

the paul hogarth company

mcgarryconsult.com



Ards and  
North Down  
Borough Council

1

Hollywood  
Masterplan Review  
Draft - August 2023

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## Introduction

This report has been prepared to summarise the findings of a review of the Holywood Town Centre Masterplan (2014) and baseline understanding of the Town. It has been researched and prepared by The Paul Hogarth Company, with McGarry Consulting and informed by a public engagement exercise undertaken by Ards and North Down Borough Council.

The town centre masterplan was produced in 2014 for North Down Borough Council and as such much has changed both locally within the study area and more widely in terms of the social, economic, policy and environmental landscape.

The following sections sets out an understanding of current projects, initiatives, an overview of conversations with stakeholders as well as a fresh analysis of Holywood.

It is followed by revised priorities and actions for Holywood Town Centre to be delivered over the next 8 years.



### Analysis - Review - Recommendations



2014  
Holywood Town Centre  
Masterplan Produced



Nov 2022  
Masterplan Review  
Commences



Public  
Engagement 1

Public  
Engagement 2

Masterplan  
Review  
Completed





## What has happened since the masterplan was written?

The Holywood Town Centre Masterplan was produced in 2014 by The Paul Hogarth Company. During that time the town centre has continued to thrive as a busy commercial hub and desirable place to live. Yet new challenges face Holywood, as they do all towns in the Borough. This includes the onset of the Climate Crisis and attitudes 'Post Pandemic' which have seen more importance placed on accessibility of green spaces.

