



HOLYWOOD

Town Centre Masterplan

Close by the water's farther side, There sits in clean and modest pride, The cheerful little Holywood.

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The Holywood Town Centre Masterplan has been produced on behalf of The Department for Social Development and North Down Borough Council by The Paul Hogarth Company.

September 2014



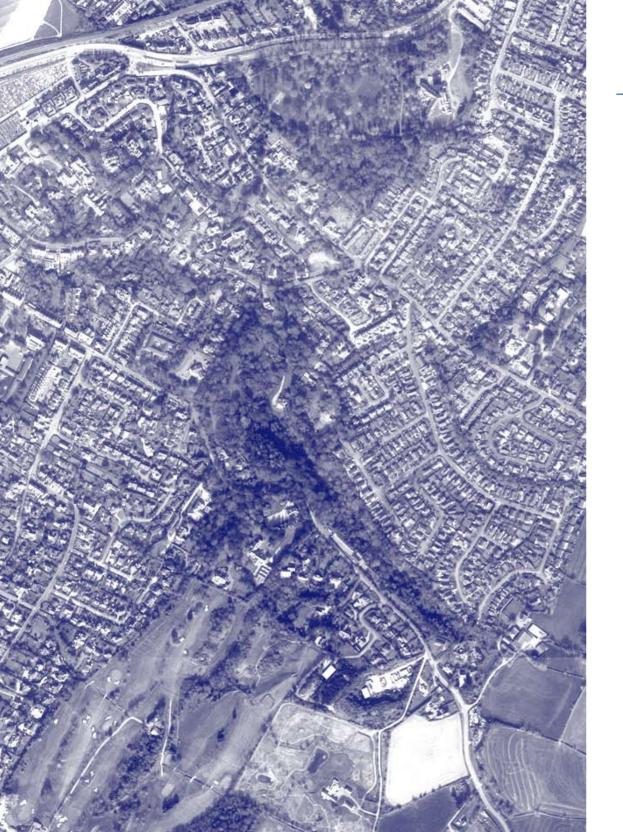


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INTRODUCTION

The Holywood Town Centre Masterplan has been commissioned by the Department for Social Development in partnership with North Down Borough Council and identifies a range of short, medium and long term initiatives which, subject to funding, will maximise the social, physical and economic potential of Holywood over the next 15-20 years.

The plan has been facilitated by a consultant team led by The Paul Hogarth Company (Masterplanners) and includes BDO (Economists), JMP (Transport Consultants), CBRE (Property Consultants), Place Solutions (Town Centre Promotion), Strategic Planning (Retail Capacity) and WYG (Cost Consultants).

1.1 WHAT IS A MASTERPLAN AND WHO IS IT FOR?

Central to a masterplan is the concept of 'placemaking' which aims to ensure the creation of successful and attractive places that promote peoples health and well being.

The Masterplan sets out a vision for Holywood Town Centre over the next 15-20 years. It provides a coherent long-term strategy intended to guide growth and development of the town and maps out the steps that are required to deliver on that strategy in accordance with a shared vision.

The Masterplan should not be confused with the on-going Holywood Public Realm Scheme, but instead sets the context within which the public realm scheme is positioned in relation to other regeneration projects.

The Holywood Town Centre Masterplan will provide a framework for the promotion, implementation and timing of urban regeneration and tourism initiatives. While non-statutory in nature, a masterplan is an effective tool that provides direction for both physical and non-physical interventions that help to shape open space, landscape and buildings. Proposals contained within the draft plan will be prioritised and phased within an Action Plan within which stakeholders and potential funders will be identified to take projects forward. The masterplan will also form an important component of the wider process of 'Community Planning' under which wider range of services can be considered.

All proposals contained within the Masterplan would be subject to further consultation and refinement. The Masterplan aims to serve the needs of those who live, work, visit and conduct business in Holywood. It should therefore be multi faceted in nature and contain a range of initiatives that not only serve the immediate and long term needs of its residents, but also address the needs of those who travel to the town to avail of its assets and services.

The Masterplan will help guide anyone with an interest in improving the town centre, including council, local community groups and businesses.

1.2 WHO WAS INVOLVED AND WHERE DOES THE MASTERPLAN COVER?

The Masterplan has been developed under the guidance of a multiagency Advisory Group, chaired by North Down Borough Council with representation from the Department for Social Development, Holywood Chamber of Commerce, Bangor & Holywood Town Centres Limited, Holywood Residents Association, Holywood & District Community Council, Holywood & District Group and Holywood Shared Town. This Group also included representation from statutory agencies including DRD, DOE, NIEA and NITB.

While the town centre tends to refer to the central area around High Street, Shore Road and Church Road, a holistic approach has been taken which looks beyond to ensure that initiatives contained within the plan respond to the wider townland.



1.3 METHODOLOGY

The Masterplan has been developed through a series of key work stages which have included comprehensive consultation and liaison with the local community in Holywood. Consultation has also been carried out with the relevant statutory agencies to ensure that the final plan appropriately reflects the needs of the town centre. The process undertaken to produce this plan involved the following four key stages :-

INFO GATHERING AND ANALYSIS

In order to gain an in-depth understanding of the strategic significance of Holywood, and its position in relation to the wider area, a number of analytical steps were carried out. This included a detailed review of all available statistical information and relevant background documentation alongside a series of site visits and desktop research in order to establish a profile of the area. This work stage also involved the production of land use and urban/landscape analysis plans, which while focussed on the Town Centre, takes cognisance of the surrounding context.

VISIONING AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

This key stage involved the establishment of local and international best practice exemplars and lessons that could be learnt from these places. This information fed into the formulation of a Shared Vision to provide a concise description of the type of place the people of Holywood would like their town centre to be. Arising from the Vision, a number of strategic regeneration objectives were developed.

DESIGN

The initial steps of the design stage included the identification of key opportunity sites and the articulation of the most appropriate form and timing of development. A draft masterplan was prepared illustrating innovative and pragmatic proposals which demonstrated the quality of existing and proposed urban form. The draft plan was put out to public consultation and feedback received was used to refine proposals and finalise the plan.

IMPLEMENTATION

An initial step of this final work stage included the development of an Integrated Promotional and Marketing Strategy which identified key target markets. Implementation/benefits realisation plans were also produced which set out a range of direct funding opportunities.

Holywood Mayday Event

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O2 A PROFILE OF HOLYWOOD

2.1 INTRODUCTION

2.2 LOCATION

In order to establish aims and initiatives appropriate to the Holywood area, it is important to first understand how the town centre presently functions and identify its existing qualities, needs and aspirations. Following on from the various methods of information gathering, including the initial stakeholder workshop, a profile for Holywood has been formulated which establishes the context for the sustainable future growth of the town centre.

