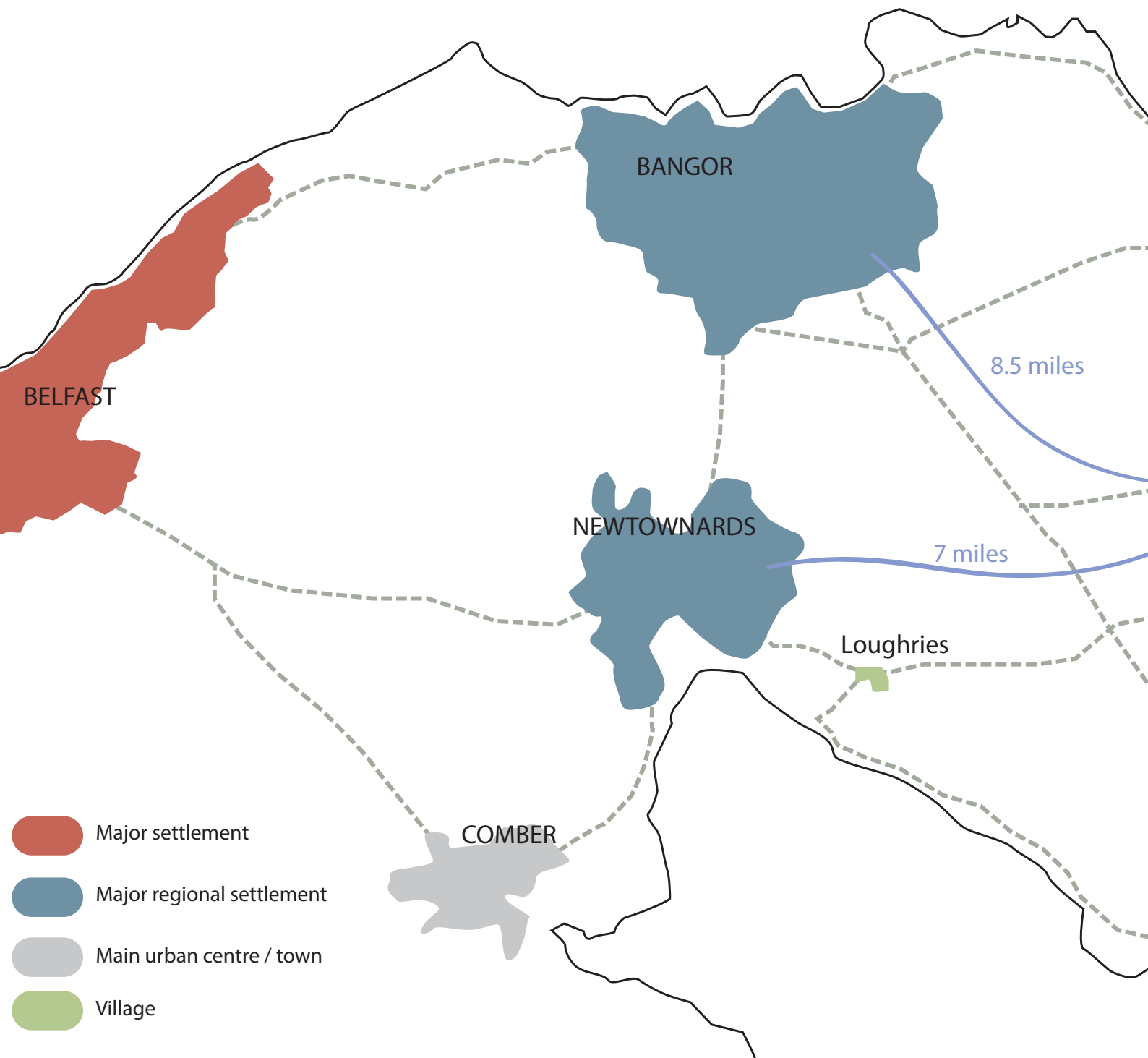
The Millisle Village Renewal Steering Group was given a draft of the document for review and comment to make final changes before the Village Plan was completed and signed off.

Priority Project

It was agreed the sea front is critical in the regeneration of Millisle in order to showcase the village and bring back economic activity. The regeneration of the Beach Park as a destination would be a driver to bring in business which would in turn make use of the derelict shops thus revitalising Main Street. A costed concept plan for the seafront, based on community consultation and feedback was drawn up by Groundwork NI showing long term and short term goals.

3 About Millisle

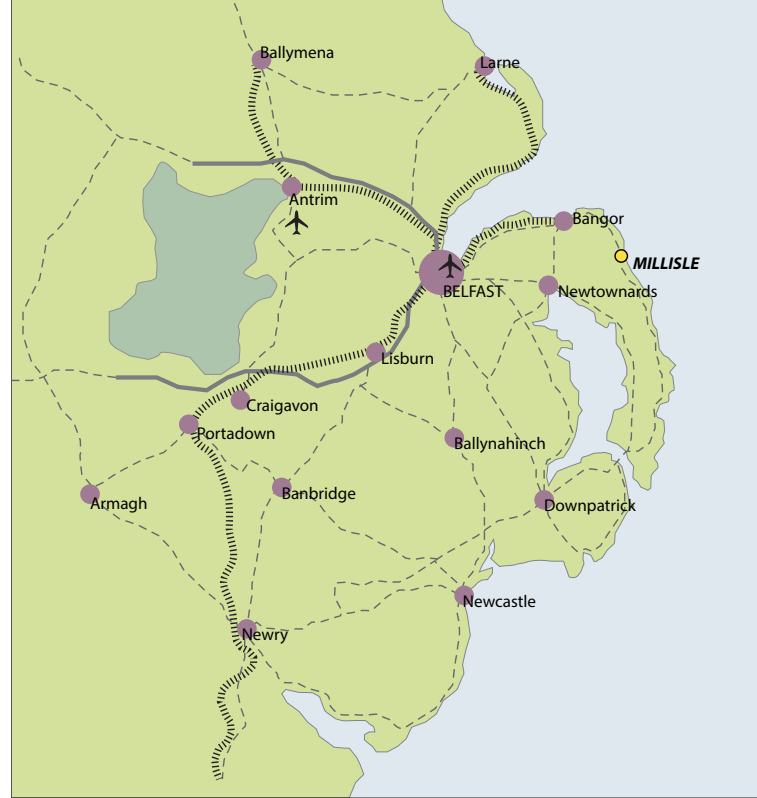
This Village Plan is largely focused within the Millisle settlement boundary (defined by Department of the Environment (DOE) in Ards and Down Area Plan 2015) although the surrounding area and its relationship with the village has also been considered.



3.1 Location

Millisle is situated on the East Coast of the Ards Peninsula, 2.5 miles south of Donaghadee on the A2 coastal road that runs the eastern length of the Ards Peninsula.

The Beach in Millisle is approximately 0.6 miles long and is the first beach heading south along the coast and for that reason, Millisle has been called **'The Gateway to the Peninsula'**.



Due to the proximity of Donaghadee to Millisle, it is important that a visual boundary is maintained in order to preserve the character of Millisle as a village and to prevent urban sprawl between the two settlements.

As discussed in section 3.4, the Millisle Ward includes the southern area of Donaghadee which is significant when analysing local statistics.

Due to Millisle's proximity to Donaghadee, Bangor, Newtownards and Belfast, recent housing development has resulted in it becoming a seaside commuter village. This has had an impact on community cohesion in the area, in particular on the use of local shops, as it is convenient for many residents to shop elsewhere. This should be taken into consideration during the consultation process for the new development plan, post 2015.

Equally, its the proximity to these large settlements may have resulted in Millisle missing out on the development of service provision despite having high levels of deprivation (section 3.4).

The challenge for Millisle is to build an identity which distinguishes itself as a destination separate from Donaghadee, as a thriving seaside village, attracting visitors on its own unique merits.

3.2 History and Heritage

Millisle is a coastal village situated on the north-eastern end of the Ards Peninsula, three miles south of Donaghadee. The name of the village originated from the many offshore rocks – ‘mille isles’ – a thousand islands.



Originally a farming area, the village grew around the mills built by the Carmichael Family whose daughter, Amy became a missionary famous for her work with girls in India and recently featured in the BBC ‘Groundbreakers’ series. A blue plaque in her memory was placed on what is now the Baptist Church in Main Street as the original home was knocked down to make way for new housing.

The population of the village grew during the Second World War as children and young families were evacuated from Belfast and many stayed afterwards. At this time there were also Jewish evacuees from Europe shipped by the Kindertransport system who lived on a local farm and were educated with village children in the local primary school.

There is a Holocaust Memorial Garden and sculpture within the school grounds which is now a tourist attraction as well as being of historical interest. Millisle Primary School made a DVD called ‘A Kinder Place, a Different World’ which describes the life for the children on the farm.



Woburn House

Woburn House was originally a stately home built between 1797 and 1830 by John Gilmore Dunbar, a wealthy industrialist and mill owner. The home was used as a summer residence until 1846 when it was inherited by George Orr Dunbar, twice Minister of Parliament for Belfast. George and his wife, Isabella carried out significant improvements, adding the South Wing which includes the tower. Isabella's father, Lord Beresford, Archbishop of Armagh lived in the house for a while and built Carrowdore Church at his own expense.

During the Second World War the house was used as a convalescent home for injured soldiers while the family were still in residence in another part of the estate. Due to large death duties, the family were forced to sell the house and a significant proportion of the estate to the Ministry of Finance in 1949.

In 1956 the building became an open Borstal housing around 130 boys aged 16 -21. At the height of 'The Troubles' in the late 1970s a more secure Closed Borstal came into operation and a new Secure Young Offenders facility for boys of school age - Lisnevin - was built on the site, having a separate entrance on the Drumfad Road.

The Lisnevin complex closed in the 1980's when the new facility at Hydebank opened. In 1980 Woburn House became a Prison Officer Training Centre housing facilities including a dog training centre, a gym and the Northern Ireland Prison service private collection of records and memorabilia. The building is open to the public once a year on European Heritage Open Day.

Any future plans should first give consideration to community led initiatives on the site to include Social Enterprise development.

Ballycopeland Windmill

The Ballycopeland Windmill dates from around 1780–1790 and was fully restored to its current state in 1978. Windmills were once a prominent feature in the area as East Down is one of the best grain growing areas in Ireland. Over 100 windmills have been recorded in the County, many located along the Ards Peninsula.

The mill fell into disrepair after the First World War after which the then owner, Samuel McGilton, offered it to the state in 1935.

Ballycopeland Windmill is one of the most popular tourist destinations within the immediate Millisle area. Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) are currently carrying out a full condition assessment in order to compile a conservation management plan to safeguard the future of the mill.

In the long term, NIEA hope to reinstate the windmill as 'working' with moving parts; however, this will be dependent on funds and the results from the condition survey.