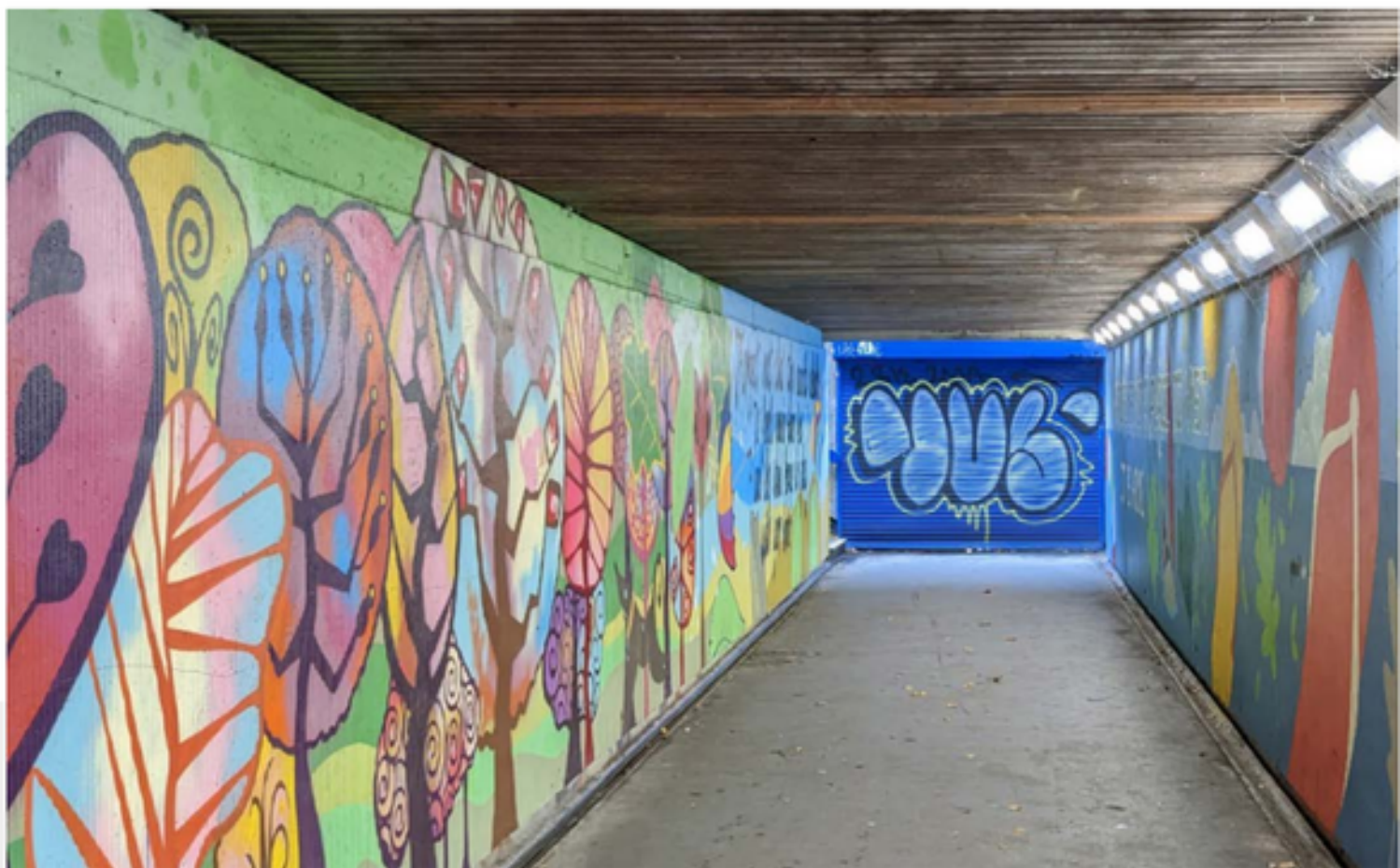


## i. Masterplan Delivery

Hollywood Masterplan Projects	Progress			Notes / Comments
	Uncompleted	On-going	Completed	
Public Realm Improvements			✓	
Future Public Realm Improvements			✓	Extended to Redburn Square
Meanwhile Uses	✓			
Shop Frontage Improvements			✓	
Town Centre Living	✓			
Traffic Management Strategy	✓			Council commissioned car parking strategy
High Street Civic Spaces		✓		
Enhanced Arrival Points			✓	Signage in position
Town Centre Approaches	✓			
Laneways			✓	New entry signage and resurfacing
Youth Hub	✓			
Heritage Centre	✓			
Improve Coastal Connections			✓	Underpass painting and relighting complete
Design Briefs for Key Sites		✓		Mixed use development underway: The Front, Hibernia Street
Shared Sports Campus		✓		Discussions between groups underway
Enlarged Station Park & Ride	✓			
Town Greenway	✓			
Reburn Square			✓	Environmental Improvement Scheme
Coastal Development	✓			
Tidal Marina	✓			
Hollywood Pier	✓			
Extended Conservation Area	✓			
Branding & Place Marketing Strategy		✓		Brand developed and agreed

## ii. Other Delivery/Success





## How is Holywood today?

### Overview

Hollywood, with monastic origins dating from the 7th Century, is now an affluent coastal town with much military land on its outskirts. A 4-lane highway cuts between the town and the sea. Hollywood is six miles east of Belfast with a population of 10,757 (2021 Census). NI's main ports and airports are within 30mins drive, often along motorways, ensuring good connections. It is on the main Belfast to Bangor train line and has 1 million people living within an hour's drive, highlighting its accessibility and accessible market.