The remainder of this section provides a brief overview of the location, historic development of Holywood as well as a policy review and details relating to its socio economic profile. Holywood is a town and civil parish within County Down. The town lies on the shore of Belfast Lough between Belfast and Bangor and on Census Day 2011, a population of 14,165 was recorded.

The masterplan study area largely focuses within the settlement development limit of Holywood, as defined by the Department of the Environment (DOE) Planning Service. While the Masterplan is largely confined to this settlement development limit, a holistic approach has been taken whereby a number of the identified projects look beyond this limit to ensure that initiatives respond and relate to the wider hinterland.



Location Plan

2.3 SOCIO ECONOMIC PROFILE

The following statistical information relating to population and demographic figures for Holywood has been reviewed from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

AGE

On Census Day 27th March 2011, the usually resident population of Northern Ireland was 1,810,863. Of this population:

- 20.95% were aged under 16 years and 14.56% were aged 65 and over;
- 44 years was the average (median) age.

On Census Day the usually resident population of the Holywood study area was 14,165. Of this population:

- 16.5% were aged under 16 years and
 20.8% were aged 65 and over.
- 44 years was the average (median) age.

HOUSING AND ACCOMMODATION

On Census Day 27th March 2011, in NI:

- 66.9% of households owned occupied and 30.0% rented;
- 11.1% of households comprised of a single person aged 65+ years;
- 9.1% were lone parent households with dependent children; and
- 22.7% of households did not have access to a car or van.

This compares to the Holywood study area. Of the 6,040 households:

- 72.1% of households owned occupied and 31.8% rented;
- 14.7% of households were comprised of a single person aged 65+ years;
- 5.4% were lone parent households with dependent children; and
- 19.6% of households did not have access to a car or van.

LABOUR MARKET

Considering the population aged 16 to 74 years old in the Holywood study area:

- 65.6% were economically active, 34.6% were economically inactive;
- 59.8% were in paid employment; and
- 3.6% were unemployed.

HEALTH AND WELL BEING

On Census Day 2011, in the Holywood study area:

- 19.6% of people had a long-term health problem or disability that limited their day-to-day activities;
- 82.0% of people stated their general health was either good or very good; and
- 13.1% of people stated that they provided unpaid care to family, friends, neighbours or others.



2.4 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The name Holywood derives from the Latin "Sanctum boscum" meaning 'holy wood'. This was the name given by the Normans to the woodland surrounding the monastery of St Laisren (son of Nasca) founded in 640, on the site of the present day Holywood Priory.

The earliest anglicised name appears as Haliwode in a 14th century literature while the Irish name for Holywood is Ard Mhic Nasca which translates as "height of the son of Nasca".

During the 17th Century Plantation of Ulster, Scotsman Sir James Hamilton, who had secured lands including Holywood, Bangor and Castlereagh Hills, established Holywood as a market town. Settled with mainly English settlers, it's Maypole is documented in the maps of Thomas Raven 1624/5.





Holywood experienced substantial growth following the Belfast and County Down Railway Company opening a service to Holywood in August 1848. This was soon followed by the extension of the line to Bangor in 1865. It was at this time that a range of high quality residential suburbs were constructed on the lower slopes of the Holywood Hills.

Like many other coastal towns and villages throughout Ireland during the 19th century, Holywood quickly became a popular coastal resort and a preferred location for wealthy Belfast industrialists and merchants, such as the Harrisons of Holywood and Kennedys of Cultra, who built large Victorian mansions as expressions of their new found wealth.

2.5 DOCUMENT REVIEW

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2035

'Building a Better Future' is a Strategy to guide the future development of NI to 2035 and help meet the needs of the region. The strategy contains aims to provide longterm policy direction within a strategic spatial perspective. The vision is to create an outward-looking, dynamic and liveable Region and to sustain a high quality of life for all.

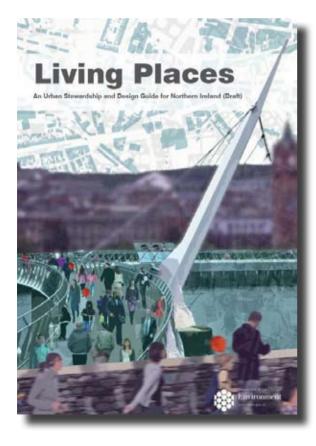
The RDS recognises the unique characteristics of individual communities such as Holywood and acknowledges that their local needs should be catered for. It also seeks to build on the strength of individual communities such as Holywood and develop a metropolitan area which is attractive to live in, providing a dynamic, commercial and cultural heart to the Region.



LIVING PLACES

Living Places - An Urban Stewardship and Design Guide for Northern Ireland establishes a number of key principles behind good placemaking in urban areas. The guide aims to inform and inspire all those involved in the process of managing and designing urban places across Northern Ireland.

Living Places acknowledges the implications that good design can have on our cities, towns, villages and neighbourhoods particularly in relation to the physical, economic, social and community benefits. Of particular relevance to this masterplan are the 10 overarching principles that the guide advocates should be followed in order to achieve excellence in the stewardship and design of existing or new places.



DRAFT BMAP 2015

The draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) designated a settlement development limit around the town to protect its natural setting whilst providing sufficient opportunities for future development. This limit also prevents suburban sprawl and impingement on the open countryside while maintaining Holywood's identity.

The Plan also identifies a number of commited housing sites (approximately 10 hectares in total), development opportunity sites and makes reference to a 'Route Management Strategy' along the A2 (dual carriageway) which is aimed at improving safety and efficiency of this route. BMAP also makes reference to the Holywood Conservation Area, designated in 2004, in addition to 5 areas of townscape character. A number of Areas of International, National Nature Conservation Importance and Local Nature Conservation Importance adjoin/are within the Holywood settlement development limit. These include;

- Belfast Lough Ramsar Site
- Belfast Lough Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Inner Belfast Lough Area of Special Scientific Interest
- Outer Belfast Lough Area of Special Scientific Interest
- Cultra Area of Scientific Interest
- Six sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance
- Seven Local Landscape Policy Areas.



WE WORKED

CONSULTATION PROCESS

3.1 VISIONING WORKSHOP

A Visioning Workshop was arranged on the morning of Friday 25th October 2013 at the Holywood Library. Facilitated by the Consultant Team, the workshop was attended by representatives from a number of community organisations including Redburn / Loughview Community Forum, Holywood & District Community Council, Holywood Conservation Group, Holywood Residents Association, Holywood Shared Town and Holywood Chamber of Commerce.

