

Supporting Thriving High Streets Glow Up Grant Guidance for Applicants

**Closing Date: 12noon on Friday 1 August 2025
(or sooner should all funding be awarded)**

Our Vision

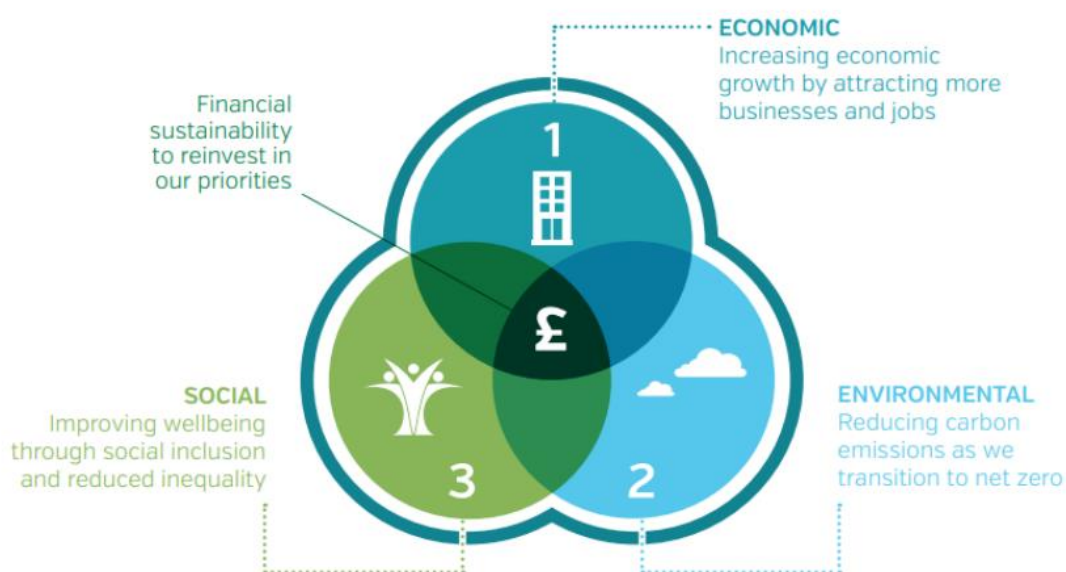
Our vision is that Ards and North Down will be a Sustainable Borough.

The Big Plan (Community Plan) uses an outcomes-based approach and seeks to enable all people in Ards and North Down to:

- Fulfil their lifelong potential
- Enjoy good health and wellbeing
- Live in communities where they are respected, are safe and feel secure
- Benefit from a prosperous economy
- Feel pride from having access to a well-managed sustainable environment.

The Corporate Plan aligns with the Big Plan with a vision for the Council to become a Sustainable Borough by way of three pillars: Economic, Environmental and Social.

Three Corporate Priorities align with these pillars of sustainable development:



Further information about the Council can be found on the Council's website at www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

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Terms of Reference

Ards and North Down Borough Council – The Council

Department for Communities – The Department

Proprietor(s)/ Tenant(s) – The Applicant

1 Introduction

The Glow Up Grant aims to support businesses to upgrade their shopfront to create vibrant, welcoming streetscapes that attract more footfall to the City and Town Centres, thereby boosting local economic activity and enhancing the overall appeal of our borough.

Ards and North Down Borough Council has been awarded £500,000 funding from the Department for Communities for the delivery of this shopfront enhancement grant scheme, this is supported by an additional investment of £50,000 from the Council.

The Glow Up Grant will provide financial assistance to active businesses in the urban centres of Bangor, Comber, Donaghadee, Holywood and Newtownards. Grants will provide 90% funding up to a maximum amount of £2,500 per property. A minimum 10% financial contribution is required from eligible applicants.