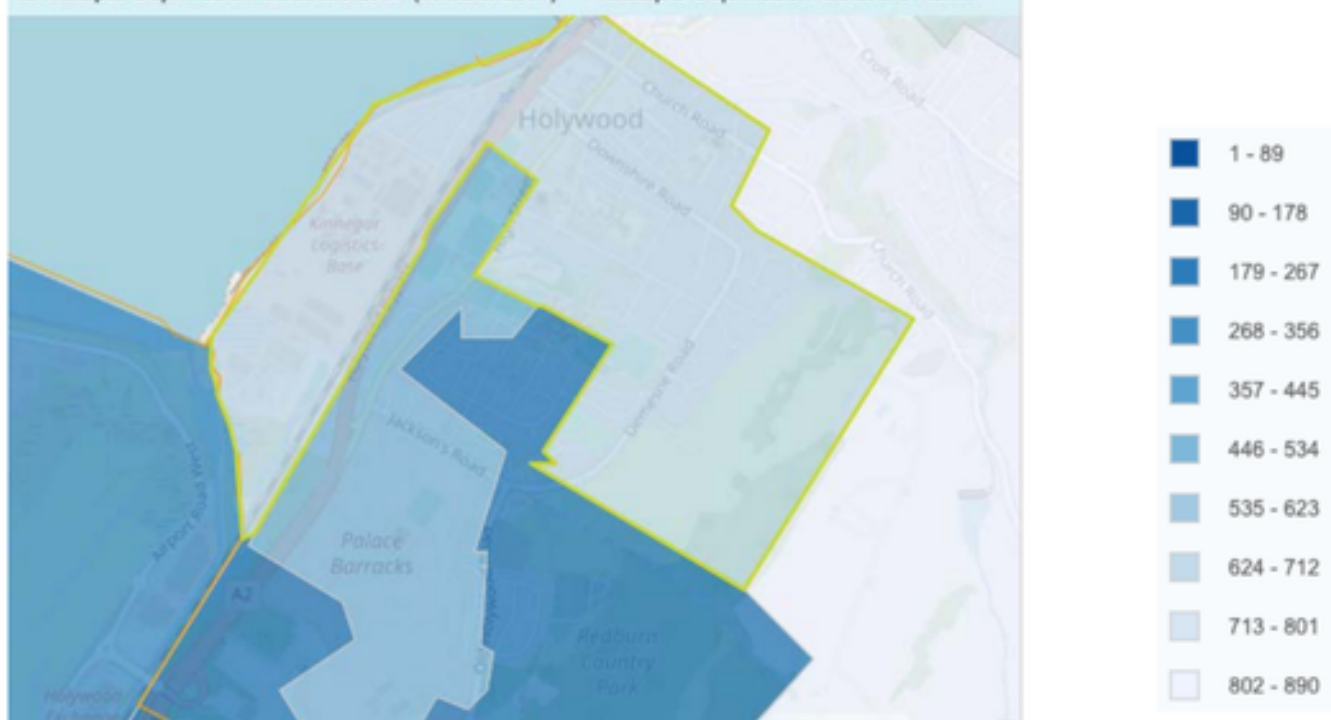
## a. Socio-Economic Profile

### Town & Town Centre Profile

(Hollywood & Clandeboyne H Super Data Zone)

The town centre has a population of 3,963 (2020) a fall of 369 people (-9.8%) since 2010. Hollywood town centre has an older population (59% over 40, v NI average 49%) and fewer children (13% 0-14 year olds, v NI 19%). Leading to smaller households (81% 1-2 person households v NI 61%). Flats comprise 44% of all accommodation (v ANDBC average 11%) and 1 in 3 have no access to a car or van (v ANDBC 15%). Town centre residents have high levels of qualifications (47% at Level 4 or above, v NI 34%) and low unemployment (3%) with at least 2 in 5 economically inactive. 43% travel to work by car, with 15% walking or cycling (v ANDBC 6%) and 9% use the bus or train (v ANDBC 3%). Active travel for those travelling to study is 41% Walking or Cycling (v ANDBC 20%) and 19% getting the bus or train (v ANDBC 23%). 29% work from home (v NI 19%, ANDBC 23%), with 22% travelling less than 5km to work (v ANDBC 21%). The town centre is considered less deprived than the NI average, in particular regards employment (36.4% had a degree v 23.7% for NI), yet 'Hollywood Demesne' lies amongst the 11% most deprived areas in NI in terms of 'Living Environment'.

NI Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017 (NIMDM 2017) >> Multiple Deprivation Measure Rank





## b. Sectoral Profile

### Property Profile

Hollywood has 313 properties within the town centre, of which 33 are vacant (10.5%). This is down from 2016-17 (average 11.2%) and below recent years (2019-2021 average 14.3%) and is significantly lower than NI average (23.7%). Office space dominates the town centre, accounting for 60% of total floor space (v NI average of 40.1%). There is 20,460m<sup>2</sup> across 165 properties (by properties the most of any town in the borough, and by area 20% more than Bangor). 'Shops, Supermarkets and Showrooms' comprise 13,057m<sup>2</sup> across 117 properties, which is 38.1% of the total area, and well below the NI average of 49.2%.

### Business Profile

In 2021, there were 265 businesses: 55 'Professional, Scientific & Technical' (up from 40 in 2013), 35 'Wholesale & Retail' (down from 50 in 2015), and 30 in Construction (up from 15 in 2013).

The number of Food & Accommodation businesses in the town centre has remained steady since 2013, at around 25, but accounts for 181 employee jobs (up 43% since 2013), double the next best sector, 'Wholesale & Retail'. Overall, employee numbers are up 54% between 2013 (322 jobs) and 2021 (496 jobs). However, total business turnover for the town centre is down a quarter from £156.6m in 2016 to £117.3m in 2019.