The purpose of the workshop was to get people thinking about the type of place that they would like Holywood to be in the future, with focussed discussion groups around a number of broad themes. An overview of the analysis findings was provided at the beginning of the workshop as a way of setting the scene for the visioning exercises.

WE LISTENED

PUBLIC DROP-IN EVENTS 3.2

REDBURN COMMUNITY CENTRE

A public drop-in event was held at the Redburn Community Centre on the evening of Thursday 12 September 2013. Organised by Holywood Shared Town, this informal event allowed the residents of Redburn and Loughview to engage with the Consultant Team to gain an understanding of the project and provide their views on issues that were pertinent to both communities.

QUEENS LEISURE COMPLEX

A second public drop-in event was held at the Queens Leisure Complex on the evening of Thursday 6 March 2014. The purpose of this event was to present the draft masterplan including shared vision, overarching aims and objectives and initiatives. This event was attended by residents and representatives from local organisations/businesses and played an invaluable role in shaping the masterplan.





TESTED

MAYDAY EVENT 3.3

One of the biggest highlights on the events calendar in North Down is the Mayday event in Holywood. This event sees the town centre filled with market stalls, street entertainment, children's activities and dancing around Ireland's only remaining Maypole which dates back to 1700.

This event was seen as the perfect opportunity in which to engage directly with the people of Holywood and truly test the draft masterplan. Visitors to the masterplan stand were encouraged to leave comments in the form of post-it notes on either the content of the plan or any other issue that they wished to raise. The feedback received during the course of the day resulted in an impressive 168 comments. This information was collated and the findings reported back to the Advisory Group and then used to refine the content of the masterplan.

WE ENGAGED

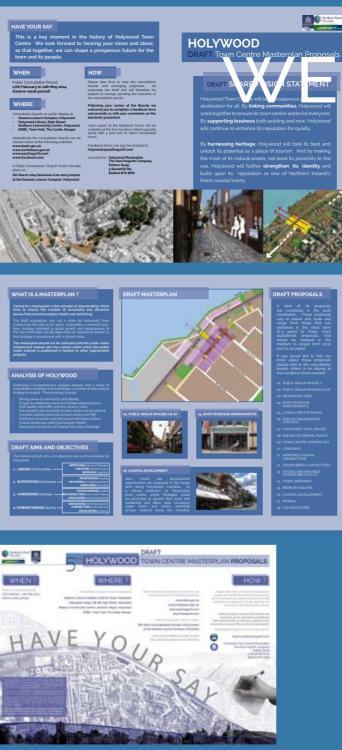
THE TARDIS 3.4

An innovative approach was taken to get the word of the masterplan out to the younger population of Holywood. With assistance from North Down Borough Council, the Holywood Men's Shed took the bold step of constructing the Dr Who Tardis as a key feature of the Mayday consultation event.

As a means by which Holywood's younger residents could be transported into the future and describe the type of place they would like their town to be, the Tardis proved to be a very popular attraction on the day. The Tardis was highly effective as a mechanism by which to engage and attract the interest of young people, with the support of our very own Doctor who quizzed them on what they liked and did not like about their town. Responses were video recorded in the Tardis and have been used to shape the masterplan.







ASKED

PUBLIC CONSULTATION 3.5

In order to test the draft masterplan proposals, a twelve-week public consultation period extended from 17th February to 11th May 2014. Exhibition boards were erected at the Holywood Library, Redburn Community Centre, Queens Leisure Complex and Bangor Town Hall. In addition, digital copies of the exhibition boards were made available online. Feedback forms were also provided online and at each of the four venues encouraging the people of Holywood to rank the draft initiatives and list their top priorities.

Approximately 2000 leaflets promoting the draft Masterplan were produced and distributed throughout Holywood. This was undertaken to raise the profile of the draft Masterplan and consultation period and to encourage as much feedback as possible.

WE REFIN

FEEDBACK FORMS 3.6

A total of forty completed feedback forms were received during the consultation period. From the scoring of draft proposals, an average project score of 7.2 was achieved across the board with the most popular project Traffic Management Strategy receiving the top score of 9.1. Shop Frontage Improvements, Laneways, Meanwhile Uses and High Street Civic Spaces complete the top five ranked projects. Traffic Management Strategy, Cheaper/Free Car Parking and Clean up rubbish/Dog fouling were also listed as respondent's top three priorities.

On the whole feedback received has been supportive of the draft initiatives. The consultation process has helped to shape and refine the masterplan.



ANALYSIS FINDINGS

4.1 HOLYWOOD TODAY

Before determining the type of place the people of Holywood would like the town to be, it was crucial a thorough understanding of how Holywood presently functioned was established. A comprehensive analysis of the town was undertaken by the Project Team, in conjunction with the Advisory Group, and has included a review of all existing documentation and plans, site visits, consultation meetings, stakeholder workshops and public consultation feedback. The collective findings of the analysis work can be summarised under the eight distinctive themes opposite.

By identifying these aspects of the town, both good and bad, we can identify which positive elements need to be supported and underpinned by the masterplan and those negative elements that should be mitigated.



COMMUNITY AND VALUES

A strong sense of community/identity and highly active community groups exists within the town. However issues relating to physical, social and economic detachment from town centre were raised within fringe communities.

2 EVENTS ARTS AND SPORTS

The town hosts nationally significant events which is representative of Holywood's cultural vitality. Acknowledgement that there is scope for additional events, however the lack of internal and external space limits the town's potential.

S ECONOMY/TOWN CENTRE BUSINESS

Good links to Belfast and beyond. The town benefits from a high quality retail offer coupled with very low vacancy rates and diversity of businesses. However variable environmental quality does exist in places.

4 vacant sites

While only a few vacant sites exist within Holywood those within the town centre are prominent and largely privately owned. These impact the arrival experience and due attention must be given to their urban and architectural design quality.



Holywood Town Centre will be a prosperous and attractive destination for all. By **linking communities**, Holywood will work together to ensure its town centre works for everyone. By **supporting business** both existing and new, Holywood will continue to enhance its reputation for quality.

By **harnessing heritage**, Holywood will look its best and unlock its potential as a place of tourism. By making the most of its natural assets, not least its proximity to the sea, Holywood will further **strengthen its identity** and build upon its reputation as one of Northern Ireland's finest coastal towns.