2 Applicant Eligibility

1. Must be an active business which is commercially trading at the time of submitting your application
2. Must be located within the city/ town centre boundary of Bangor, Comber, Donaghadee, Holywood and Newtownards. Only businesses located within the boundary will be eligible to apply. **You can view the city and town centre boundary maps at Appendix 1.**
3. The works will be for capital improvements to enhance the visual appeal of the shopfront. For more information on eligible works, please refer to Section 3
4. Applications must be submitted by the business owner(s) and/or the proprietor(s)
5. Where the applicant is the tenant applying, you must obtain permission from the proprietor(s) to carry out any works to the building. A signed and dated consent notice from the proprietor must be provided with the supporting information.
6. The applicant is the named person to receive grant. The applicant must remain the same throughout the process and will be the person responsible for making and receiving payments
7. Applications are limited to a maximum grant of £2,500 per property over the lifetime of the scheme
8. A minimum 10% contribution is required from the applicant
9. Applications are limited to one per property

3 Eligible Works

Only capital items which are an improvement to the exterior of the business shopfront are eligible. On the application form applicants must demonstrate how the proposed project will enhance the shopfront to assist with achieving the following outcomes:

- encourage footfall
- improve the appearance of the streetscape
- provide a welcoming and vibrant shopfront

Examples of eligible capital items:

- Signage
- Windows, doors, and shopfront
- Preparation and painting of shopfront
- Decorative and maintenance improvements
- Outdoor provision (e.g. tables, seating, benches etc.)
- Awnings
- Access Improvements

This list is not exhaustive and can include other capital works/items that can be demonstrated as an improvement to the visual appeal of the shopfront.

All items and/or works must comply with all statutory obligations and consider Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Applicants should consider sustainable methods of shopfront enhancements such as eco-friendly materials, energy efficiency, designing for durability.

Works to the side of a building will only be funded if they are clearly visible from the street and if they are associated with an overall project which includes improvements to the front façade of the same property.

4 Statutory Consent

It is the responsibility of the applicant to make enquiries as to whether any statutory consent, e.g. planning permission, advertising consent, building control, listed building consent etc, is required for their planned works and subsequently to ensure that the relevant applications are made.

Statutory Consents

In the case of tenants, the proprietor's permission must be obtained in writing and submitted as stated in Section 2.

New signage (with/without illumination) generally requires Advertisement Consent- any proposed signage should be in accordance with The Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015. Please refer to Schedule 3 of these Regulations for those classes of advertisements which may be displayed with deemed consent (i.e. without the need for an application for advertising consent).

Some external works to a building (excluding a listed building) can be carried out without the need for planning permission. Details of those works that are deemed to be 'permitted development' can be found in the Schedule to The Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015, under Part 34 – Shops, Financial and Professional Services Establishments, and Part 35 – Office Buildings.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all statutory approvals required are lawfully complied with.

A Letter of Offer will only be issued when statutory consents are received and a copy provided.

The Glow Up Grant operates independently of statutory consent(s) and any Offer in Principle does not imply in any way that statutory consent(s) will be forthcoming.

All Letters of Offer will be conditional on the applicant securing the statutory consent(s).

Building Control

Alteration of buildings and entrances are likely to require a Building Control application. Please contact the Building Control office on the details below for further guidance.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure approvals are attained, and that copies of the approvals are made available to the Council.

A claim for grant funding will only be paid when the relevant approvals are granted and evidence of this is provided.

Note – Consultancy and statutory application fees for obtaining necessary approvals are not grant eligible under this scheme.

Relevant contacts:

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Planning Department, 2 Church Street, Newtownards, BT23 4AP

Tel: 0300 013 3333 Email: planning@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

Mon-Fri 9.00am – 3.00pm

[Planning Applications Information - Ards and North Down Borough Council](#)

Ards and North Down Borough Council Building Control Department

City Hall, The Castle, Bangor, BT20 4BT

Tel: 028 9120 8015 Email: buildingcontrol@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

Mon-Thu 9.00am – 5.00pm and Friday 9.00am – 4.45pm

[Building Control - Ards and North Down Borough Council](#)

During application assessment, officers may request the applicant to provide evidence that they have contacted the relevant agencies. A copy of correspondence may be required to verify the need for statutory approvals. It is suggested that enquiries are made in writing.

5 Risk and Insurance

The applicant, agent and/or contractor is responsible for all risks in connection with public or employer liability associated with the works.