### Tourism

As of June 2023, there is no accommodation available within the Hollywood town centre boundary. Outside this boundary, there is the 5\* Culloden Estate and Spa offering 202 bedspaces/98 rooms. According to the Tourism Northern Ireland Accommodation Stock report dated 1st June 2023, there are currently 19 self catering properties offering 84 bedspaces listed as Hollywood. In addition, Rockport School offers Campus accommodation for 56 bedspaces and Lorne Estate offer Group hostel accommodation catering for 138 bedspaces.



## c. Policy Context

### National and Regional

#### The Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS)

The RDS puts in place spatial planning, transport and housing priorities that will support and enable the aspirations of the Region to be met.

#### Strategic Planning Policy Statement 2015 (SPPS)

The SPPS supports positive place making as a people centered approach with the key to successful place-making set out through identifying the assets of a particular place as well as developing a vision for its future potential. Successful place making promotes accessibility and inclusivity for all, acknowledges the importance of creating hospitable and safe places, and emphasises the contribution of vibrancy, adaptability, and diversity of use and how it plays a role in contributing to vitality of place and how it will endure into the future.

#### Living Places - An Urban Stewardship and Design Guide for Northern Ireland 2014

The Urban Stewardship Design Guide establishes the key principles behind good place making and recognises the wider economic, cultural and community benefits of achieving excellence in the stewardship and design in these places, be they existing or proposed

### Local Context

#### Local Development Plan

The Council is now preparing the Local Development Plan. Until the LDP is adopted, planning decisions are made in the context of the following existing plans:

- **Ards and Down Area Plan 2015**
- **North Down and Ards Area Plan 1984-1995**  
Due to the adoption of the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) being deemed unlawful and subsequently quashed the North Down and Ards Area Plan 1984-1995 is the statutory development plan for the legacy North Down area.

#### The Big Plan for Ards and North Down 2017 - 2032

The Big Plan sets out the vision for the next 15 years for Ards and North Down to be a vibrant, connected, healthy, safe, and prosperous place to be. The Plan sets out 5 outcomes to achieve the vision:

##### Outcome 1:

All people in Ards and North Down fulfil their lifelong potential

##### Outcome 2:

All people in Ards and North Down enjoy good health and wellbeing

##### Outcome 3:

All people in Ards and North Down live in communities where they are respected, area safe and feel secure

##### Outcome 4:

All people in Ards and North Down benefit from a prosperous economy

##### Outcome 5:

All people in Ards and North Down feel pride from having access to a well-managed sustainable environment

#### Integrated Strategy for Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development 2018 - 2030

The Strategy presents a coherent vision for the pursuit of prosperity for Ards and North Down. It responds to the vision and outcomes of the Big Plan and is used as a common point of reference for the growth of the economy, the welcoming of visitors and the improvement of both urban and rural places.

## d. Hollywood Today - Conversations & Perceptions

A series of conversations have taken place through the public engagement exercise the Council carried out as well as targeted workshops with the Town Advisory Group, council officers and elected members.