05 a vision for the future

5.1 A SHARED VISION

A key role of the Masterplan is to inform and shape a clear and shared Vision for the future of Holywood. Effective masterplans rely on there being a vision in place which is based on clearly articulated aims (the why) and objectives (the what). Only with these in place can we determine which initiatives are appropriate (the how). The Shared Vision represents the collective views and aspirations of the people of Holywood and form the basis upon which all proposed initatives must be tested against and contribute to.

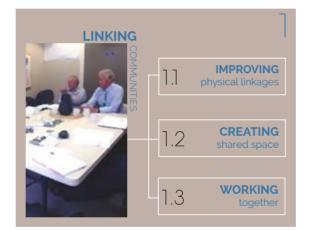
The Shared Vision shown opposite was arrived at through a collaborative visioning workshop involving local community groups, statutory agencies, elected representatives and members of the Holywood Chamber of Commerce, as well as feedback received during the public consultation period.



5.2 REGENERATION AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Having established a Shared Vision for Holywood Town Centre, it is now necessary to identify the means by which it can be realised. This is achieved through the formulation of aims and objectives which collectively contribute to the vision.

Based on the feedback received during the consultation period and conclusions drawn from the initial analysis stage, four key regeneration aims have emerged that will guide the future development of Holywood. These are **Linking** Communities, **Supporting** Businesses, **Harnessing** Heritage and **Strengthening** Identity. Specific objectives have also been identified under each of these aims.









LINKING COMMUNITIES

The Masterplan acknowledges the proactive work and positive change that the many community groups have made in Holywood. However more work needs to be done, particularly in relation to issues regarding the social, physical and economic detachment of particular fringe neighbourhoods.

Linking communities not only refers to improving physical connections, but also working relationships and the provision of both internal and external space that will enable the town's many communities to interact and socialise.

Three specific objectives that have been identified under this aim;

- IMPROVING physical linkages
- CREATING shared space
- WORKING together





SUPPORTING BUSINESSES

Holywood Town Centre consistently outperforms many comparable towns in Northern Ireland. Its high quality niche retail offer, flourishing creative sector and vibrant cafe culture have contributed to the attractiveness of Holywood, not only as a place to live and work but also as a visitor destination.

It is crucial that the Masterplan recognises these qualities and identifies relevant initiatives that help to support local businesses while creating opportunities for new sectors to emerge.

Three specific objectives that have been identified under this aim;

- MAINTAINING quality
- NUTURING emerging sectors
- ENRICHING the offer

Holywood contains a range of architectural heritage assets all of which contribute to the attractiveness of the town. These assets include sites from Holywood's early Christian past and Norman occupation, as well as the Plantation period and from the town's expansion in Victorian times.

The Masterplan seeks to raise awareness of this asset base, building on projects such as the Holywood Old School Heritage Appreciation Walk, in order to safeguard these sites while making them work to the benefit of the community.

Three specific objectives that have been identified are;

- SAFEGUARDING assets
- RECONNECTING town with history
- UNLOCKING tourism potential





The unique charm and attractiveness of Holywood is not evident from its existing entrance points. What could be perceived as a 'hidden' town centre, largely due to the A2, Holywood would benefit from initiatives that improve its 'front door' to the town in order to enhance first impressions. Strengthening Holywood's identity would also involve rediscovering the towns historic connections with its coastline.

Opportunities also exist to develop a brand that is unique to Holywood and one which reflects the principle of quality long associated with the town.

Three specific objectives that have been identified are;

- ENHANCING first impressions
- CONNECTING land and sea
- DEVELOPING a brand

WHAT YOU TOLD US......

"Holywood needs more shops and better leisure facilities"

Tardis visitor (aged 10)

"The Old Priory Inn was supposed to be redeveloped and has been vacant for a number of years now"

Redburn Community Centre Drop-in Event

"What the town really needs is a square!" Attendee at Visioning Workshop

"Holywood would benefit from improving its connections with the coast"

Attendee at the Queen's Leisure Complex Drop-in Event

"Consideration should be given to a one-way system within the town centre"

Resident at Merry Mayday Event

"Holywood is increasingly becoming the desired location for Digital and Creative Services"

Stakeholder Meeting feedback

"It would be great to build and improve seafront access"

Attendee at Visioning Workshop

"Better sports and rugby facilities" Resident at Merry Mayday Event

"Holywood has quite a thriving art scene with a number of music and drama festivals"

Stakeholder Meeting feedback

"More youth and community facilities"

Tardis visitor (aged 14)

6 MASTERPLAN CONCEPT

6.1 TOWN CENTRE CONCEPT

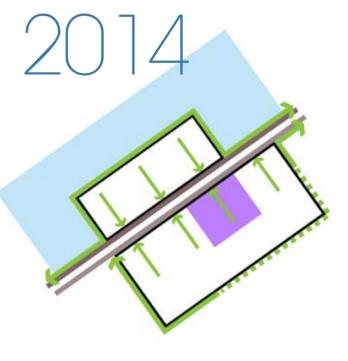
The Concept Plan identifies how the Masterplan will be structured and identifies broad principles that govern potential drivers of change. It illustrates how the town centre should develop and highlights some of the key areas that need to be addressed. These include elements such as the forging of new connections, the crossing of barriers and the enhancement of existing movement patterns, the combination of which will realise the sustainable future of the town centre.

While the overall concept plan promotes Holywood as a **connected** town (see opposite), the adjacent plan gives a snapshot of the town today for comparative purposes.

HOLYWOOD - A FRAGMENTED TOWN

Today Holywood can be viewed as comprising two distinctive components. The existing town centre and its surrounding residential neighbourhoods south of the A2 and the community of Kinnegar north of the railway line. Both of these areas have been historically shaped and defined by the introduction of the railway line and later the construction of the A2.

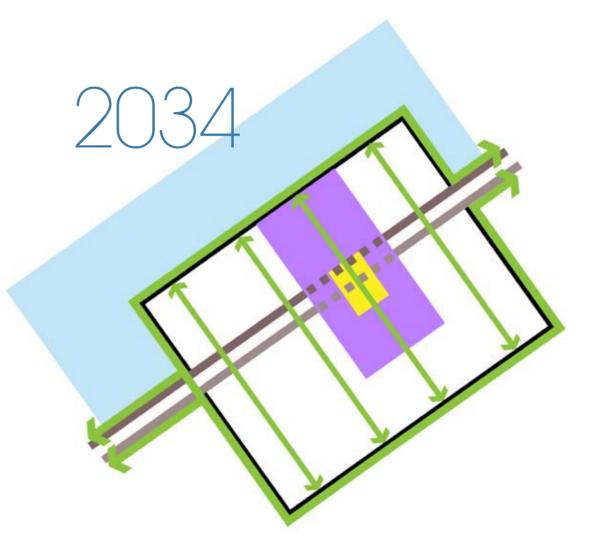
This severance has resulted in a disconnect between the town and its coast, placed limitations on the future sustainable growth of the town core area and a disjointed network of green spaces.