The Council and the Department does not and will not accept liability or responsibility in respect of the grant aided work carried out to the applicant's property; accordingly the applicant should not rely on the inspection or payment of grant monies by the Council as any proof or guarantee that the contractor engaged to execute the works has completed the said works to a proper standard prior to payment; the applicant is strongly advised to satisfy themselves that the works have been carried out to a satisfactory standard.

A copy of all relevant and valid insurance certificates for the preferred contractor(s) must be submitted at the time of your application with the supporting documentation.

6 Funding

The grant offered will fund 90% of project costs up to a maximum grant of £2,500. A contribution of 10% will be required from the applicant.

Note - There is no minimum level of grant award.

Example:

Total Cost of Project	Grant Award	Business Contribution
£700	£630	£70
£1,600	£1,440	£160
£2,500	£2,250	£250
£3,000	£2,500	£500
£5,000	£2,500	£2,500

The grant will **not** fund:

- Internal works
- Statutory application fees
- Consultancy fees
- Professional fees (e.g. solicitor/ surveyor/ architect)
- Insurances
- Retrospective expenditure where works/items have already been obtained and paid for prior to a Letter of Offer
- VAT*
- General Upkeep
- Marketing and Advertising
- Costs that are already covered by other funding

**VAT – this is applicable to businesses that are VAT registered.*

This list is not exhaustive, should you have any queries regarding eligible items for funding please contact: glowupgrant@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

7 Application

In order to apply for the Glow Up Grant, applicants must complete and return the completed online application and submit the supporting documentation no later than **12noon on Friday 01 August 2025**.

In order to consider your application, the Council requires the following documentation:

1. Completed online Application Form > accessed here > **Link will be available from 9am on Monday 23 June 2025**
2. Submission of supporting documentation, to include quotation(s), contractor(s) valid insurance, before image(s) and proprietor approval (where required) > this must be sent via email to glowupgrant@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk within 7 working days of submitting your online application form. Please include your name, business name and address on subject line.

IMPORTANT:

Applications are only deemed as submitted in full when both the online application form has been completed, and the supporting documentation has been received.

In instances where the supporting documentation has not been received within 7 working days of submitting your online application form, your application will be deemed incomplete and therefore ineligible. Should this happen, you are eligible to reapply if within the application timeframe.

You must submit:

- ✓ Completed online Application Form – including a description of the works that you intend to carry out, the need for those works and how they will positively impact footfall, improve the streetscape and provide a welcoming and vibrant shopfront.
- ✓ Proof of permissions (where required) – if you are the tenant(s) of the property you will need the proprietor(s) to provide approval of your application to show that they have given permission for the building works to be carried out.
- ✓ Written quotations - it is the applicant's responsibility to undertake procurement by obtaining quotations for all items, labour, and materials to demonstrate that value for money is being achieved. Written or email costs must be dated and include the supplier's name and contact details. For items being purchased online, a screenshot or print off showing price, date and supplier must be submitted. Please refer to Section 13 for further details on procurement.
- ✓ Before photographs of the current shopfront to demonstrate the need for works. Council officers will also conduct a site visit.
- ✓ Insurance certificate(s) – a copy of all relevant and valid insurance certificates for each contractor (This is not required for materials).

8 Application Assessment

Applications will be assessed on the following basis;

1. First-come first-served basis* where all documentation is provided, this includes the completed online application and all supporting information submitted to glowupgrant@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk within 7 working days of the online submission.
2. Ability to achieve the works within the scheme timeframe.
3. The applicant has clearly demonstrated the need for and how the proposed works will enhance the shopfront, contribute to the visual appeal of the business and streetscape.

Incomplete applications will be rejected and the applicant will be notified by email. Should this happen, you are eligible to reapply if within the application timeframe.

**Completed applications will be assessed on a first come basis until the total grant is allocated. Incomplete applications will be rejected. Should this happen, you are eligible to reapply if within the application timeframe. The date and time of the submission of application and supporting information will be recorded.*

Applications will be considered and assessed as soon as possible following receipt.