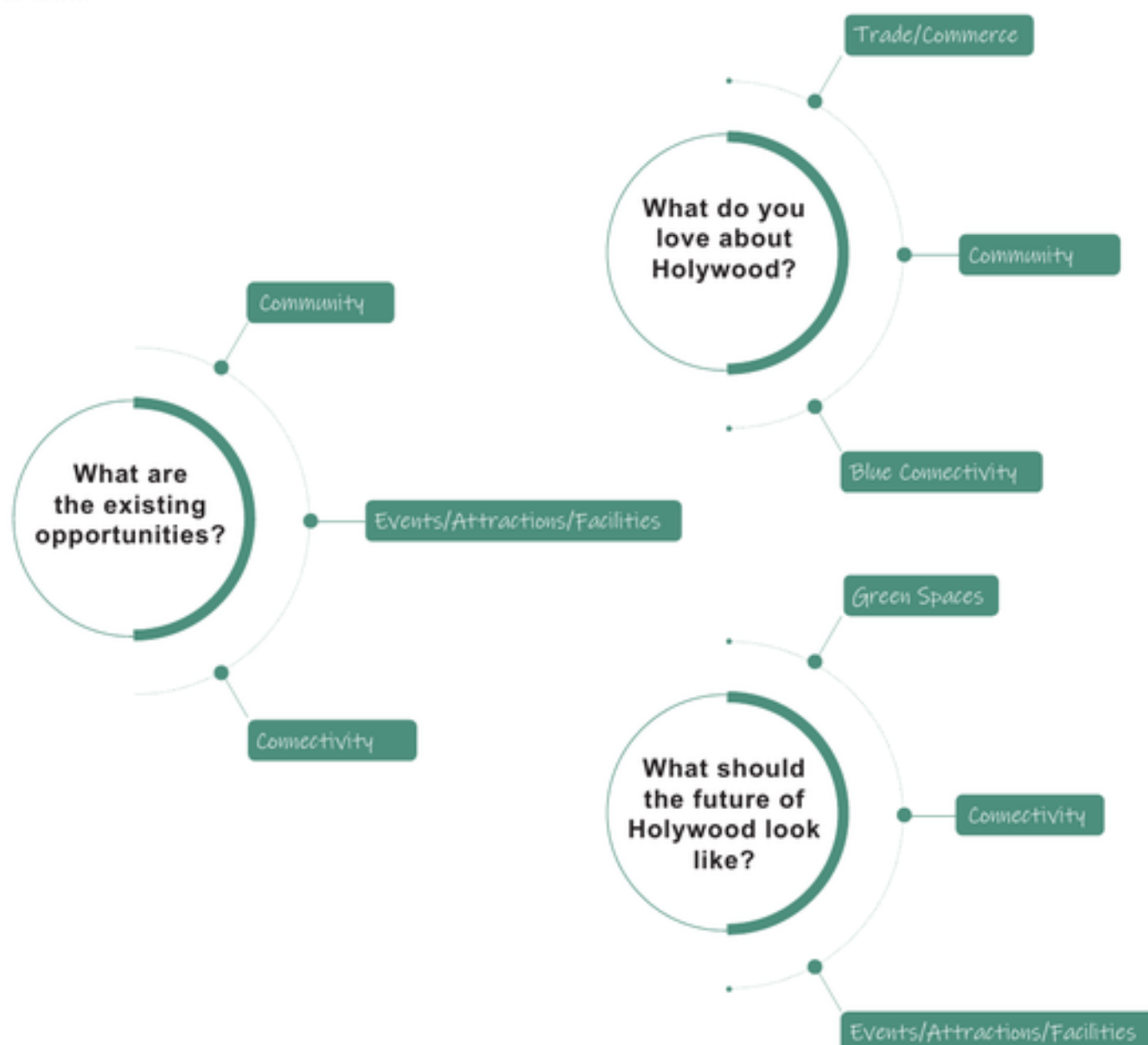
The Council organised a drop-in event and on-line survey providing the opportunity for the community to engage with council officers and representatives from the Hollywood Town Advisory Group and provide their views and aspirations for the future of the town.

Drop-In Event:

**100+** comments

On-line Survey:

**53** responses





### Why live in Hollywood?

- Commerce/Trade
- Blue Connectivity
- Community
- Green Spaces

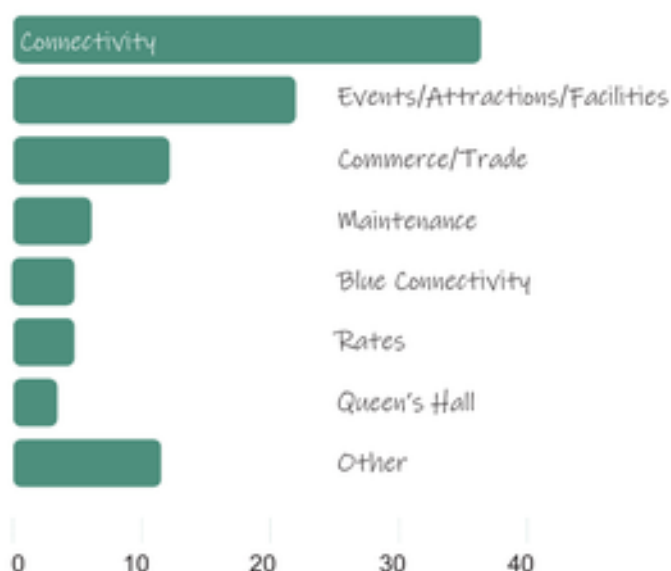
### What are the undesirables about Hollywood?