HOLYWOOD - A CONNECTED TOWN

By reducing the severance caused by the A2 and railway line, we can then set in place a framework that allows for improved connections between Holywood's Town Centre and all adjoining communities.

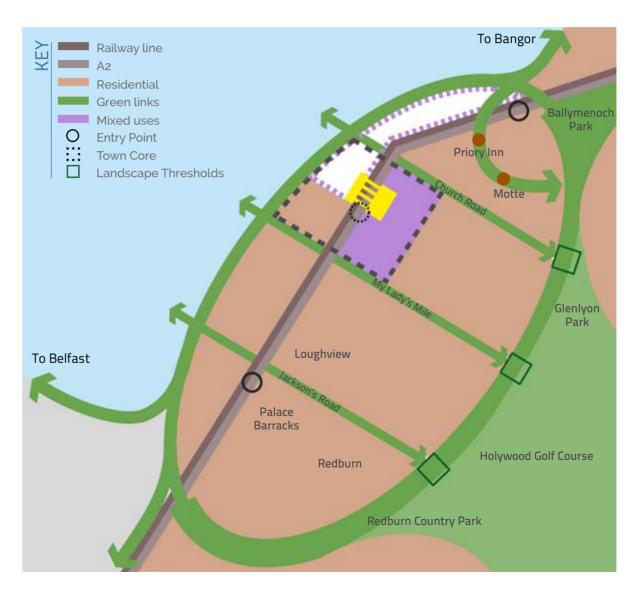
A connected Holywood will be a town that embraces its coast while allowing for a strengthened town core based on sustainable urban design principles. Its once disjointed green spaces can now be extended to form a permable green grid which connects the communities of Holywood to its town centre, coast and beyond. In doing so, Holywood Town Centre has room to breathe. It's core will be able to extend towards the coast, centred around a new primary civic space.



6.2 WIDER TOWN CONCEPT

The wider town concept presents an opportunity to examine ways in which connections between the public spaces surrounding the town could be improved. Formalising a green loop encompassing the greater Holywood area with connections to Belfast and Bangor, would link the 'hidden' spaces along the east of the town. These would include Redburn Country Park, Glenlyon Park, Ballymenoch Park and subject to agreement, Holywood Golf Course.

Consideration would also be given to the future role and appearance of the three green spines that connect these spaces to the coast, namely Church Road, My Lady's Mile and Jackson's Road and the treatment of their respective entrances to these public spaces. Likewise innovative solutions should be sough to ensure that these spines overcome the barriers posed by the A2 and railway line.







$\bigcirc 7$ masterplan initiatives

The following section provides details on the range of initiatives which collectively form the strategic vision for Holywood Town Centre. It is intended that these Masterplan initiatives will combine to bring about the comprehensive physical, social and economic regeneration of Holywood Town Centre over the next 15 - 20 years. A Project Action Plan accompanies the Masterplan and identifies funding requirements alongside those organisations from the public, private and community sectors that should be involved in the delivery of each initiative. This is crucial in light of current Local Government restructuring, whereby planning and regeneration powers will be transferred to Council.

The Action Plan will also set out phasing, defining which initiatives should be delivered in the short term and which are more suited to the medium and longer terms. The Masterplan will also take cognisance of the on-going strategic area plans for the restructuring of primary education, which has implications for Holywood Primary School, Priory College, Holywood Nursery School and the former Redburn Primary School site.

The focus of the Masterplan is on the strengthening of the town core area through the reuse and development of vacant and derelict sites and buildings, improvement works to town centre entrances and the identification of future public realm works. It also promotes a more permeable network of laneways and public spaces and includes proposals that seek to reconnect the town with its coast.

Once funding is secured, all initiatives will be subject to a process of further feasibility studies, detailed design, public consultation and where necessary, planning approval. The following 23 initiatives are proposed within the masterplan and are referenced opposite;

- 1 PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS
- 2 FUTURE PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS
- 3 MEANWHILE USES
- 4 SHOP FRONTAGE IMPROVEMENTS
- 5 TOWN CENTRE LIVING
- 6 TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT STRATEGY
- 7 HIGH STREET CIVIC SPACES
- 8 ENHANCED ARRIVAL POINTS
- 9 TOWN CENTRE APPROACHES
- 10 LANEWAYS
- 11 YOUTH HUB
- 12 HERITAGE CENTRE
- 13 IMPROVED COASTAL CONNECTIONS
- 14 DESIGN BRIEFS FOR KEY SITES
- 15 SHARED SPORTS CAMPUS
- 16 ENLARGED STATION PARK & RIDE
- 17 TOWN GREENWAY
- 18 REDBURN SQUARE
- 19 COASTAL DEVELOPMENT
- 20 TIDAL MARINA
- 21 HOLYWOOD PIER
- 22 EXTEND THE CONSERVATION AREA
- 23 BRANDING AND PLACEMARKETING STRATEGY

PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS

The Masterplan supports the approved £2.4million public realm scheme which has been developed by North Down Borough Council and the Northern Ireland Executive (through the Department for Social Development).

This project will help to maintain the vibrancy of Holywood Town Centre ensuring that it maintains its role as an important retail and employment base. When completed the public realm scheme will have the potential to reinvogorate the town and improve trading conditions.

Work started on site in May 2014 and are expected to be completed by Spring 2015.

FUTURE PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS

Extension of high quality public realm treatment along additional key streets throughout the town centre. Streets proposed in future public realm improvement schemes could include upper Shore Road, lower High Street, Sullivan Place, Church View and Downshire Road.

Works could include the upgrading of existing surface materials to complement the current public realm improvements.

The undergrounding of overhead utility cables, renewed landscape, improved street lighting and bespoke street furniture could also form part of any future public realm works.

MEANWHILE USES

Feedback from the many stakeholder and public consultation sessions held within the town highlighted the number of prominent vacant/derelict properties and sites within Holywood as a top priority. The presence of derelict and empty properties can quickly lower the quality of the environment and depict a poor image, particularly on those more prominent sites within the town centre.

This initiative would identify land or vacant/derelict buildings suitable for temporary socially beneficial uses until such time that a more permanent and sustainable solutions can be found. Here priority would be placed on achieving 'quick wins' in the most problematic cases.