9 Letter of Offer

Applicants **cannot** start works until a 'Letter of Offer' for the grant has been issued and the acceptance form is returned to the Council.

The Council will **not** retrospectively fund projects.

Grant funding must be accepted within 7 working days of the date of the Letter of Offer.

If your project requires statutory consent and your grant is approved, the Council will write to you making an **Offer in Principle** for funding. The Council will only issue a formal Letter of Offer once consent is granted, and a copy provided as evidence. It should be noted that consent must be granted and works completed by 1 March 2026.

10 Works Commence

The Council will contact the applicant via email following the receipt of the completed Acceptance Form to confirm that works can commence.

11 Works Complete

Works must be completed in accordance with that listed on the application form, as per quotations and for which a Letter of Offer has been issued. Where alternative works or additional works is undertaken no payment will be made unless the Council's approval has been obtained prior to works commencing. The grant may be reduced or withheld if the grant eligible work proves to be less than estimated.

12 Payment

Grant funding will only be released for payment following inspection of works by the Council. It is the responsibility of the applicant to notify the Council once works have been completed so inspection can be arranged. Inspection will be arranged within 7 working days of notification.

The applicant will be responsible for paying all supplier(s) and/or contractor(s) directly following completion of the work. The applicant will then be required to complete a Claim Form to recover the grant funding.

Grant funding will be paid directly to the applicant within 28 days of receipt of the applicant's completed Claim Form along with the following documentation:

- Original invoice(s)/receipt(s) for works and materials which must be dated and provide the supplier/contractor details.
- Copy of cheque/ BACS/ bank transfer/ debit card/ credit card payment to contractor(s) and/or supplier(s)
- Copy of bank statement showing associated payment leaving the applicant's account.
- Where a credit card is used to make payment, a copy of the statement showing the transaction and a copy of the relevant bank statement reflecting the amount being paid to the credit card will be required for verification.

Applicants must provide all the evidence requested, if requested documentation is not supplied, payment will be withheld. Please do not apply for funding if you cannot supply these items.

Payment of grant will be made to the applicant via direct BACS payment.

Payment from the applicant to supplier(s) and/or contractor(s) must be made via cheque/ BACS/ bank transfer/ debit card/ credit card.

Cash payment is not acceptable and will not be eligible for refund from the Council – this is also applicable to deposit payments.

Applicants are responsible for paying the supplier(s) and/or contractor(s) and claiming back VAT, if applicable.

13 Procurement

Applicants **must** provide quotations in order to demonstrate best value for money for the works to be undertaken.

Procurement Requirements

- Any single item costing under £3,000 – submission of two written quotations
- Any single item costing between £3,000-£10,000 – submission of three written quotations

The process must be open and fair. The best value for money must be secured and the successful supplier(s) and/or contractor(s) must be properly qualified to undertake the works, meeting health and safety requirements in relation to the individuals performing the works and for members of the public.

The applicant will be responsible for any additional costs over and above the maximum grant threshold (£2,500).

The quotation(s) for each element of the proposed items/works must be submitted via email to glowupgrant@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk within 7 working days of submission of the online application.

Each quotation must be dated* and include;

- Supplier name and contact details
- Detail of each Item(s)/Works to be undertaken, such as item description, quantities, size, finish required etc.

*Quotations dated from the 09 June 2025 (when the scheme was publicly advertised) will be accepted.

All supplier(s) and/or contractor(s) asked to provide a cost must be given an identical specification and all quotations received must meet the works description as per the application.

If you, or a business of which you are an owner/ partner/ director, or a family member, intend to supply goods, services, or works for the project for which you have been offered funding, please contact the Council immediately for advice. Failure to comply with this requirement will deem your process as ineligible.

Any proposed changes to the agreed grant eligible works must be agreed by the Council in writing before the work takes place (including any changes to the contractor). The applicant cannot deviate from the works and costs provided; this will render the application as invalid.

In the instance where you have not followed the above procurement instruction, you must provide the rationale and justification within the supporting information. This should only happen if there are exceptional circumstances such as the market has been tested and there is no other supplier. In such circumstances the Council will review your request.