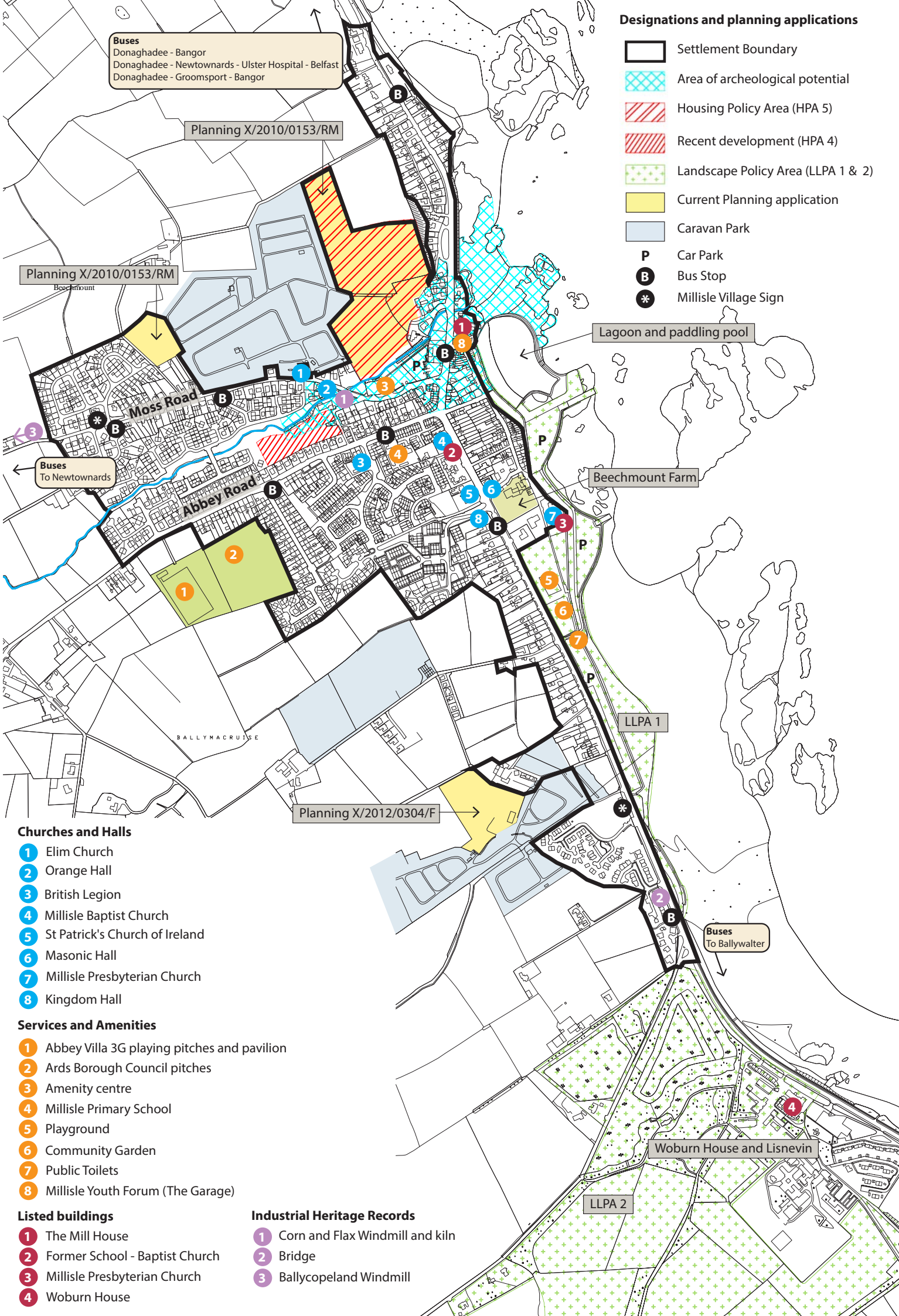
The Windmill is seen locally as an important part of the identity of Millisle and measures to maximise its tourist potential and relationship with the village are discussed in Section 7.5.5

Abbey Villa Football Club

Abbey Village FC was formed in 1955 and is one of the largest amateur football clubs in the county. It currently has 4 adult men's teams and a full youth set-up of 9 teams.

Its facilities include a clubhouse, full size grass football pitch and a recently constructed 3G Multi-Use Games Arena (MUGA) complete with floodlights for further information ref section 3.5.

In order to ensure that Millisle's remaining built heritage is preserved for future generations, it is important that every effort is made to find new uses for old buildings. This will help strengthen village character enriching the quality of life for all residents.



Buses
 Donaghadee - Bangor
 Donaghadee - Newtownards - Ulster Hospital - Belfast
 Donaghadee - Groomsport - Bangor

Designations and planning applications

- Settlement Boundary
- Area of archeological potential
- Housing Policy Area (HPA 5)
- Recent development (HPA 4)
- Landscape Policy Area (LLPA 1 & 2)
- Current Planning application
- Caravan Park
- P** Car Park
- B** Bus Stop
- *** Millisle Village Sign

Planning X/2010/0153/RM

Planning X/2010/0153/RM
 Beechmount

Lagoon and paddling pool

Beechmount Farm

Planning X/2012/0304/F

LLPA 1

Buses
 To Ballywalter

Woburn House and Lisnevin

LLPA 2

Churches and Halls

- 1** Elim Church
- 2** Orange Hall
- 3** British Legion
- 4** Millisle Baptist Church
- 5** St Patrick's Church of Ireland
- 6** Masonic Hall
- 7** Millisle Presbyterian Church
- 8** Kingdom Hall

Services and Amenities

- 1** Abbey Villa 3G playing pitches and pavilion
- 2** Ards Borough Council pitches
- 3** Amenity centre
- 4** Millisle Primary School
- 5** Playground
- 6** Community Garden
- 7** Public Toilets
- 8** Millisle Youth Forum (The Garage)

Listed buildings

- 1** The Mill House
- 2** Former School - Baptist Church
- 3** Millisle Presbyterian Church
- 4** Woburn House

Industrial Heritage Records

- 1** Corn and Flax Windmill and kiln
- 2** Bridge
- 3** Ballycopeland Windmill

3.3 Community Audit Map

The maps (left and below) contain a summary of Millisle at the time of this report. The information includes shops and businesses, community assets and historical features.

It also includes land designations as defined by the Ards Area Development Plan and current significant planning applications.

Millisle is of a compact form with the oldest part of the village stretching along the coast and more recent development located westwards inland.

The surrounding landscape is characteristic of the Ards Peninsula with an open rocky shoreline with exposed pastures and wooded areas meeting the coast. The Mill Burn River runs towards the coast through the village and there are opportunities to make it more of a feature of the village.

The A2 passes through the village centre of Millisle and there are a number of large car parks on the outskirts of the village providing parking space for tourists.

The village is characterised by its coastal location, historic village centre and panoramic sea views. As such it remains a popular holiday destination and has several caravan parks, holiday homes and sea-side attractions. Unusually, there is a working farm in the centre of the village which adds to the village character.



3.4 Millisle Statistics

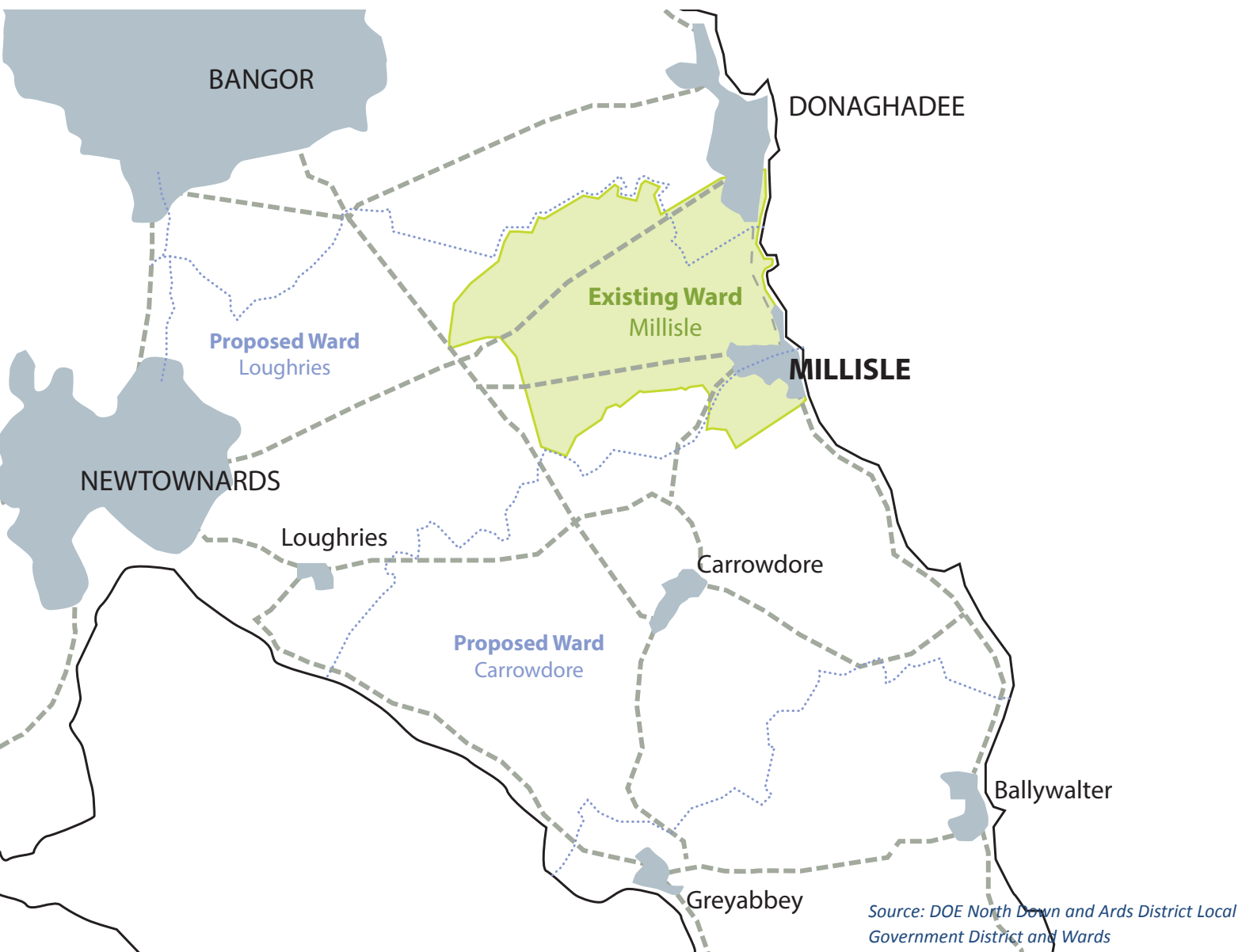
Through information collated from the Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service (NINIS) website it is possible to look into detailed statistics of Millisle. The most up to date information available is from the 2011 census and includes data on population, health, education, unemployment, crime etc. For statistical purposes, Northern Ireland is divided into different areas which are illustrated in the sections below.

Electoral Wards:

The current Millisle Ward covers the whole of the village and the south of Donaghdee and extends east inland as shown on the map below

Local Government Reform

After the recent Local Government Reform the existing Ward boundaries will be changed as shown below. Therefore Millisle will straddle the two Wards of Loughries and Carrowdore.





Super Output Areas

There are two super output areas (Millisle 1 and Millisle 2) which fit into the current Millisle Ward.

Super Output areas are used to measure deprivation and are based on population size, with an average size of around 2000 people per area.

The Index of Deprivation is calculated from 890, least deprived to 1, most deprived.

Millisle 1 is the 2nd **most** deprived SOA in the Ards Peninsula:

- Portaferry 2 159
- **Millisle 1** **226**
- Portavogie 253

(figures showing the 3 most deprived areas in the Peninsula)

In contrast, Millisle 2 is the 2nd **least** deprived SOA in the Ards Peninsula:

- Donaghadee N 759
- **Millisle 2** **726**
- Ballywalter 2 646

(figures showing the 3 least deprived areas in the Peninsula)

It is clear that there is a significant contrast between Millisle 1 and 2 in terms of the Index of Deprivation. Since Millisle 1 covers the majority of the village, the statistics relating to this SOA are more relevant to the situation within the village. In an exercise compiled by Community Foundation NI on the Deprivation Statistics of Rural SOAs in Northern Ireland, SOA Millisle 1 is ranked 24 out of 87.

This should be taken into account in decision making for development and provision of services in the Millisle Ward as the level of need would appear to be much lower than reality in the village of Millisle if an average of both SOAs was taken.

	Millisle 1	Score	Millisle 2	Score
Population	1,688	-	2,591	
Multiple Deprivation Measure	226	-	726	
Income Deprivation	231	32%	765	10%
Employment Deprivation	287	15%	725	8%
Health and Disability Deprivation	189	-	732	
Education skills and training Deprivation	168	-	603	
Proximity to services Deprivation	252	-	234	
Crime and disorder Deprivation	363	-	752	
Living Environment	438	-	658	
Income Deprivation affecting children	231	36%	819	7%
Income deprivation affecting older people	317	45%	729	21%

Within the Ards Peninsula region, Millisle stands out as being significantly higher on the Multiple Deprivation Measure than much of the rest of the area. This is despite being relatively close to major settlements and the jobs and services that these support. Measures to address this imbalance should be considered in any future plans for the village.