HOLYWOOD

Town Centre Masterplan

SHOP FRONT IMPROVEMENTS

Successful shopfront designs should complement the building of which it forms part and reflecting it's scale, proportion and character. This initiative would enable those retail frontages that are in poor condition to be targeted for improvement with a focus on introducing a degree of unity, establishing common design themes and raising the overall design standard within the town centre.

As part of ongoing revitialisation work, this initiative could also include the commissioning of a feasibility study to explore the potential of incorporating a permanent or removable canopy within the town centre and the identification of an appropriate site. This would provide a multi-functional and high value amenity for residents and visitors to the town.



TOWN CENTRE LIVING

One of the key contributing factors to a successful town centre, is consistent footfall. Introducing residential uses into our town centres brings the best footfall both during the day, in the evenings and at night. Many age groups within our society, particularly the young and old, need to regularly access town centre amenities. Providing accommodation to suit the residential requirements of these groups reduces the need to build additional homes on the outskirts of our towns and reduces the reliance on private transport for everyday needs.

Town centre living could be increased in Holywood through the refurbishment of existing redundant properties over shops (Living over the Shops) and through new mixed use development opportunities.



TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

A comprehensive Traffic Management Strategy, which aims to identify key traffic issues, could be undertaken to evaluate traffic flow patterns, existing traffic conditions and travel patterns while balancing pedestrian and vehicular priorities. With this baseline information, existing deficiencies could be identified which would single out locations in need of improvement based on existing and forecasted traffic volumes.

This study should produce a list of findings and recommendations as a basis for moving a number of related initiatives forward. Findings from the strategy would provide the context within which consideration could be given to potential improvements to the existing traffic system and parking arrangements.



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HIGH STREET CIVIC SPACES

The opportunity exists to formalise a series of minor civic spaces within the town centre. These spaces would form key nodes at the southern, mid and northern end points of High Street and would provide flexible external spaces that could accommodate a range of community events.

The civic space suggested at the northern end of High Street could be associated with the future redevelopment of the Priory Inn building. This informal space could be utilised for key events with consideration given to the temporary exclusion of traffic.

Subject to consultation with the First Presbyterian Church, a second civic space is proposed at the mid point of High Street that utilises the existing area in front of the church.

A third space is proposed at St. Helen's Business Park at the southern end of High Street. While this space would retain its primary function as the parking/threshold to the business park, its design would lend itself to events if required. Subject to consultation, consideration could be given to the use of shared surfacing at each of these three locations in order to create a pedestrian friendly environment which allows for safe, day to day traffic movement.



ENHANCED ARRIVAL POINTS

Two existing and one proposed arrival/ gateway points have been identified. The first is located along the southern edge of the town close to Jackson's Road while the second is to the north at the Bangor Road entrance. The third, a new gateway, is proposed along High Street in close proximity to the PSNI Station.

It is proposed that the status of these arrival points are raised through a programme of improvement works. These works would include a re-examination of existing surface materials and where appropriate, the incorporation of shared surface solutions to slow traffic down and enhance the sense of arrival. Community artwork, tree planting, lighting and the use of gateway markers could all form part of this initiative.

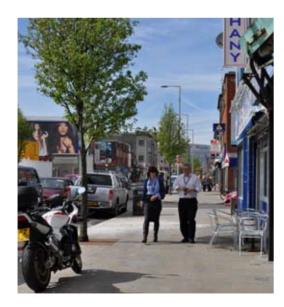




TOWN CENTRE APPROACHES

This project relates to modest scale enhancement works along Holywood's key approach routes that lead to the town centre. These works could include the repainting of selected building facades, new lighting solutions, street tree planting and soft landscaping.

Formalising and widening pavements, installing good quality lighting and improving those older commercial frontages would raise the status of these key routes. These works would help to make these approaches a more viable option for residents of fringe communities wishing to access services within the town centre.



LANEWAYS

This initiative concerns the establishment of a network of interconnected and vibrant laneways throughout the town centre that promote a diverse alternative to the traditional High Street and Church Street offer. Priority would be given to the enhancement of existing laneways within the town centre, most notably Patton's Lane and Alexandra Place.

Here both laneways would benefit from enhancement works to raise the profile of their entrances onto High Street. New surface improvements and enhanced lighting could also form part of these works and be designed so as to retain the intimate nature of these important connections. New openings along the laneways would also help to provide additional animation. The Masterplan also proposes the creation of a number of new laneways within the town centre, namely a new link connecting St. Helen's Business Park southwards to Church View and within new development opportunities identified along the A2.



MASTERPLAN INITIATIVES

YOUTH HUB

One of the key messages received during the consultation period, was the aspiration to establish a youth hub within Holywood.

A new youth hub within the town centre would enable dedicated facilities and floor space to be established that caters for the social, creative and educational needs of Holywood's younger population. Incorporating 'chill out' spaces alongside dedicated space for arts and sports, the youth hub would also act as a learning centre to develop business skills among young people.

In the short term, redeveloping the Youth Wing of the Queens Leisure Complex and incorporating a dedicated entrance directly onto Sullivan Place, would allow this building to work more efficiently and animate this stretch of the street.



HERITAGE CENTRE

A heritage centre within the town centre would capture the history associated with the Priory, the Motte, King John, the plantation and the pioneering Holywood familities. This facility would also be an ideal venue within which to showcase the town's Ulster Scots heritage.

In the longer term the aspiration would be to seek to design a bespoke landmark building on the western side of a redesigned Redburn Square, as a destination that draws visitors to Holywood's coast.

Temporary exhibition space could be identified within the town centre as a pilot scheme in the short term, with a view in the medium to longer term of identifying a permanent site subject to demand and consultation.



IMPROVED COASTAL CONNECTIONS

Underpasses allow for the uninterrupted flow of pedestrian and cycle movement, normally grade separated from vehicular traffic. As a means of crossing under barriers, underpasses work best when designed to feel safe, open and accessible.

This initiative relates to the existing underpasses at Strand Avenue and Priory Park, with a view to transforming them into local landmarks. While benefitting from unimpeded and direct views, both underpasses look tired and make minimal contribution to the quality of the environment. Adaptation of these underpasses through innovative design details and lighting solutions would help to introduce a sense of character and place at these locations while maintaining levels of safety.



HOLYWOOD

Town Centre Masterplan

DESIGN BRIEFS FOR KEY SITES

While there are only a few vacant sites within the town centre, those that do exist are prominent. It is crucial that design briefs are formulated for these sites to ensure a high standard of urban and architectural design quality.