14 Timescales

The following timescales will be adhered to for this grant:

Glow Up Grant advertised	Monday 09 June 2025
Glow Up Grant open for applications	9am on Monday 23 June 2025
Glow Up Grant close for applications	12noon on Friday 01 August 2025
Grant Notification	Within 7-10 working days of completed application received.
Acceptance Form	Must be completed and returned within 7 working days of receiving Letter of Offer
Final date for all works to be completed	01 March 2026
Final date for all claims and evaluation to be submitted	10 March 2026

The Glow Up Grant will open for applications from **9am on Monday 23 June 2025**.

Online applications and supporting documentation must be returned as soon as possible as grant funding is allocated on a first-come first-served basis.

The closing date for applications is Friday 1 August 2025 (or sooner should all funding be awarded)

This scheme is an online process. If you are unable to complete your application and provide the supporting information online, please make contact glowupgrant@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk to arrange alternative method.

Application supporting documentation to be sent to:
glowupgrant@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

An acknowledgement email will be issued upon receipt of your application, this will provide your application reference number.

Eligible applicant will receive a Letter of Offer as soon as possible following the assessment of their application. This is estimated to be issued within 7-10 working days.

Applicants will be required to have completed and paid for all grant eligible works by 01st March 2026 (ensuring compliance with all terms and conditions of the grant Letter of Offer) Claims for grant payment should be made within 10 working days of all works being completed.

Claims for grant payment received after the 10 March 2026 will not be accepted.

15 Non-eligible and Unsuccessful Applications

Non-eligible

- Applicants who have previously received funding that was not managed satisfactorily or was not completed. This includes if you did not return monitoring or evaluation forms within the agreed timescale.
- Applications (including all essential documents requested) that are not fully complete or submitted after the grant closure deadline.
- Businesses/organisations implementing projects which are not compliant with grant's aims and objectives.
- Retrospective expenditure where works/items have already been obtained and paid for prior to a Letter of Offer
- The grant cannot be used for the purpose of, or in any way be connected with the promoting of any political party or religious viewpoint. No aspect of the activity being funded should be party political in intention, use or presentation or likely to be perceived as discriminatory.

Unsuccessful

If your application is incomplete or not eligible, you will be notified by email, and the reasons will be outlined. Should this happen, you are eligible to reapply if within the application timeframe.

A review process will be available.

16 Monitoring and Evaluation

Applicants will be required to provide monitoring information and complete a post grant evaluation form following the completion of works. This will be in the form of an online survey and will be required to be completed at the time of submitting your claim for grant payment.

Applicants should be aware that before and after photographs will be required. Before photographs must be submitted at the application stage and after photographs must be submitted with your claim for grant payment. An officer will also conduct a before and after visit.

17 Data Protection

Ards and North Down Borough Council value your right to personal privacy. We comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 / UK General Data Protection Regulation, ensuring that information is collected fairly and lawfully, is accurate, adequate, secure, up to date and not held any longer than necessary.

The personal information provided will be used for the purposes of managing the Grant, including sending of letters of offer and processing claims.

This information will be held for seven years from the conclusion of the program when it will be securely destroyed. Information you provide may be shared with external statutory or regulatory bodies, such as the Northern Ireland Audit Office or relevant Government Department, when there is a necessary and legitimate need to do so, but any personal information you provide to the Council is held securely and used only for Council purposes.

For further information, our Privacy Statement can be viewed at <https://www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/privacy-and-cookies> or contact the Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

18 Contact Information

If you have any queries regarding an application or would like assistance in ensuring that you can obtain all the required information, please contact:

Email: glowupgrant@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

Telephone: 0300 013 3333

19 Application Checklist

☐ Fully completed online application form submitted

- ☐ Where required, confirmation from the Planning Department and/or the Building Control Department as to whether your project requires statutory approvals – evidence may be requested.
- ☐ Supporting documentation sent to glowupgrant@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk within 7 working days of submitting application, subject line to include applicants name, business and address.
- ☐ Supporting documentation includes:
 1. Before Photographs
 2. Proprietor Consent Notice (where required)
 3. Minimum number of required quotations for all works/ items
 4. Copy of preferred Contractor(s) valid insurance