Output Areas

The smallest areas with statistical data are 'Output areas' (OA) which have the same boundaries as 'Small Areas' and fit within the Super Output Area boundaries.

The map below shows the approximate boundaries of OAs in Millisle. For detailed information within these boundaries, refer to the table in the Appendix 6.

Percentage Comparisons (%)	SUPER OUTPUT AREA MILLSLE 1	LOCAL GOVERNMENT DISTRICT	N. IRELAND
	Millisle 1	Ards	N.I
0-15 years of age	21.33%	19.55%	20.95%
16-65 years of age	62.32%	63.46%	64.49%
65+ years of age	16.35%	16.99%	14.56%
Male	48.16%	48.78%	49%
Female	51.84%	51.22%	51%
Catholic (Community Background)	2.67%	12.68%	45.14%
Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related) (Community Background)	84.77%	76.92%	48.36%
Ethnic group other than white	0.65%	1.02%	1.72%
Persons with limiting long-term illness	27.19%	21.15%	20.69%
Providing unpaid care	13.68%	13.55%	11.82%
Owner-occupied households	63.91%	73.19%	66.90%
No access to a car or van	20.39%	16.61%	22.70%
Degree level education or higher	19.24%	22.30%	23.65%
No or low level qualifications	45.86%	39.46%	40.63%
Persons in paid employment	55.27%	60.13%	57.61%
Unemployed	4.17%	4.06%	4.96%



Analysis of the data in Appendix 6 from Millisle Output Areas reveals that the areas in Millisle scoring highest on the deprivation indices are OA4 and OA7. These are the most built-up areas within the village with the densest populations.

The most significant differences from the Northern Ireland averages are as follows:

Long term health problems:

OA 2, 4 and 7 have the highest percentage of people with long term health problems at 32.32% average against 20.69% national average, in comparison, OA1 has a below average figure of 18.36%

Households rented:

OA4 and 7 have percentages of rented households at 54.01% and 50.78% respectively. This is in contrast to OA1 with 12.25% and the Millisle average at 23.85%

Over 16 with no or low level qualification:

OA4 and 7 also have the highest percentage of people with low levels of qualification in Millisle (55.04% and 59.43%) which is above the Millisle average of 46.08% and the Northern Ireland Average of 40.63%

Employment:

The unemployment figures for OA7 are amongst the lowest in the village, 2.59% compared to 6.7% in OA4 (the highest figure). As OA7 also has the highest number of people aged over 65 (21%), this would indicate that the area has a high number of retired people which may explain the low level of unemployment recorded.

It is recommended that considering all of issues highlighted above, measures should be taken to improve the quality of life for the most deprived and elderly residents in this area.

Children:

OA4 has the highest percentage of lone parents with dependent children; 13.87% compared to 8.69 (Millisle Average). The area also has the highest percentage of people with no access to a car or van; 35.04% compared to 19.13 Millisle average. This could indicate the need for good youth facilities within this area as transport to and from Millisle may be an issue for children in this area.

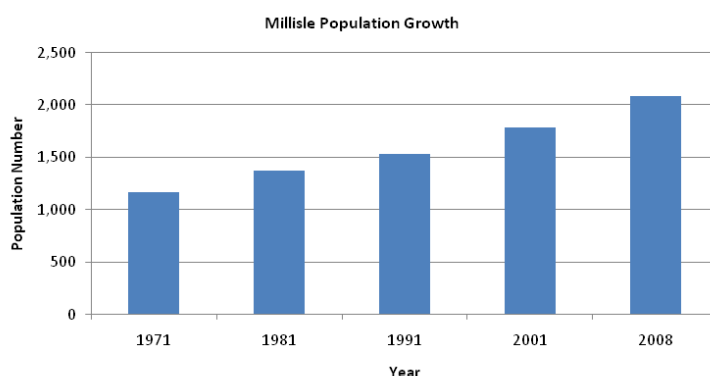
Population Growth

A key issue that effects Millisle is the population growth of the village.

A concern within the village is that the number of homes built in recent years has not been matched by investment in services and infrastructure.

This has led to the decline of village cohesion as new residents look elsewhere for service provision in the nearby larger settlements.

The graph below illustrates the growth in Millisle's population. The figures are taken from information available on the NINIS website. Figures from 1971, 1981 and 1991 Census are approximations based on a grid rectangle roughly covering the settlement at the time. The 2001 figure is more accurate and is based on the settlement limit. The figure for 2008 is an estimate, NINIS will be releasing settlement limit population figures from the last Census in 2011 later in the year.



3.5 Planning Applications and Future Developments

Planning Applications

The Ards Area Plan includes several Housing Policy Areas within the Millisle Settlement Boundary.

The majority of these have now been developed or are currently under construction.

The most significant area of land still to be developed is HPA 5 – Land North of Moss Road and West of Donaghadee Road.

There is a current application comprising 195 units, 11 detached, 58 semi detached, 102 townhouses, 24 apartments, landscaping and other associated site works.

The application is Reserved Matters with Outline Permission granted in 1967. Currently the project is under consultation, a layout plan of the development is included in the appendix.

Other significant granted planning applications of interest to Millisle include:

X/2012/0304/F Extension of the Walkers Lane caravan park to including a new facilities block, play area and associated works.

Refer to the Community Audit map section 3.3 for locations.

It is recommended that any future development should be accompanied by an upgrade of services such as roads, sewerage and community investment etc.

Copelands

Belfast Central Mission plans to develop the former Childhaven Site in Millisle into the Copelands Dementia and Nursing Care facility which is hailed as a flagship project to provide exemplar market-leading care in Northern Ireland.

The proposed model provides specialist care based on the 'Household Model of Care' Norton and Shields (2006). The approach differs from traditional care homes in that the staff are allocated a resident rather than a particular job.

Belfast Central Mission estimates that the opening of the centre will provide up to 60 full time equivalent jobs in the area as well as associated supplier requirements for catering and pharmaceutical needs for example.

Belfast Central Mission is not yet at the stage to develop the detail of staffing or service provision although they are keen to explore opportunities with the local community where possible.

Ongoing partnership working with Copelands is recommended to ensure all future opportunities are explored.



Destination Strangford Lough

Some improvements to tourist provisions in the Beach Park are currently being implemented as part of the Mourne Coastal Route. Millisle is one of 5 chosen stop off points along the Peninsula which are being developed as 'Destinations'.

Picnic benches, finger posts, interpretation boards and a play ship are scheduled for installation at the end of November 2014.

These installations are part of the Destination Strangford Lough Initiative which is working to develop strong branding of the area to boost its tourism potential.

It is recommended that any additional signage around Millisle be designed to complement the proposals with a pre-agreed pallet of materials and colours to tie the village together whilst also creating an identity unique to Millisle.

Lagoon

The Council has advised it is currently in the process of carrying out maintenance and improvement works to the Lagoon Area.

Ards Borough Council has advised that a structural report has been carried out and found the lagoon wall to be sound and therefore there are no plans to raise its current height.

Water quality tests have found the water to be suitable for bathing.

Works are scheduled to apply a non slip surface to the paddling pool and a programme of deep cleans are planned to keep it usable and attractive for users this summer holiday period, (2014).

The future of the paddling pool will be decided based on feedback from this season and a long term solution agreed as to whether it should be removed completely.

Destination Strangford Lough signage proposals



NI Water

NI Water are in the planning stages to develop a new wastewater pumping sewer and marine emergency overflow.

Land ownership issues are currently being resolved and NI Water will not be able to start work on the project until they have full title of the land.

Unfortunately time scales are currently unknown.

Development Opportunity - Moss Road Car Park

Located at the junction between Moss Road and the A2, this opportunity site presents substantial regenerative potential to Millisle given its size and central location.

The Council has advised that they have agreed in principal to buy the land which is currently owned by DRD Roads Service. The purchase is subject to ground condition surveys which will feed into the Council's strategic analysis of the site.

The completion of the survey and analysis will inform the Council's preferred use of the site which is currently unknown as the exact condition of the site is unsure.

If the site is of no strategic use to the Council, in theory it could be leased to an interested party although the Council is unlikely to carry out the analysis until after the Council Reform (2015). **It is recommended that where possible the use of this site is planned and developed via community led regeneration.**

Development Opportunity - Ballywalter Road Car Park

This site is a large and underused car park, which is currently owned by DRD Roads Service. The future of the site after Council Reform is currently unknown; some off street car-parking functions are transferring to the Council although the full list of assets to transfer is still being agreed.

The site represents a development opportunity and could complement the proposed improvements to sports, activity and recreation in Millisle which are proposed by this Village Plan.

If the site is to remain as a carpark, it is recommended that the surfacing is upgraded and suitable traffic calming measures put in place to deter antisocial behaviour.

Abbey Villa F.C. - Future Plans

Abbey Villa F.C. are an integral part of the community infrastructure of Millisle having been operating since 1955. The Club envisages Abbey Villa becoming a hub for the community, at least from a sporting sense, and the MUGA is currently hired by individuals from the village including Millisle Primary School; however, the club is keen to extend this usage to all.

Abbey Villa F.C. has a number of objectives:

- When funds are available, extend the clubhouse to enable the facility to accommodate village activities and further aiding the club's integration within the community;
- Become a community hub for sport within the village and surrounding area;
- Through sporting activities improve the health, well-being and education of the local villagers and surrounding communities;
- To become more environmentally aware, reducing its carbon footprint through making use of renewable energy;
- To upgrade its facilities to become an IFA accredited centre of excellence;
- Obtain chartermark club status; and
- To upgrade its facilities to allow the club to attain IFA Championship status.

Successful achievement of the above will allow Abbey Villa F.C. to become more integrated within Millisle village and play an even bigger role within the community.



Amenity Centre



Moss Road Car Park



Ballywalter Car Park and toilets

4 Community Engagement

Initial consultation summary

The Millisle Village Renewal Steering Group met with Groundwork Northern Ireland in an initial consultation meeting on the 11th November 2013. At this meeting the best method of consultation was considered in order to involve as many people as possible in the process. It was agreed that the Community Mapping Exercise based on Planning for Real format would have the best results. General time frames were also agreed including key dates throughout the development of the Plan.

Consultation process summary

Stage one:

The first stage of community consultation began with setting up a Facebook page for the Village Plan to create a platform for residents to have their say online. A leaflet was designed to advertise the first consultation event on the 18th January which was dropped into every house in the village by the Steering Group.

Millisle Primary school ran a poster competition to advertise the commencement of the Village Plan, these were displayed in the shops and one was chosen to be used in the design for the leaflet.

The Consultation event was based on a 'Planning for Real' format and was implemented over several stages. The first stage involved the making of a 3D scale model of Millisle with pupils from the Primary School. Youth Groups and other village groups were then invited to an evening session to help complete the map the next day.

This creative, visual and hands on method helped to generate an interest around the consultation which in turn helped to encourage the community to attend the main event on Saturday. In total around 70 adults and 20 young people attended the event and a resulting 400 comments were generated.

Stage two

A number of key points were raised which helped form the basis of the village survey. The main concerns from the community mapping event centred around the appearance of Main Street and the Lagoon and the knock-on effect this has on the numbers of tourists visiting Millisle. Other concerns included road safety, a lack of facilities and village cleanliness.

The survey was designed on the information gathered at the consultation event and circulated around all houses in Millisle by the Steering Group. The survey was also made available on Survey Monkey and posted on the Facebook page. The questionnaire closed on the 10th February 2014 had a good response rate of 130 returns plus 32 respondents on Survey Monkey.

The information from the consultation process was gathered and analysed in order to form a first draft of the Action Plan.



Millisle Primary School make the map

Secondary consultation workshop summary

A draft of the Action Plan was presented at a village meeting on the 25th February 2014. The purpose of the meeting was to feed back to the whole community on the process and to prioritise the proposed actions.

The meeting was well attended with approximately 40 adults and 20 young people from Millisle Youth Forum.