The primary objective of the design briefs would be to assist in guiding future development and investment within Holywood Town Centre ensuring that any proposals create a high quality environment, which maximises the regenerative benefits for its residents, business sector and visitors. More specifically, the design briefs should establish clear parameters to provide guidance on the form of development that is appropriate and in accordance with current planning policies and best urban design practice.



SHARED SPORTS CAMPUS

A Vision for Sport in Holywood 2014-2017 was recently produced by Holywood's sports organisations and Holywood Shared Town. This strategy outlines Holywood's sporting vision, ambitions, goals and priorities that promote 'Shared sporting facilities and opportunities through successful partnership approaches'. One key initiative relates to a shared sports campus pavilion and changing rooms at Spafield to accommodate the needs of Rugby, Cricket, Football and Gaelic.

The opportunity also exists to give due consideration to the development of a velodrome within the Holywood locale. While not necessarily located at Spafield, this facility would have strong links to the Shared Sports Campus and cater for a number of complimentary activities.



ENLARGED STATION PARK & RIDE

As part of the wider regeneration of opportunity sites along the Shore Road and A2, it is proposed that the existing Holywood Railway Station Park and Ride could be repositioned and enlarged in order to address ongoing challenges in this area and cater for the future growth of the town.

Extending the Park and Ride facility southwards, along the A2 in the medium to long term, would create additional parking spaces while freeing up space to allow the future redesign and configuration of Redburn Square. New development opportunities elsewhere within the town could provide more suitable premises for the existing businesses presently located in this area.



TOWN GREENWAY

The Masterplan includes proposals for the establishment of a Town Greenway linking Brook Street with Stewart's Place and beyond to Strand Avenue. Anchored at its southern end by the Holywood Motte, the proposed greenway follows an existing stream to the rear of the telephone exchange and Church Road Car Park before connecting to the Holywood Playground at Johnny the Jig along High Street. The Greenway could continue north to Strand Avenue via Stewart's Place where it includes a new public open space/outdoor gym on the site of the former Seaside Tavern. From here the Greenway continues to the coast and Seapark via the existing underpass.

This proposal could result in a continuous 0.5km pedestrian route which would not only improve access to one of the finest preserved Anglo-Norman earthmounds in Ireland, but would also provide a safe and attractive route for residents accessing key community services within the immediate area, such as Holywood Nursery School, Priory Surgery, Brook Street Surgery and Church Road Car Park. As with all initiatives contained within the Masterplan, the proposal would be subject to detailed design work, statutory approvals and consultation. This is primarily to ensure that the Greenway is designed and phased appropriately and in a way that protects the amenity of surrounding residents.



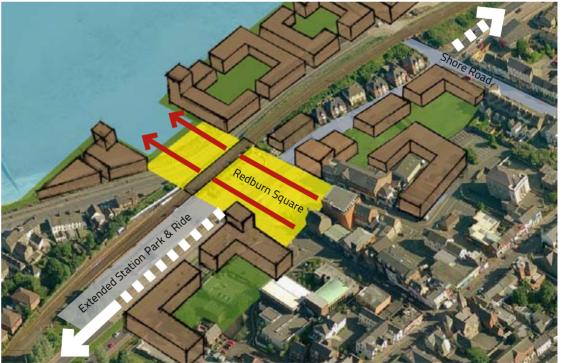
REDBURN SQUARE

Redburn Square was originally designed and laid out as a garden and open area used by carriages at Holywood station, following the introduction of the railway in 1848. The image below depicts the layout of Redburn Square as it existed in the 1930s before the introduction of the A2 bypass in the 1970s, which completely severed the connection between the square and the station thereby changing its character and role overnight. The Masterplan has examined various options of how this issue of severance could be addressed, ranging from modest proposals which tackle the problem with at grade solutions to more innovative approaches that include the undergrounding of a section of the A2 fronting the town centre. Lowering a section of the A2 would not only improve the efficiency and safety of this national route, but as a consequence, would present the opportunity to rediscover and redesign Redburn Square as a key civic space enclosed by a range of high quality buildings. Due consideration would be given to the existing built environment within any design proposal to ensure the square befits its importance to the town.

A review of existing flood defence measures should be integral to any option that involved the undergrounding of a stretch of the A2 dual carriageway.









COASTAL DEVELOPMENT

The potential for new mixed use development opportunities exist in the longer term along Holywood's coastline. To ensure that this area becomes a vibrant extension to the town centre, active frontages would be promoted at ground floor level, residential and commercial uses at upper floors and public waterside access retained along the shoreline. In forging a more direct pedestrian connection from High Street, good quality Town Centre residential accommodation can then be provided within close proximity of Holywood Railway Station that provides a new edge to this historic coastal town.



TIDAL MARINA

This ambitious proposal would establish a new destination site along Holywood's coast and create a waterside entrance to the town and act as a catalyst for further waterside based activities in this location.

Recent studies conducted in Ireland and the USA have demonstrated that businesses located near a marina can realise up to 13 times as much income as the marina itself and generate an average of 0.3 jobs per berth.

Establishing a new tidal marina with physical and visual connections to the town centre would contribute significantly to the local economy. In Holywood these benefits would include increased trade for local shops and businesses, job creation and further animation of the town's coastline.



HOLYWOOD PIER

As one of the longer term projects within the plan, a pier is proposed along Holywood's coastline. Seaside piers can act as a reminder of a Victorian era and the achievements of Victorian engineers.

A lightweight floating structure in this location would allow currents and tides to flow unhindered. As a new destination along the coastal path between Belfast and Bangor, the proposed pier would complement the vision for the future coastline and add to Holywood's overall tourism offer.

Complementing additional initiatives proposed along the coast, the pier would provide a distinctive landmark feature and an attractive stop-off point for visitors and residents to avail of panoramic coastal views.



EXTEND THE CONSERVATION AREA

In May 2004, the Department of the Environment designated part of Holywood as a Conservation Area. Supplementary design guidance has been published and should be taken into account as a material consideration in determining planning applications which are within, or affect the setting of the area.

A key priority that emerged following the analysis process and consultation period was the extension of the existing Conservation Area. Extending the Conservation Area south along High Street up to My Lady's Mile would afford greater control over new development within the town. A larger Conservation Area within the town centre would ensure a consistent approach to design.



PLACE MARKETING STRATEGY

Place Marketing is an integral part of the regeneration agenda and could be utilised to align and position Holywood within the wider strategic context of local economic development, tourism and inward investment strategies. Dovetailing with marketing strategies for other neighbouring towns, a Place Marketing Strategy could be a vital strategic tool in realising the Masterplan Vision for the town centre whilst delivering specific regeneration aims and objectives.