**This scheme is funded by the Department for Communities
and Ards and North Down Borough Council**



Department for
Communities
www.communities-ni.gov.uk

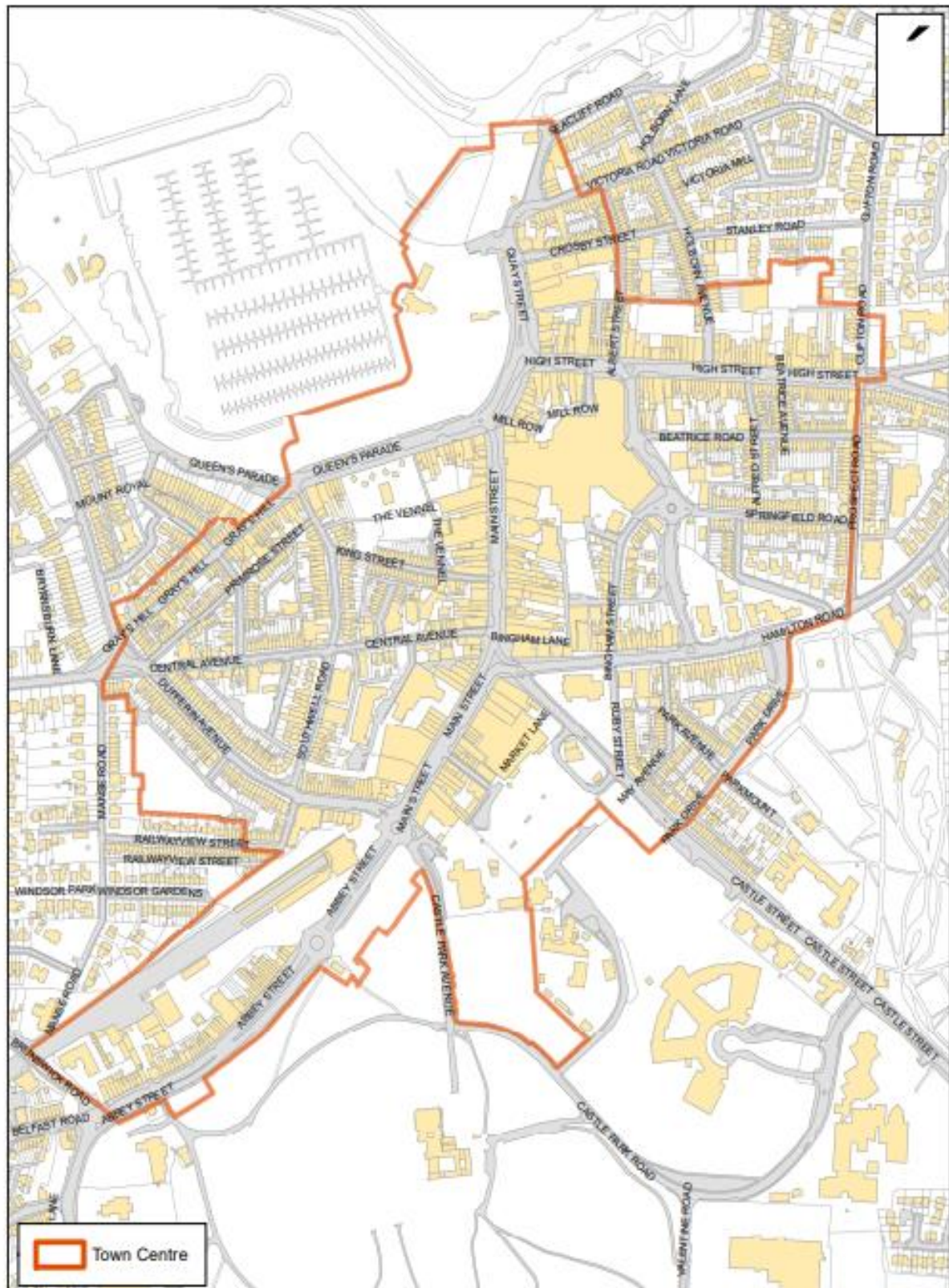
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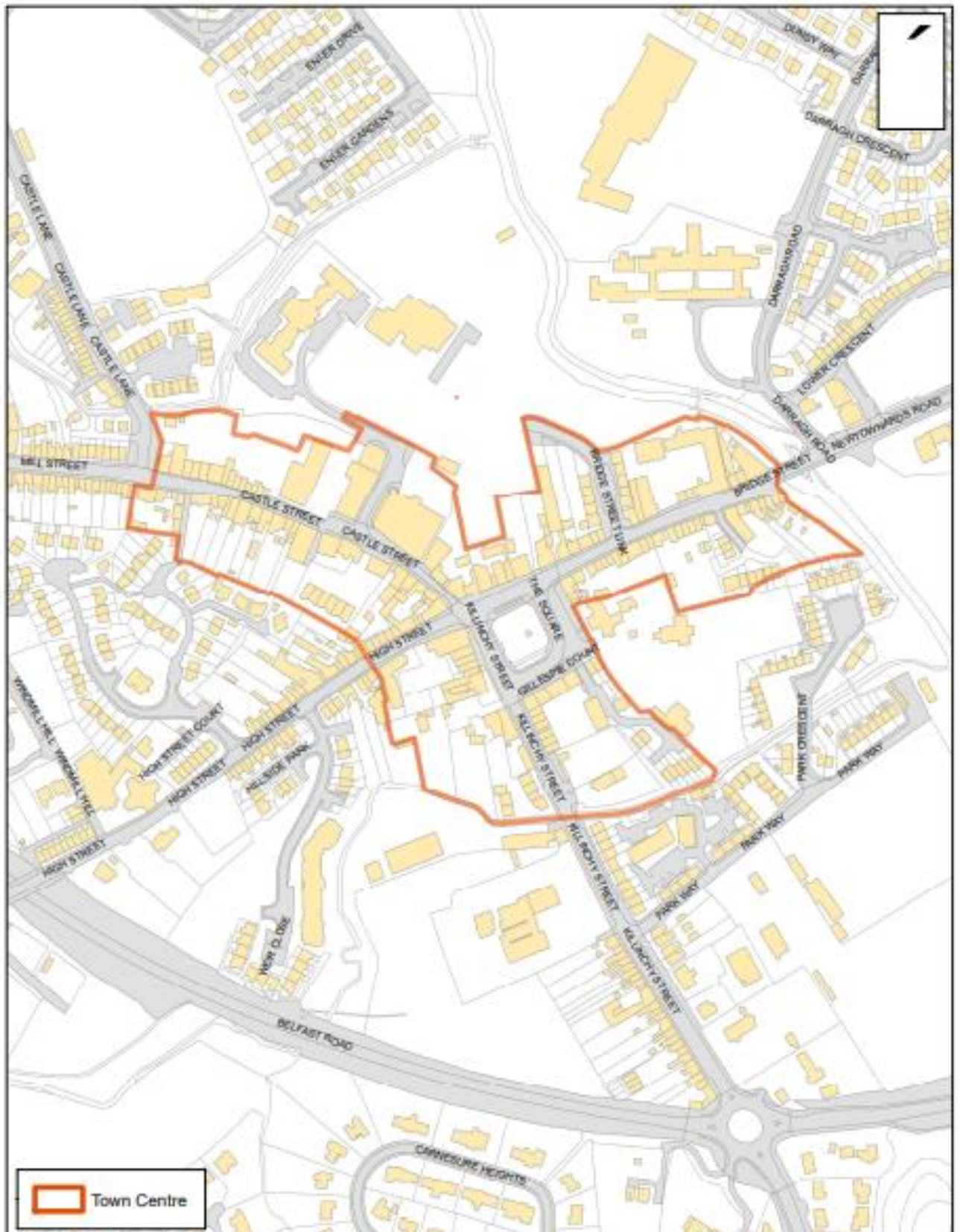
Supporting Thriving High Streets