As an introduction to the evening, a brief presentation of the consultation process and an overview of the draft Action Plan was given. The room was arranged into tables, each with a large A1 print out of a different section of the Action Plan divided into 5 different areas:

- Revitalisation of Main Street
- Tourism
- Beach Park, Lagoon and Sea Front
- Community Development
- Environmental improvements

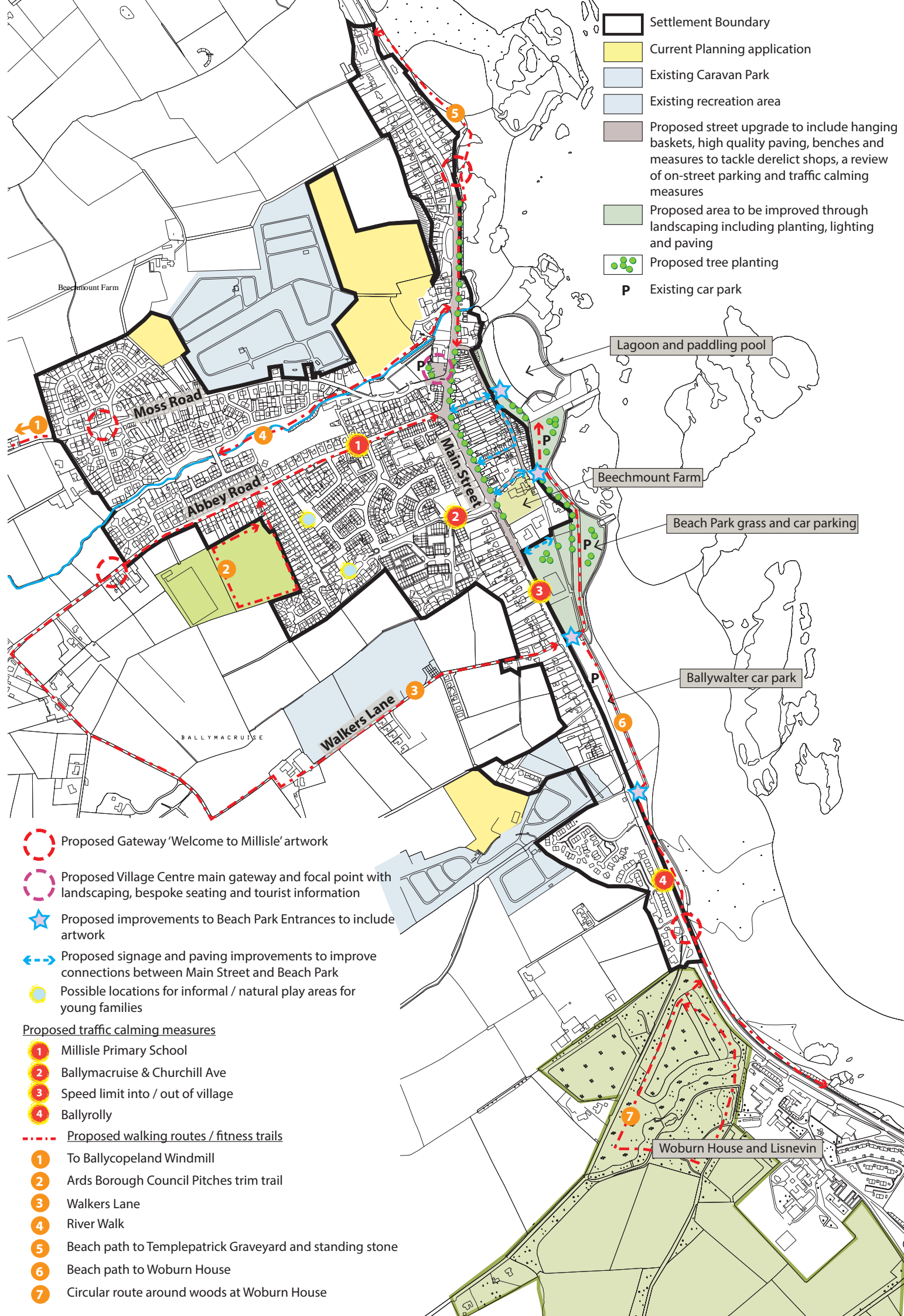
NB: headings have now changed slightly

The Action Points in the plan were prioritised according to their potential delivery time frames – short term, medium term and long term. In order to prioritise the points in the Action Plan, each attendee was given 3 stickers and asked to vote against a project in each category.

The A1 sheets were then circulated to allow everybody to become familiar with the Action Plan and to vote on each section. The process enabled debate and discussion and attendees were encouraged to make notes on the sheets if they felt anything was missed out.



Community Consultation event



- Settlement Boundary
- Current Planning application
- Existing Caravan Park
- Existing recreation area
- Proposed street upgrade to include hanging baskets, high quality paving, benches and measures to tackle derelict shops, a review of on-street parking and traffic calming measures
- Proposed area to be improved through landscaping including planting, lighting and paving
- Proposed tree planting
- P** Existing car park

Lagoon and paddling pool

Beechmount Farm

Beach Park grass and car parking

Ballywalter car park

Woburn House and Lisnevin

- Proposed Gateway 'Welcome to Millisle' artwork
- Proposed Village Centre main gateway and focal point with landscaping, bespoke seating and tourist information
- Proposed improvements to Beach Park Entrances to include artwork
- Proposed signage and paving improvements to improve connections between Main Street and Beach Park
- Possible locations for informal / natural play areas for young families

Proposed traffic calming measures

- 1 Millisle Primary School
- 2 Ballymacruise & Churchill Ave
- 3 Speed limit into / out of village
- 4 Ballyrolly
- Proposed walking routes / fitness trails
- 1 To Ballycopeland Windmill
- 2 Ards Borough Council Pitches trim trail
- 3 Walkers Lane
- 4 River Walk
- 5 Beach path to Templepatrick Graveyard and standing stone
- 6 Beach path to Woburn House
- 7 Circular route around woods at Woburn House

5 Local needs and identified themes

The theme of the Action Plan is the regeneration of Millisle's identity as a thriving coastal village. The challenge for the community moving forward is to make Millisle a vibrant and exciting place to live, work and visit, capitalising on its scenic seaside location. Based on the issues that have been identified through research and consultation, the Action Plan sets out a list of objectives and projects in order to renew vitality in Millisle.

Sections 6 and 7 describe the proposed projects which have been developed in agreement with the Millisle Village Renewal Steering Group.

These initiatives form the strategic vision for Millisle and are categorised into different levels of priority as well as a short, medium or long term time frame for delivery.

The Village Plan Map (left) is the amalgamation of site analysis and community consultation. It is a visual representation of proposed projects and initiatives set out in the Priority Action Plan in Section 6 and Delivery and the Vision and Next Steps in Section 7.

Within the theme of regenerating the image of Millisle, the projects have been divided into the following 5 categories:

- Community Development
- Revitalisation of Main Street
- Upgrading Millisle's Appearance
- Beach Park, lagoon and sea front improvements
- Tourism Development

The top priority project agreed by Millisle Village Renewal Steering Group has been developed to a stage to be included in a funding application. Details of this can be found in the appendix.

It should be recognised that all initiatives in the following section are conceptual and contribute to an overall vision for Millisle. These suggested projects must be flexible to allow for any changing circumstances.

6 Priority Action Plan

The Priority Action Plan below is a summary of all the projects recommended to address issues identified through the consultation process. The table identifies a timeframe for delivery and partners who will be required to move the Plan forward.

The table is designed to be used as a working document to be updated and altered as circumstances change.

Abbreviations:

M	Millisle Village Renewal Steering Group
C	Ards Borough Council / North Down and Ards District Council (post 2015)
PS	The Planning Service
RS	DRD Roads Service
NIEA	Northern Ireland Environment Agency
RA	Rivers Agency
TB	Northern Ireland Tourist Board
DoJ	The Department of Justice
NIW	Northern Ireland Water
T	Translink
AV	Abbey Villa

Regeneration Initiative		Timeframe for delivery	Partners	
Community Development	7.1.1	Provision of a community centre / hub	M/L	M/C
	7.1.2	Scheme to develop empty shops as community assets	S	M/C
	7.1.3	Promotion and development of community groups	S	M/C
	7.1.4	Development of Youth Facilities	S	M/C
	7.1.5	Enter Millisle into competitions	S	M/C
	7.1.6	Create employment opportunities	S/M	M/C
	7.1.7	Lobby for improved bus services and local transport	M	M/C/T
	7.1.8	Invest in recreation and health and well being initiatives	S/M	M/C/AV
	7.1.9	Regeneration of identified sites	M/L	M/C/DoJ/RS/TB/NI EA
Revitalisation of Main Street	7.2.1	Development of a 'Village Centre' / Tourist Hub and Information Point	M	PS/M/C/RS
	7.2.2	Visual improvement to empty shop fronts	S	M/C/PS
	7.2.3	Scheme to develop empty shops as community assets	M	M/C/PS
	7.2.4	Support for Existing Business and Promotion of the Village Centre	S	M/C/PS
	7.2.5	Maximising potential of working with local Care Homes	S	M
	7.2.6	Diversification of Main Street	M	M/C/PS
	7.2.7	Improved connections between Main Street and the Sea Front	L	M/C/RS/PS
Upgrading Millisle's Appearance	7.3.1	Reinforce sense of arrival to Millisle	M	M/C/PS/RS
	7.3.2	Open Space Audit to develop areas of green spaces throughout the village	S	M/C
	7.3.3	Road safety and traffic calming	M	M/C/RS
	7.3.4	Walks and connections	M	M/C/NIEA/RA
	7.3.5	Improvements along Main Street	L	M/C/PS/RS

Regeneration Initiative			Timeframe for delivery	Partners
Beach Park, Lagoon and Sea Front	7.4.1	Engage with Ards Borough Council to improve the experience of the Lagoon Beach Park	S	M/C
	7.4.2	Lobby Council and NI Water Regarding Sewerage Problem	S	M/C/NIW
	7.4.3	Production and Implementation of a Masterplan for the Lagoon and Beach Park	M	M/C
	7.4.4	Community Led Enhancement of Beach Park	S	M
	7.4.5	Improve Appearance of Beach Park from the Road	M/L	M/C/RS/PS
Tourism Development	7.5.1	Work with Ards Borough Council to introduce a programme of summer events	S	M/C
	7.5.2	Develop walking routes around Millisle	M	M/C/NIEA/RA/TB
	7.5.3	Improvements to tourist signage and Millisle branding	S	M/C/PS/RS
	7.5.4	Improvements to Tourist infrastructure	M	M/C/PS/TB
	7.5.5	Develop connections between Ballycopeland Windmill and Millisle	M	M/NIEA/TB/C
	7.5.6	Build on Rural Location and Natural Environment	S	M/NIEA/TB/C

7 Vision and Next Steps

7.1 Community Development

In order to promote community development in the village there may be opportunities to think creatively about the re-use of empty buildings on Main Street . This can bring benefits for the village community whilst also improving the overall appearance of Millisle, bringing vibrancy to the area and encouraging investment. This section explores various initiatives to help improve quality of life for all residents in Millisle.

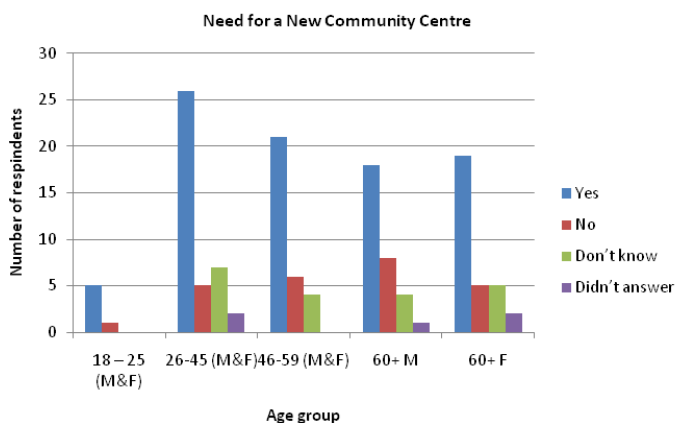
7.1.1

Provision of a Community Centre / hub

The creation of a Community Hub or facility has been identified as an important component in building the sustainability of Millisle. While there are currently a number of buildings available for hire by community use, the creation of an independent ‘Hub’ is seen as a natural progression in community capacity building. While the exact nature of the Hub is in the planning stages, results from the consultation have identified areas of need that the Hub can begin to address. The graph (below) illustrates the results from the consultation regarding the need for a community facility in Millisle.