Place Marketing sets out the Strategy for stakeholder engagement in order to launch and develop a strong brand proposition which is collaborative, yet ambitious in its approach. It will also have a crucial role in galvanising civic pride, ownership and passion for the place.



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The Action Plan prioritises all 23 initiatives contained within the Masterplan. The priority assigned to each initiative is based on demand and the likely impact that it will have on Holywood.

Indicative timeframes are also included within the Action Plan. Short-term projects refer to those initiatives that the people of Holywood have prioritised to be progressed within one to five calendar years while a medium-term timeframe refers to those initiatives which could be taken forward and realised within five to ten years. It is envisaged that those initiatives alloted longterm timeframes would be delivered over the next ten to twenty years. It is important to ensure that any available funding streams are targeted so that the Town Centre achieves the maximum physical, economic, environmental and social benefit from those initiatives contained within the Action Plan.

The Action Plan, therefore, includes a range of potential funding sources which are considered relevant to each of the listed initiatives. While lead delivery agents who would champion individual initiatives are also included, each project will require the collaborative input from a number of organisations and individuals from the public, private and community sectors in order to be fully realised. The Action Plan should be viewed as a 'live' document to ensure that progress is monitored regularly and updated accordingly. As new initiatives and opportunities arise in future, these should be assessed against the four overarching aims and Shared Vision and added to the Action Plan where appropriate.



HOLYWOOD Town Centre Masterplan

	Masterplan Initiatives	Timeframe for Delivery	Lead Delivery Agents	Stakeholders / Potential Funders
01.	PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS	S	DSD/Council	DOE, NIEA, DRD, Priv
02.	FUTURE PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS	S/M	Council	DOE, NIEA, DRD, Priv
03.	MEANWHILE USES	S	Council	DOE, NIEA, Priv, Comm
04.	SHOP FRONTAGE IMPROVEMENTS	S	Council	Priv, NIEA
05.	TOWN CENTRE LIVING	S/M	Council	NIHE, Priv, DOE, NIEA
06.	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT STRATEGY	S	DRD	Council, Comm, Priv, Trans, Sus, Schs
07.	HIGH STREET CIVIC SPACES	М	Council	DOE, NIEA, DRD, Priv
08.	ENHANCED ARRIVAL POINTS	S/M	Council	DRD, DCAL, Comm, ACNI, NITB
09.	TOWN CENTRE APPROACHES	S/M	Council/DRD	DCAL, Comm, ACNI
10.	LANEWAYS	М	Council	Priv, NIEA, DRD, NIHE
11.	YOUTH НИВ	S/M	Council	DCAL, Comm, HLF, PSNI, Priv
12.	HERITAGE CENTRE	М	Council	Comm, NIEA, DOE, DCAL, HLF
13.	IMPROVED COASTAL CONNECTIONS	S/M	Council/NIR	DOE, NIEA, DRD, Priv, PSNI
14.	DESIGN BRIEFS FOR KEY SITES	S	Council	Comm, DOE, NIEA, INI, DRD, NIHE, Priv
15.	SHARED SPORTS CAMPUS	S/M	Council	Comm, DCAL, SNI, DRD, DSD, HLF, NIEA, Priv, SNI
16.	ENLARGED STATION PARK & RIDE	М	DRD	Council, DOE, NIEA, Priv, Trans, Sus
17.	TOWN GREENWAY	М	Council	NIEA, DOE, Sus, Schs, Priv, HTH, RA, TCV
18.	REDBURN SQUARE	S/M	Council/DRD	NIEA, DOE, Trans, Sus, Priv
19.	COASTAL DEVELOPMENT	M/L	Council/Priv	NIEA, DOE, DRD, Trans, Sus, Priv
20.	TIDAL MARINA	M/L	Council/Priv	DOE, DCAL, DRD, NITB, INI
21.	HOLYWOOD PIER	M/L	Council	DOE, DCAL, DRD, NITB
22.	EXTEND THE CONSERVATION AREA	S/M	NIEA	Council, DOE
23.	BRANDING & PLACE MARKETING STRATEGY	S	Council	NITB, Priv, Comm

Timeframe:

Delivery Agents, Funders and Stakeholders:

S= Short (1- 5 yrs)	ACNI	Arts Council of Northern Ireland	DSD	Department for Social Development	NITB	1
M = Medium (5 - 10 yrs)	Comm	Community Organisations	HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund	Priv	F
L = Long (10 - 20 yrs)	Council	Council	HTH	Highway to Health	PS	I
<u> </u>	DCAL	Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure	NIEA	Northern Ireland Environment Agency	PSNI	F
	DRD	Department for Regional Development	NIHE	Northern Ireland Housing Executive	RA	I

- Northern Ireland Tourist Board Private Sector Planning Service Police Service of Northern Ireland
- **Rivers** Agency
- Sus TCV Trans

Schs

SNI

Sport Northern Ireland Sustrans The Conservation Volunteers Translink

Schools (PS/SS)



09 conclusion

The Holywood Town Centre Masterplan has been developed by the people of Holywood for those that live, work and visit the town. Through a collaborative process, a shared vision has been agreed; an ambitious vision that seeks to put people first while building on the existing qualities of the place including its communities, businesses, heritage and strong identity. This vision sets in place a solid framework to guide the future growth of the town and provide the context to help guide those with interests in the development of the town.

The production of this Masterplan has also included a comprehensive and innovative consultation process, a process which ensured that public drop-in sessions were held at a number of locations throughout the Masterplan area. Good practice consultation techniques, as demonstrated by the use of the Tardis on Mayday, were encouraged by North Down Borough Council and DSD from the outset of the project as an innovative and engaging way to reach out to Holywood's younger population and seek their views on the type of place they would like Holywood to become.

The Holywood Town Centre Masterplan contains a total of 23 initiatives, a number of which could be delivered in the immediate to short term, while other more aspirational initiatives would be realised in the medium to longer term. The collective realisation of these initiatives will make a discernible difference to the functioning of Holywood as well as the economic competitiveness and social attractiveness of the town. Those that have been involved in the development of the plan are committed to its delivery and the sustained growth of the town. However in order to be successful, its prolonged delivery will require the collective input from the new Council, statutory agencies, local community groups and private sector to ensure it reaches its full potential. With the transfer of planning powers to the new Council, and the increasing emphasis placed on Community Planning, the Masterplan will play a pivotal role as a mechanism for investment and engagement within the town.

While limited funding is presently available for these initiatives, by having a Masterplan which addresses the needs and aspirations of the residential, community and business sectors, Holywood now has a clear vision and action plan in place for pursuit by the new Council and interested parties.

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