Appendix 1

Bangor



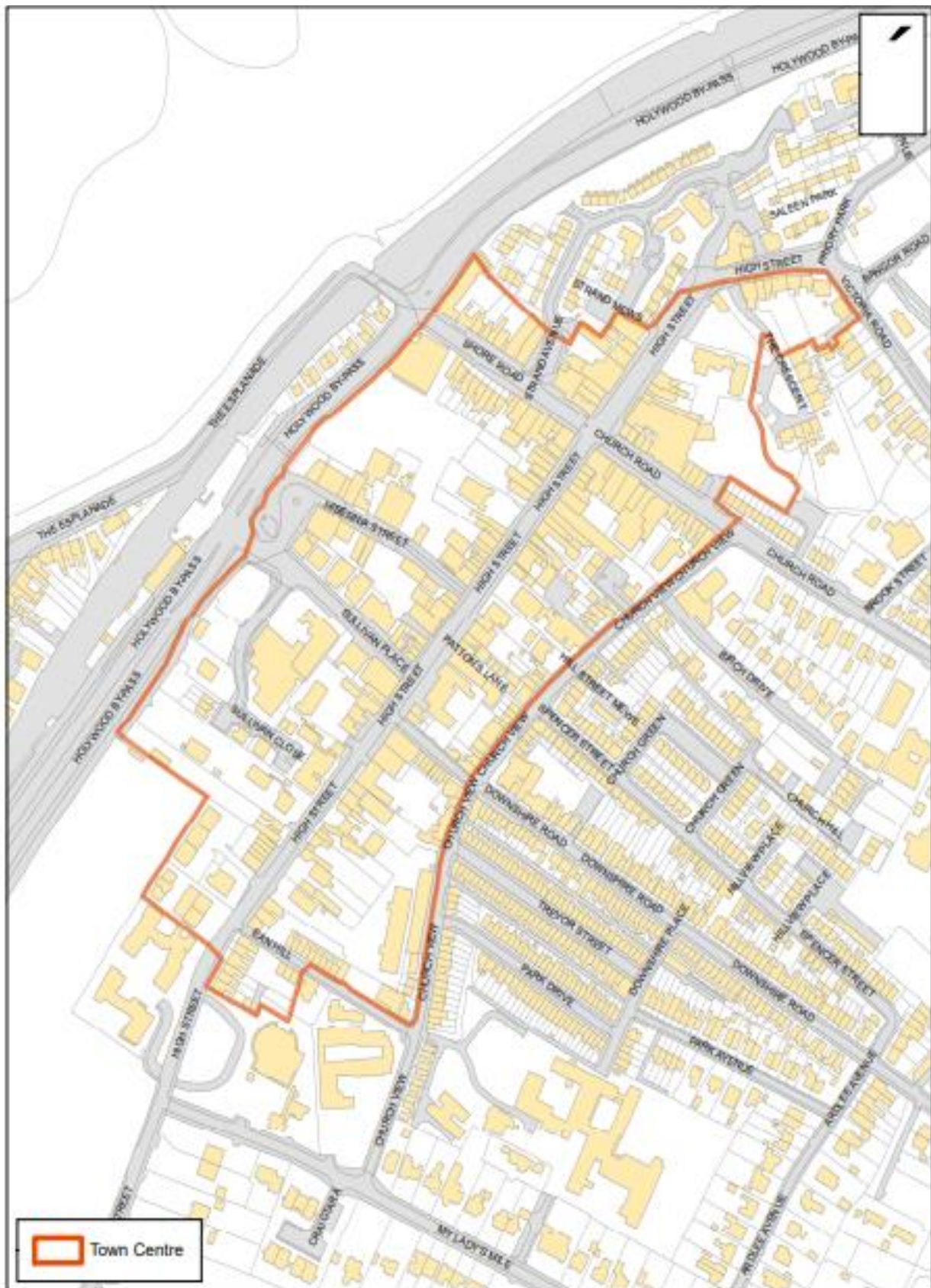
Comber



Donaghadee



Hollywood



Newtownards