Next Steps:

- Agree how the Hub will be used ie: providing advice, training and support
- Develop social enterprise element
- Identify suitable building on Main Street
- Apply for funding in order to develop designs further
- Apply for grants to include renewable energy into the centre



7.1.2

Scheme to Develop Empty Shops as Community Assets

In order to encourage investment in the village it is crucial to improve the overall appearance and vibrancy of Main Street. To kick start this process there may be opportunities to think creatively about the use of some of the empty spaces. For example recently there has been a growing trend of the temporary use or the ‘pop up’ use of empty units. This approach can benefit start up businesses as it allows them to test the market of their product or service at a reduced financial risk. This Action Plan recommends that support for such schemes should be made available.

Next Steps:

- Develop Action Group to take this forward
- Contact Ards Borough Council Economic Development Officer for help and information



Blackpool Culture Shops

In Blackpool, the Culture Shops programme created over 30 artistic and community displays in seven empty shops over the course of a year. This provided a temporary lift to empty properties, improving the appearance of both individual shops and the surrounding locations, making areas of the town feel safer and more vibrant. -Extract from ‘Re-imagining urban spaces to help revitalise our high streets’ July 2012



Millisle Main Street



Example of street improvements bringing vitality and increasing community pride in an area

7.1.3

Promotion and development of community groups

There are many groups within the community operating in Millisle who all play an important part in village life. The Millisle Village Renewal Steering Group was set up in order to help deliver the Village Plan and is made up of residents, business and representatives from most of the groups in the village.

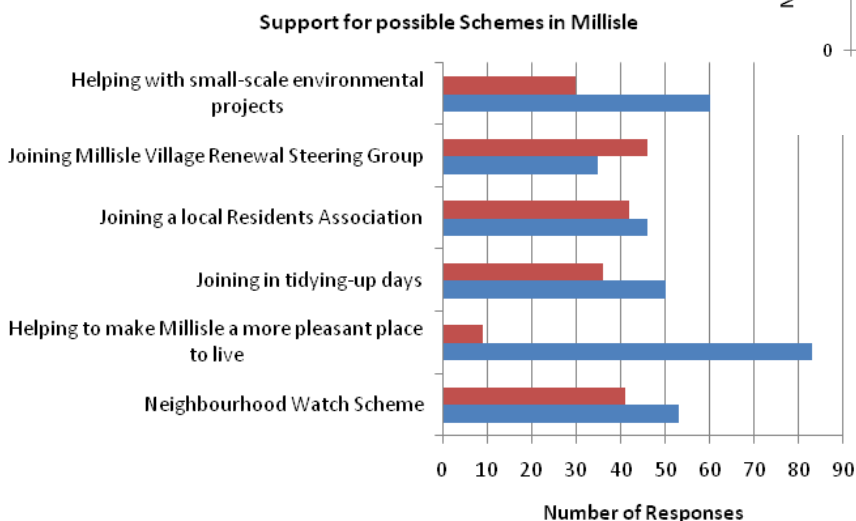
The Plan recognises the unique offer that each group brings to the community and the importance of sustaining and developing them as being critical to the future of Millisle. Where opportunities arise, groups should be offered support, help and advice in order to develop and grow.

Idea development:

- Share resources through a local network – online tool
- Develop a traders association
- Create a data base of groups
- Set up Neighbourhood Watch schemes and residents associations, ref Appendix for locations where residents have shown an interest
- Develop social media
- Develop the existing newsletters and notice boards

Next Steps:

- Maintain strong relationship with Ards Borough Council
- Set up a regional interagency group to address issues
- Work with the community police to set up Neighbourhood Watch schemes
- Engage with Ards Business Centre



7.1.4

Development of Youth Facilities

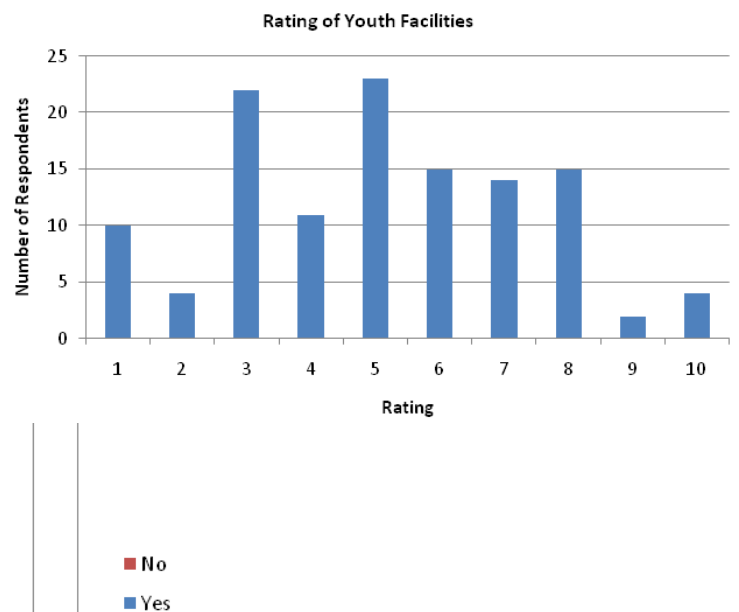
There are several youth groups operating in Millisle either independently or through church groups. Although consultation with youth groups has been carried out for this Village Plan, it is recommended that a detailed audit of all current youth opportunities be carried out. The audit will enable a clear picture to be built up of the current provision and could be a tool to help youth groups to co-ordinate their activities. This will effectively assess the need for development by identifying any gaps in provision to strengthen any future funding applications.

Idea development:

- Improve and secure existing youth provision where opportunities arise
- Set up a Young Citizens scheme
- Work to integrate youth with older generations to reduce any negative perception
- Integrate Millisle’s youth with caravan visitors children
- Develop existing summer schemes in conjunction with Caravan Park owners

Next Steps:

- Carry out detailed audit of existing youth facilities
- Work with SEELB Youth Service to develop schemes



7.1.5

Enter Millisle into Village Competitions

There are various opportunities to get involved in community led initiatives to improve the appearance of Millisle such as Ulster In Bloom, Tidy Towns and Best Kept awards. Whilst working towards this would create a greater sense of civic pride and achievement, it could also put Millisle on the map, making it stand out on the Ards Peninsula and improving its image as a desirable place to live work and visit.

Idea development:

- Run competitions within Millisle for the best window boxes or hanging basket display
- Encourage each different group to take up the challenge

Next steps:

- Agree an Action Group to take forward
- Apply for small pots of money to get up and running
- Approach local businesses for sponsorship and / or donations

7.1.6

Create Employment Opportunities

22 people expressed interest in starting up businesses during the consultation process. The Village Plan recommends that in order to provide support for interested people, events and information sessions should be organised or promoted.

Idea Development:

- Employment training – youth enterprise schemes
- Development of social enterprises and the role of social enterprise in the delivery of services
- Youth mentoring programmes incorporating job placement and training initiatives

Next Steps:

- Set up a meeting with Ards Borough Council Economic Development officer
- Actively consider how Council Reform may provide opportunities for development
- Work with Copelands to ensure any employment opportunities are met
- Engage with Ards Business Centre

7.1.7

Lobby for Improved Bus Services and Local Transport Schemes

Public transport plays a vital role in the sustainability of rural communities. In some of the Output Areas in Millisle, the percentage of people with no access to a car is up to 12% higher than the Northern Ireland Average (ref section 3.4). This would indicate that many people in Millisle have to travel to access services and their employment.

Next Steps

- Meet with Translink to discuss the potential for more direct routes and more frequent routes
- Promote existing local transport funds such as Rural Transport Scheme and Down Community Transport
- Trial a car share scheme

7.1.8

Invest in recreation and health and well being initiatives

Many of the initiatives set out in this Action Plan will help improve quality of life for residents of Millisle through improved access to the outdoors and improved offers of recreation. Good health and well being are the results of a combination of physical, social and emotional factors, the Village Plan aims to provide a structure whereby the Millisle community of all generations have opportunities to benefit from these offers.

Idea development:

- Maintain use and interest in the community garden
- Consider setting up an Incredible Edibles Project to encourage local produce
- Look into setting up a Men's Shed project

Next Steps:

- Look into existing successful schemes
- Carry out visits to learn more and for inspiration

7.1.9

Regeneration of identified sites

Explore with partners the potential regeneration of identified sites, eg: Woburn House; Lisnevin Site; Moss Road Car Park and Ballywalter Car Park

Next Steps:

- Set up an Action group to take forward
- Meet with owners of identified sites to explore development potential
- Consult with community on regeneration sites
- Identify funding opportunities for development

7.2 Revitalisation of Main Street

In order to restore Millisle's former vibrancy as a thriving seaside village, the image of Main Street needs to be improved to promote the village as a place to live, work, visit and invest. Key initiatives to help kick start the regeneration process of Main Street are discussed in this section.

7.2.1 Development of a Tourist Hub / Information Point

High quality public realm in Millisle will help to define the village's character and improve its overall image. While the implementation of large scale street improvement is a long term goal for the village, a more obtainable short term solution is a landscaped central 'hub' or 'village centre'.

The key aim of this small street improvement is to enhance the quality of users experience of Main Street. The style of design should be suitable to easily extend throughout the village over time, creating a strong identity in Millisle.

Idea development:

- Bespoke seating,
- Planting,
- Tourist signage, finger posts and information boards
- Cycling facilities eg: water and bike stands

Next Steps:

- Identify suitable funding streams to develop a design to apply for planning permission
- Lobby new Council to push forward proposals in 2015
- Identify a suitable location, possibly part of Moss Road Carpark



Let's Colour Dulux project, Bangor

7.2.2 Visual Improvements to Empty Shop Fronts

There are many empty shops on Millisle Main Street which have a detrimental effect to its overall image. A short term approach can be taken to give the village centre a sense of vitality through community led regeneration with artwork on shop fronts. If promoted well, this initiative would raise the profile of Millisle whilst also highlighting the plight of many village centres and problems associated with empty retail units

Next steps:

- Approach landlords
- Identify funding
- Commission assessment report of building condition to include necessary repairs
- Appointment of an artist to co-ordinate scheme
- Agree theme to bring consistency
- Paint buildings traditional seaside colours
- Incorporate hanging baskets

NB: Where buildings are deemed unsafe, Building Control can carry out work to ensure public safety.



7.2.3 Support for Existing Business and Promotion of the Village Centre

Support for existing businesses is crucial to maintain viability of current shops and businesses. A Traders Association can offer support to businesses through combining resources to put on events which attract people to use the village centre and encourage them to shop locally. Funds raised through events and membership can be fed back into initiatives to improve the vibrancy of Main Street such as hanging baskets, Christmas lights, street dressing etc.

Next steps:

- Contact Ards Economic Development Officer for information and support
- Set up an Action Group to approach traders
- Develop a website as a directory of shops and services in Millisle
- Run 'Discover Your Local Business' or 'Support Your Local Shops' events
- Combine with seasonal or national events such as Easter Egg Hunts and the Big Lunch
- Create a festival atmosphere through Street entertainment and face painting etc
- Advertise events through the Council and local press

ATM

The Rural Development Council has advised that access and availability of free ATMs are an essential need in rural areas. While a free service is available from the Post Office, the opening hours are limited and don't suit people using the shops after work. The provision of a free ATM may encourage further use of local shops and the Planning Service have indicated that the installation of an external ATM would not be problematic from a planning point of view.

7.2.4 Maximise the Potential of Working with Local care homes

There are a number of care homes located in the proximity of Millisle and Belfast Central Mission are planning a new development within the village boundary for completion within the next 5 years (ref section 3.5).

There are opportunities to work with various care home owners in the area to aim to integrate the service requirements and the needs of the residents with Millisle, increasing the footfall on Millisle Main Street as a result.

Idea development:

- Consider ways to encourage residents and families take day trips and walks from the centres.
- Provide suitable facilities such as a dementia friendly cafe
- Provide local produce to on site cafes
- Advertise village events in care home receptions

Next Steps

- Set up initial meetings with care home management teams to begin to address this idea.



7.2.5 Diversification of Main Street

Through the consultation process a clear list of services which the community believe to be lacking in Millisle were identified:

Service	Number listing the service as one of the top 3 priorities	Number listing the service as top priority
Support with Health	59	40
Café/Home Bakery	40	9
Fuel Station	24	13
Toilets	4	1
ATM/Bank	20	9
Community Building	33	10
Better bus service/ station	13	6
Policing	10	3
Other (38 services identified)	65	21

Results from the consultation have clearly shown the areas in service provision which the community feel are lacking for example:

Doctor's Surgery / Health care:

Although a Doctor's surgery may not have been previously viable in Millisle, it is recommended that this option is now pursued. According to NINIS statistics on Millisle, a higher than average proportion of residents have to rely on public transport in order to access services and the population has grown significantly over the past 10 years. It may be possible to re-instate a drop in service, open one day per week in the proposed community hub for a trial period.

Café:

The results of the consultation have also shown a clear demand for more choice in food provision in the village.

Benefits:

- Encourage passersby to stop in Millisle
- Attract visitors from care homes
- Attract cyclists
- Alternative to takeaway food

Idea Development:

- Provide quality local produce
- Cater for local people but aim to become a 'Food Destination'
- Run as a social enterprise
- Consider running with catering apprentices / training schemes

7.2.6 Improved connections between Main Street and the Sea Front

As mentioned in the previous Village Plan; Pride in our Rural Villages, Millisle Village Study, 2008 (Scott Wilson), there is a need to integrate the shore front with Main Street more effectively.

It is important to strengthen the relationship between Main Street and the shore to benefit businesses and improve the experience of tourists to the village.

Improvements to include:

- Finger posts and signage,
- Paving, street trees and lighting
- Improved access onto beach from Streets

Moss Road Car park:

- Redesign to be a welcoming arrival point to Millisle
- Re-brand as the 'Village Main Street Carpark'
- Include planting, street trees and decorative archways
- Include a new pedestrian crossing point

Benefits:

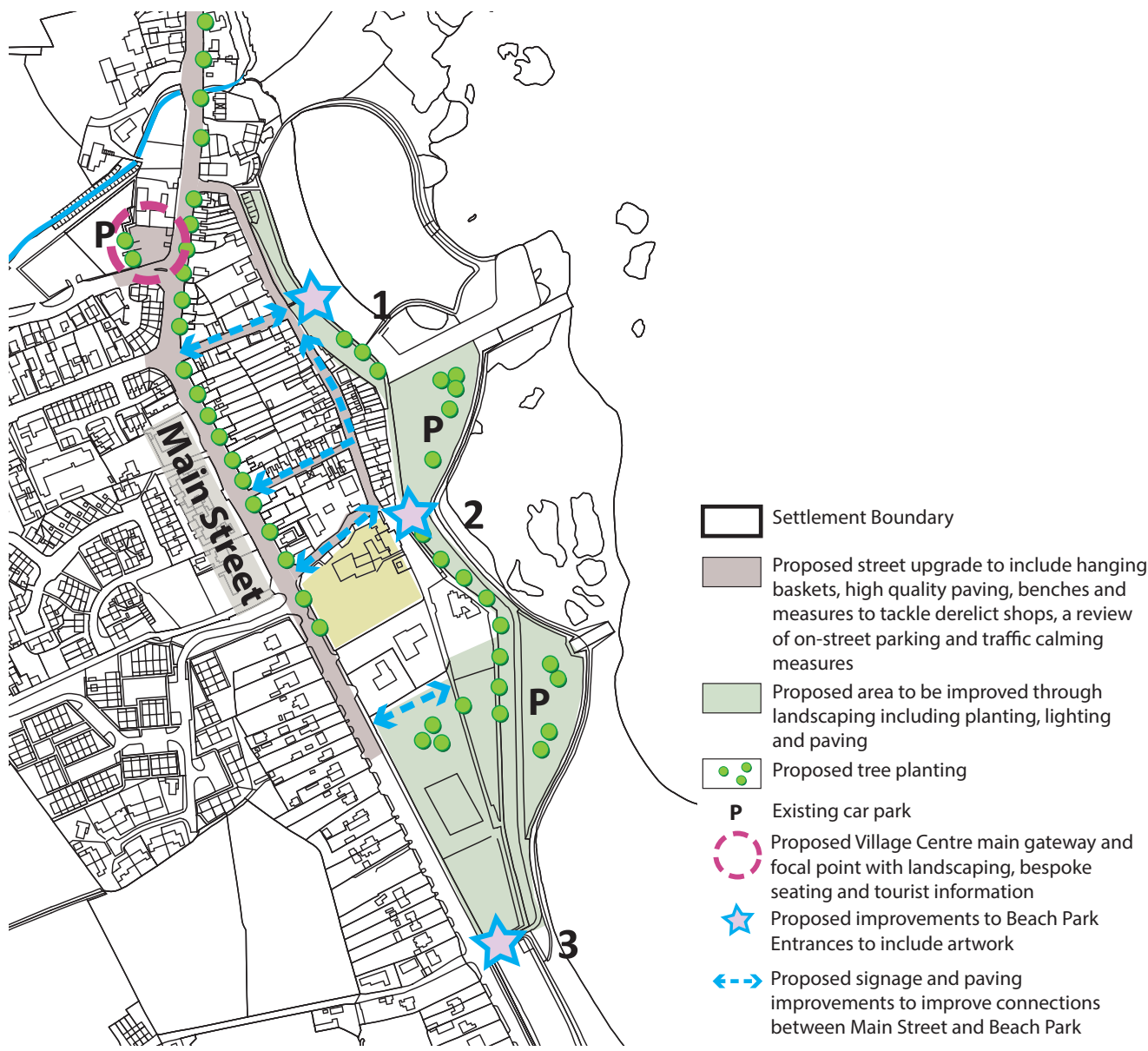
- The Lagoon is not visible from the road. This scheme would encourage visitors to stop and visit the Lagoon while also increasing footfall on Main Street.

Next steps:

- Consider proposal with Council
- Lobby to improve car park after new Councils form in 2015



Existing access to the Lagoon - 1 (see image right)



Existing main access to the Lagoon - 2 (see image above)



Existing main access to the Lagoon - 3 (see image above)

7.3 Upgrading Millisle's appearance

7.3.1

Reinforce sense of arrival to Millisle

There is an opportunity to build a strong identity in Millisle through the strengthening of the Village arrival points. The idea seems popular with residents and featured strongly during the consultation process.

Currently there are standard Council 'Welcome' signs to denote the arrival to the village. Although these signs are located in suitable places, there is an opportunity to replace them to create more of a statement when entering Millisle.

The benefit of strengthening the identity of Millisle is part of the overall strategic vision for the village. Future improvements to Beach Park and the development of recreation activities will benefit from a memorable and clear village identity.

'Gateway' features should be developed in conjunction with the residents and could include public art or sculptural elements to reflect the heritage of the village. The designs should be appropriate to the scale of the village and not over ambitious. Sensitive locations and site specific landscaping will enhance the impact.

As documented in the Department of Transport's Local Transport Note 1/07, evidence shows that Gateways designed in collaboration with other traffic calming measures are proven to reduce speed through a village (ref section 7.3.3).

Next Steps

- Begin discussions with the Council and Roads Service
- Identify suitable funding streams and apply for funding
- Appoint a consultant to develop the proposals and work with the relevant statutory bodies

7.3.2

Open Space Audit to develop areas of green spaces throughout the village

There are several areas of open space in and around the housing estates in Millisle which have the potential to be developed to the benefit of local people. Although a play park has recently been installed in Beach Park, the provision of some localised play opportunities would benefit young families living nearby.

An Open Space Audit of the Village can identify and suggest suitable use of the spaces to begin to plan for opportunities of recreation which will contribute to health and well being.

It is recommended that some simple interventions in the spaces be designed to encourage outdoor use of the space such as sculpture, trees, artwork, and natural play features such as bounders, stepping logs and mounding.

Next steps:

- Begin discussions with the Leisure Services Department of Ards Borough Council
- Begin consultation with local people

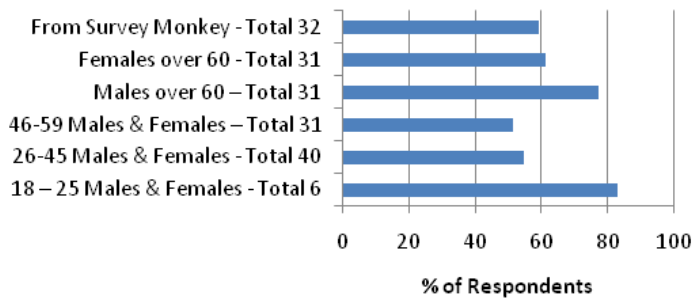
Wide footpath leading into Millisle from Donaghadee; opportunity to turn into a 'Seaside Promenade' with colour, seasonal interest, seaside banners, seating and improved access to the beach etc



7.3.3

Road Safety and Traffic Calming

A number of different areas have been highlighted through the consultation process in regard to road and traffic safety. Consultation results show the number of people with concerns around road safety:



Homezone



Shared Space in Killyleagh

Due to the nature of the main road (A2) running through Millisle, traffic speeds can be fast and cars often speed up when leaving the village while still within the restricted speed zones. According to the Department of Transport's Local Transport Note 1/07, in order to reduce speeding efficiently in rural villages on roads with high traffic, a combination of measures is required:

Idea Development

- Road markings such as 'Dragon's Teeth', transverse bar markings
 - Vehicle activated 30mph signs
 - Narrowing and chicanes
 - Gateways: evidence shows that striking and visual measures have the greatest impact on speed through a village
 - Speed cameras
 - Removal of central roadway markings
 - Shared Space Area of paving on the road
- The evidence shows that the car speeds are influenced by street activity such as reducing the physical separation between vehicles and pedestrian, this can be achieved through types of surface textures.
- Mini roundabouts – Could be considered for Moss Road and Abbey Road Junctions
 - Traffic calming on Abbey Road outside Millisle Primary School
 - 20mph and 'Home Zones' in estate areas – designs to give priority to people over traffic

Next Steps:

- Set up a meeting with DRD Roads Service, the PSNI, Roads Safety Groups and residents to discuss options.
- Work with other villages affected by traffic on the A2 along the Peninsula and lobby for a joint approach



Road narrowing traffic calming

7.3.4

Walks and connections

Several walking routes have been identified as possible areas for development to improve pedestrian connections around the village. The improved accessibility of walks will benefit residents from a recreational point of view as well as encouraging more local people to be active.

The river through the centre of the village offers an excellent opportunity to connect the new housing developments with Main Street. The new housing development did not integrate the river into the design of the public realm and it would be of benefit to the quality of life for residents of Millisle to enhance the river's access and visibility.

Other walks that should be enhanced around the village include a walk to Ballycopeland Windmill and the reinstatement of Walkers Lane.

Next Steps:

- Set up an Action Group
- Begin discussions with landowners
- Work with Ards Borough Council and the Rivers Agency for the river walk
- Commission a feasibility study to look into the options for the river walk and the windmill walk



Existing access to the river to be enhanced

7.3.5

Improvements along Main Street

In order to improve the image of Main Street, improvements should be made to add colour and seasonal interest creating vibrancy, a sense of place and character. These improvements are a long term objective and would be expensive to implement however they would help boost the local economy whilst also slowing down traffic through the village centre.

Idea development:

- Create a 'Promenade' on the wide pavement north of the village
- Planters and hanging baskets
- Street trees
- Decorative paving
- Bespoke seating
- Viewing areas
- Access onto the shore
- Street trees
- Seaside style banners
- Heritage lighting

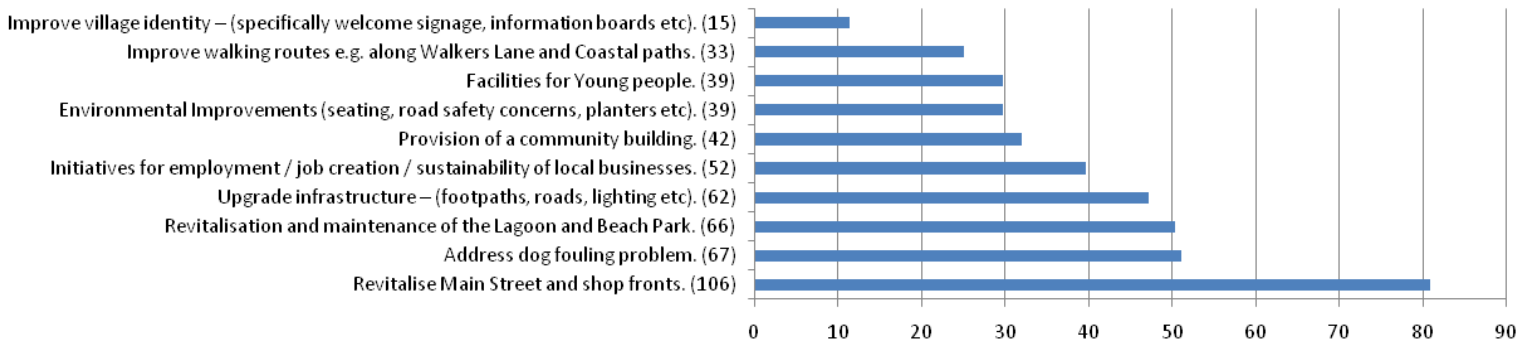
Next Steps:

- Seek funding for smaller elements such as banners, hanging baskets and seating
- Look for funding to produce a masterplan of the village centre
- Include Main Street in the Beach Park masterplan proposals

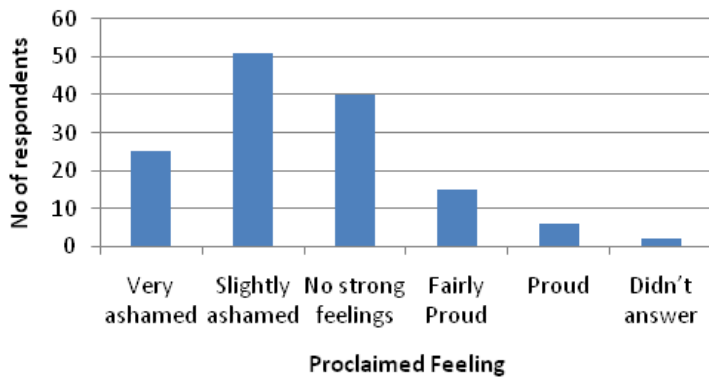


Millisle Main Street

Response to the issues identified on 18th Jan public consultation
 Showing % of the 131 respondents who ticked 4 concerns. (Actual numbers are shown in brackets)



Feelings on Image of Millisle



Street de-cluttering and 'Place-Making' through paving, trees, planting and seating

Hanging baskets and street banners - colour and seasonal interest

7.4 Beach Park, Lagoon and Sea Front Improvements

Millisle's coastal location defines its character and identity, therefore the area has featured strongly during the consultation period. The coastal area is well used by the village although the general perception is that it needs to be upgraded and improvements made to maximise its potential.

This section of the Action Plan addresses the future of the Lagoon, Beach Park and wider coastal area.

7.4.1

Engage with Ards Borough Council to improve the experience of the Lagoon and Beach Park

It is recommended that measures are put into place to improve partnership working and provide good lines of communication between community groups and the Council for the ongoing development and maintenance of the Beach Park and Lagoon. For example there is a perception that the site is currently unkempt and that water quality is poor, although through transparency between parties, a sense of community ownership can be developed and built upon. Simple measures such as displaying the water quality results would give locals and visitors the confidence that the area is safe, clean and maintained.

It is recommended that Ards Borough Council fully engage with the community to identify Health and Safety improvements required for the Lagoon. Any health and safety assessment should be carried out as a risk - benefit assessment weighing up the perceived risk against play value in order to offer a quality experience to the young people in Millisle. For example this process would seek to answer the question 'What risks must we allow or create to enable children to gain access to the potential benefits of play' (Playlink, Risk- Benefit Assessment Form 2010).

Other priority health and safety issues to be addressed include the upgrade of paths and ramps around Beach Park to current DDA standards. This will help give people with mobility problems the confidence to enjoy walks along the coast which is particularly important when seeking to maximise the benefits of providing opportunities for elderly people living in the area.

Next Steps

- Work with the Department of the Environment (DOE) to display water quality results
- Develop partnership working with the Council
- Ensure good lines of communication regarding planned improvements for the Lagoon according to the Council's condition report on the Lagoon
- Council to carry out recommended Health and Safety works to the Lagoon and Beach Park

7.4.2

Lobby Council and NI Water Regarding Sewerage Problem

NI Water are in the planning stages to develop a new wastewater pumping sewer and marine emergency overflow in Millisle, ref section 3.5.

Unfortunately time scales are currently unknown and therefore continued lobbying is recommended in order to ensure the fast resolution of these outstanding issues.

The rectification of this problem will have a significant benefit to the overall quality of the Beach Park for all users.



Sewerage outlet

7.4.3

Production and Implementation of a Masterplan for Beach Park and the Lagoon

Improvements to Beach Park and the Lagoon can be approached in phases through individual funding pots as and when they become available. The production and agreement of an updated Masterplan for the coastal area is recommended as a first step in the regeneration of the area.

The Council commissioned a Feasibility Study into Millisle Beach Park carried out by WDR & RT Taggart in July 2007 which included three concept options for the park. This report would form the basis of a more detailed Masterplan to be agreed in partnership between Ards Borough Council and the wider Millisle community.

The Masterplan will enable co-ordinated phased development of an overall vision ensuring opportunities are not missed rather than implementing elements in isolation from each other.

The Plan should include suggested suitable phases for improvements and rough associated costs to allow individual funding packages to be sought by fully constituted community groups.

The following items should be considered in the Masterplan although it should be noted that some of the items may be implemented before a Masterplan is created, if suitable funding streams become available.

Idea Development

- Upgrade paths to conform to Health and Safety standards
- Bespoke seating
- Picnic benches
- Promenade to allow for activities such as walking, jogging, running, roller-skating etc
- Urban Sports facilities (skateboarding etc)
- Trim trail
- Events space, traditional seaside activities
- Sheltered seating area
- Viewing platforms
- Additional slips and boat moorings
- Landscaping and planting to green areas to add interest and character
- Lighting
- Re surface car parks and design in traffic calming measures
- Relocation / refurbishment of toilets
- Activity centre (Watersports/ kayaking etc)

Next Steps

- Concept Plan to be developed

The plan should agree a pallet of colours and style to ensure the development of strong identity and character.



Idea development

7.4.4

Community Led Enhancement of Beach Park

Community led improvements can be made to Beach Park at little cost.

It is recommended that some ideas are put into place in the short term to help lift the appearance of the area and to foster a seaside holiday atmosphere as well as a greater sense of shared ownership and civic pride.

Idea development

- Areas of wildflowers to add diversity, colour and interest
- Temporary art installations
- Sculpture
- Community clean up events

Next Steps:

- Set up an Action Group
- Apply for small funding pockets
- Appoint a community artist to develop ideas

Bathing Beauties Beach Huts - Lincolnshire



Seaside wildflowers



7.4.5

Improve Appearance of Beach Park from the Road

It is recommended that the planned improvements to Beach Park are not looked at in isolation.

Idea development

- Install feature car park barriers to create strong entrances
- Upgrade walls and paths
- Develop tree planning and planting schemes

Next Steps:

- Incorporate the area into the Beach Park Masterplan
- Lobby the Council to consider part of the Destination Strangford Lough proposals



Existing main entrance to Beach Park



Decorative carpark barrier

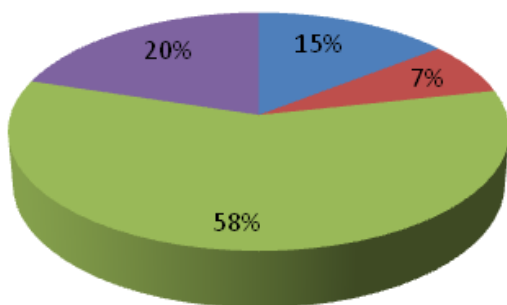
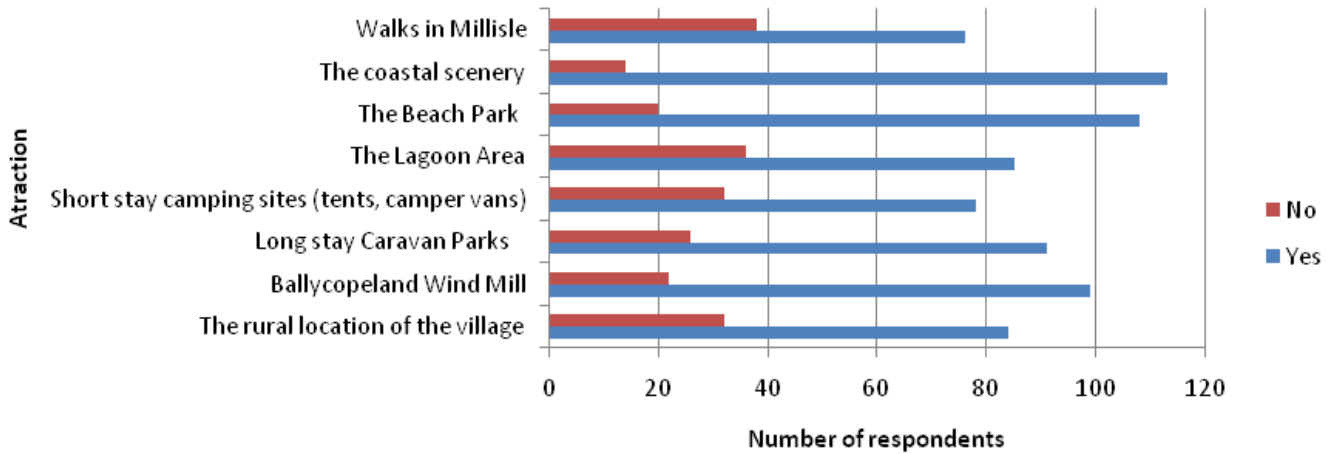


Paths and ramps - surface upgrade needed



Large areas of green amenity space

Do you think the following are important as tourist attractions in Millisle?



- Didn't answer (20)
- The lagoon should be removed (10)
- The current structure of the lagoon should be improved (81)
- The lagoon should be completely rebuilt (28)

7.5 Tourism Development

Tourism is an integral part of Millisle and has shaped its development over the years. Consultation results showed a clear perception that the future sustainability of Millisle is dependent on the health of tourism. The objectives below aim to address where gaps in provision are and suggest measures to develop tourism to make it relevant to current trends and expectations.

7.5.1

Work with Ards Borough Council to Introduce a Programme of Summer Events

Many people throughout the consultation process have cited the need for events to attract tourists to Millisle. It is recommended that a programme of summer events should be organised and well marketed across the Peninsula and further afield.

Idea development:

- Extend successful summer schemes and Sand Sculpture Extravaganza
- Work with community groups through the coastal Peninsula area to co-ordinate a programme of events
- Utilise green spaces in Beach Park
- Develop a theme / brand specifically for Millisle ie: traditional seaside activities
- Apply for arts funding to work with community artists to run community arts events
- Combine with the Traders Association to maximise success
- Advertise events on the Council Website
- Develop Millisle 'Village of Culture'

Next steps:

- Develop an Action Group and seek support from Peninsula Community Network (PCN),
- Develop a programme of events in partnership with PCN
- Aim to develop an East Peninsula group
- Apply for funding from Ards Borough Council



Innovative summer Installations such as a Street Piano bringing interest and attracting visitors

7.5.2

Develop Walking Routes around Millisle

Consultation indicated a high level of interest in walking opportunities for the area. It is recommended that the improvement and development of paths along the seafront be prioritised to include imaginatively designed viewing points and stopping areas for walkers. The promotion of activities should also be developed including cycling and water sports. Developing a good network of walking routes is integral to the proposed overall tourism strategy in Millisle and would offer significant benefits to both residents and visitors.

This initiative also fits into the area's Tourism Management Plan (ref section 8.2)

Woburn Woods

Woburn Woods is situated on the outskirts of Millisle and offers potential recreation opportunities. When plans for Lisnevin are developed, the woods should be considered as an area to be developed for public use through sensitively designed footpaths.

The woods can also be used for educational purposes with landowner consent through the Forest Schools scheme which enables primary school children to experience woodland as part of the National Curriculum.

Next Steps

- Identify walking routes around Millisle
- Lobby Department of Justice and the Environment Agency to ensure community led development of Lisnevin.

7.5.3

Improvements to Tourist Signage and Millisle Branding

In order to improve the experience of tourists to the village and to increase village legibility, the proposed Tourist Hub (7.2.1) should be combined with an interpretive map of the area. The sign should be replicated at Beach Park or the Lagoon to help strengthen the character of the village and to tie it together visually.

Information to be included:

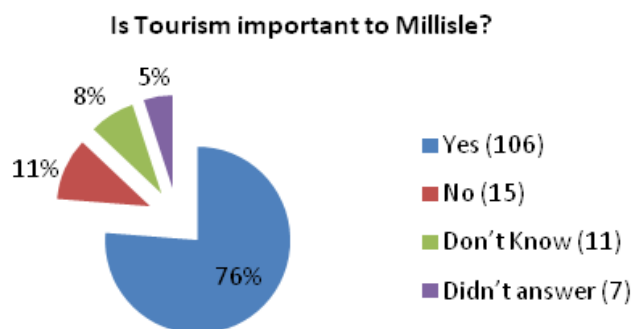
- Local attractions such as the Holocaust Memorial Garden In Millisle Primary School
- Bus times to Ballycopeland Windmill
- Local wildlife
- Activities
- Clearly mapped walking and cycle routes
- Local businesses

Next Steps:

- Work with the Council’s Tourism department to develop a design to complement the Destination Strangford Lough Proposals
- Agree a pallet of materials and colours to tie the village together whist also creating an identity unique to Millisle
- Seek funding to design and implement the signage

Brown Tourist Signs

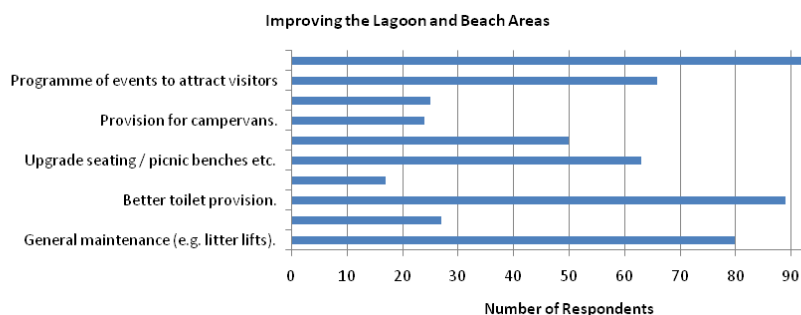
A review of brown tourist signs could also help suggest to passersby that the village is an interesting place and popular with tourists, signage in the village centre could include the Beach Park and Lagoon as well as the caravan parks.



7.5.4

Improvements to Tourist Infrastructure

Improvements to existing provisions for Tourists was seen throughout the consultation as very important to the development of Millisle. The following points items were considered to be of most significance:



Toilets:

- Renovate and set in an improved landscape to improve their overall setting.
- Review of opening hours to better suit the needs of visitors
- Work with Council to agree community responsibility for opening and closing toilets
- Consider relocation to a more central position, closer to Beach Park

Motorhome facilities:

The provision of motorhome facilities as an option for stopover stays in Millisle could offer significant benefits to the local economy.

Recently new facilities have been installed in Donaghadee which have proven to be successful. During the consultation respondents indicated that facilities in Millisle would be a welcome addition to the village.

There may be scope to offer similar facilities to those in Donaghadee although Ards Borough Council advised that it would be necessary to consider the merits of Millisle against other settlements along the Peninsula especially due to the proximity of the existing site in Donaghadee.

7.5.5

Develop connections between Ballycopeland Windmill and Millisle

Ballycopeland Windmill is a popular tourist destination and attracts visitors even when the visitor centre is closed during winter. The promotion of the windmill and strengthening its connection to Millisle is key to the tourism development strategy for the village.

Idea development:

- Create footpath / circular walk around the windmill similar to the walks at the Giants Ring, Belfast
- Explore old walking route between the Windmill and Millisle
- Consider increasing opening hours
- Development partnership working with the NIEA regarding community responsibility for opening the site
- Consider possibilities to hold events at the windmill as part of the programme of summer events
- Consider a mobile café as part of a community enterprise scheme

Next Steps:

- Set up a meeting with the NIEA to discuss the windmill's future and development for the benefit of the village.

7.5.6

Build on Rural Location and Natural Environment

Destination Strangford Lough Tourism Management Plan (TMP) identifies a key strength and opportunity of the area as wildlife and wildlife watching. The region is internationally recognised for its overwintering birdlife and is located on a RAMSAR site which designates it of international importance.

Millisle has the opportunity to take advantage of its rural and coastal setting to maximise the opportunities this regional strategy may bring in terms of tourism.

Idea development:

- Enhance open sea views and scenic coast line,
- Create destination points with viewing platforms and seating
- Develop bird watching opportunities with bird hides
- Develop and build awareness of local farm and sea food supplies and sell in local eating places and shops
- Develop opportunities highlighted in the TMP to explore 'local culture through nature; including living landscapes, wildlife, local food, produce and speciality restaurants'

Next Steps:

The farm located in the centre of the village offers a unique opportunity to build on the above opportunities. The farm already supplies meat to the butchers and it would be beneficial to promote this aspect of the village further. Interpretation signage on the fencing overlooking the farm from the main road could be aimed at children to teach them about farming life. Diversification to include a small petting farm could possibly be considered as a further attraction for tourists.

- Set up an Action Group to look into how this has been achieved in other areas, in particular Todmorton Incredible Edible





Ideas of seating areas and viewing platforms to complement to coastal scenery in Millisle

8 Statutory engagement

A key element to the success of the Village Plan is statutory buy-in from local authorities as well as an understanding of how the suggested measures fit into statutory documents, policies and plans.

A meeting was held with stakeholders from a number of different agencies and is summarised in this section along with an overview of relevant policy documents.

8.1 Stakeholder meeting:

Stakeholders were invited to attend a meeting on the 18th February 2014 to discuss the draft proposals and to identify roles and responsibilities in delivery.

The meeting was well attended with elected representatives Jonathan Bell MLA and Cllr Eddie Thomson as well as representatives from:

- Ards Borough Council,
- The Planning Service,
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive,
- NI Water,
- The PSNI,
- County Down Rural Community Network,
- North Down and Ards Road Safety Committee,
- Peninsula Healthy Living Partnership
- DOE Marine Division.

The meeting allowed stakeholders to explain their current roles and responsibilities and any relevant future plans for the Millisle. Issues were discussed as a group within the context of the items emerging from the consultation process.

After the meeting where necessary, clarification on various points were sought by email or telephone.

8.2 Regional Policy Review

Regional Development Policy

8.2.1

Programme for Government 2011-2015

The Programme for Government sets out the Executive's 82 commitments for the next four years. These commitments range from raising levels of employment, investment in tourism, skills and training and Health and Social Care.

Specific rural commitments include a £13 million package to tackle rural poverty and social and economic isolation, administered by DARD.

8.2.2

Building a Better Future - Regional Development Strategy 2035

Building a Better Future - Regional Development Strategy 2035

The Regional Development Strategy (RDS), Shaping our Future sets out a number of policies to guide development of Northern Ireland. The key aims relating to Millisle are:

- Sustain rural communities living in smaller settlements and the open country side
- Improve accessibility for rural communities
- Support rural Renaissance
- Promote a sustainable approach to tourism infrastructure
- Conserve, protect and enhance the built heritage and natural environment

The RDS recognises the importance of Tourism as a growing part of the local economy of the Ards region. This is due to the area's scenic beauty and historical interest as well as its combination of urban and rural settlements and close proximity to Belfast.

Rural Development Policy

The responsibility for rural development and rural policy in Northern Ireland is with The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD). Responsibilities include the management and implementation of the following documents and frameworks of relevance to the Village Plan:

- Rural Development Programme
- Rural White Paper Action Plan
- Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Framework 2011-2015

8.2.3

Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme

The Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 is currently under consultation and the size and shape of it is dependent on the outcome of discussion on the EU budget for the period and final EU regulations.

The main differences from the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 are the removal of the axis structure to improve flexibility. Existing measures have been consolidated into fewer broader measures with an increased focus on knowledge transfer, innovation, co-operation, climate change and the environment.

8.2.4

Northern Ireland Rural White Paper Action Plan

The Action Plan is the over arching strategy for rural areas and provides for joined up interdepartmental working to identify measures to improve the quality of life in rural communities. Key themes include:

- Urban / Rural linkages: - to support the development of efficient transport and infrastructure system that facilitates effective rural – urban inter-linkages
- Access to services: - Promote fair and equitable access to key services for all rural dwellers
- Sustainable Rural Communities: Maintain viable economic social, cultural and physical infrastructure in rural areas, minimise regional infrastructure disparities.
- Sustain Rural Economies: Provide rural businesses with appropriate support to ensure the development of dynamic and innovative rural economies, maximise employment opportunities for rural dwellers.

8.2.5

Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Framework 2011-2015

This framework supports a package of measures worth up to £16 million to support vulnerable people in rural communities and target the root causes of isolation. Priority themes include:

Access, poverty, advice on welfare, health and social care, public transport, advice and support, education and training.

Local Development Policy

8.2.6

Sub Regional Transport Plan 2015 (DRD)

The Transport plan focuses on both urban areas and rural area. The plan acknowledges that the private car plays an important and dominant role in rural areas although access to public transport is important. Public transport offers a more sustainable choice but mainly provides important access to services for people without cars.

For villages and intermediate settlements like Millisle with the population band of between 1000-4499, a service frequency of 3 return journeys per day is proposed. The department also proposes that each settlement has at least two principal bus stops equipped to modern standards including up to date service information, convenient shelter and adjacent crossing facilities if appropriate.

Millisle has a more than the minimal requirement of bus services set out in this policy. However, any plans to reduce the current service would have a significant impact on Millisle residents especially as there is a higher than average dependency on public transport. (Ref About Millisle Section)

8.2.7

Ards Borough Council Corporate Plan 2012-2015

The Ards Borough Council Corporate Plan sets out a number of objectives until 2015 when the new Council areas will come into effect.

These focus on the following areas:

- The quality of the environment, making it cleaner, greener and more sustainable.
- Building on the strength of local communities, working for a safer Borough and improving health, well being and quality of life for local people
- Development of the region as a tourist destination
- Each area has key actions and targets set against it such as tourism promotion:
- Target:
 - Annual increase in line with NI Increase or above
 - 3% increase per annum

Key Actions:

Promote tourism effectively, improve existing and develop new tourism product and secure external funds for tourism development.

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Disclaimer

It is believed that the particulars contained within and appended to this Report are correct, but they are not guaranteed and Groundwork NI shall not be liable in any manner or way for any inaccuracy, error or omission in the said particulars.

This draft completed by Groundwork NI 31st July 2014