- Connectivity
- Maintenance
- Commerce/Trade

### What is a disadvantage for businesses in Hollywood?

- Connectivity Issues
- High Rates

### Areas for Improvement



### The Future of Hollywood?



## d. Holywood Today - Conversations & Perceptions

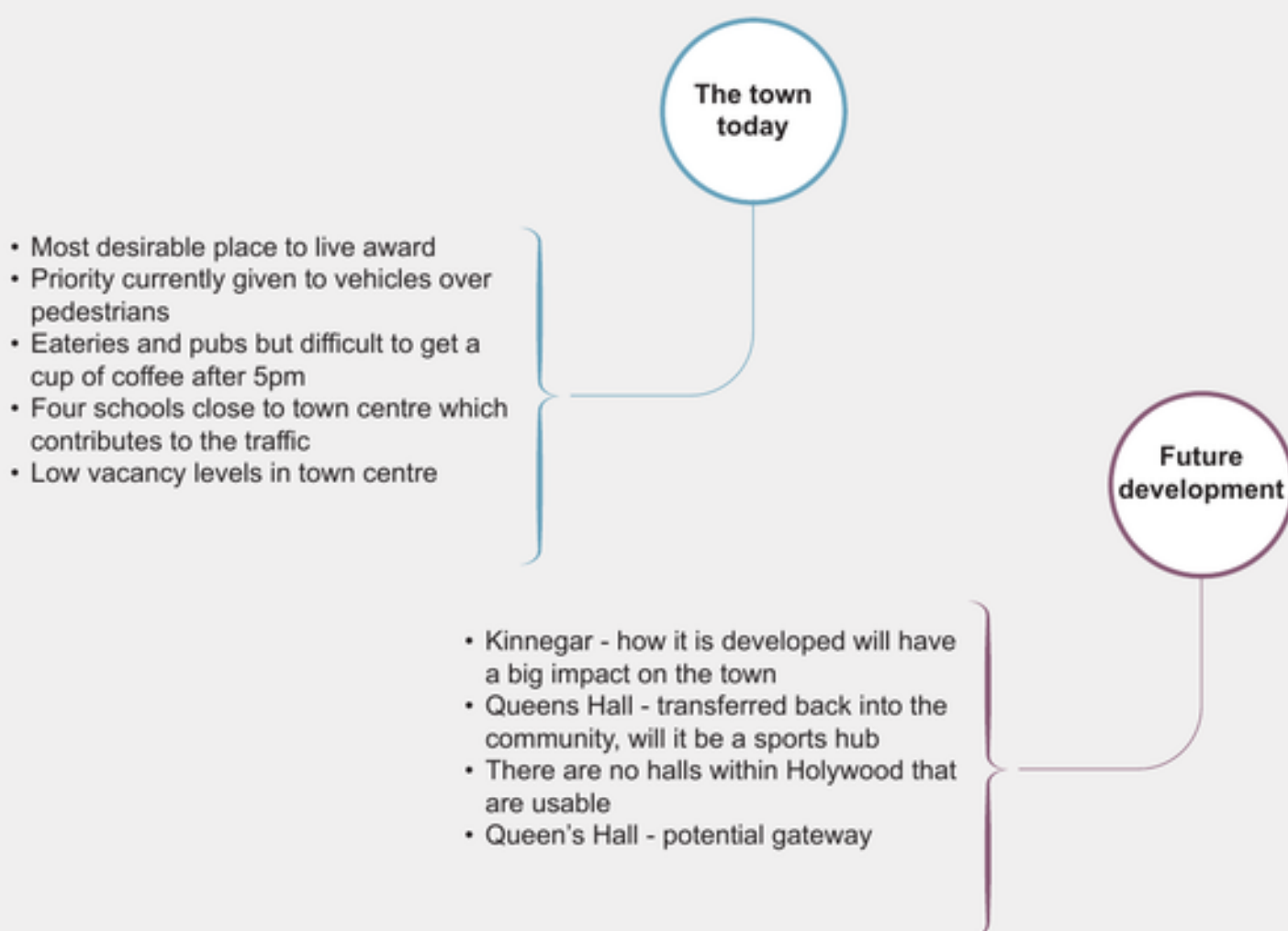
Through targeted workshops with the Town Advisory Group, council officers and elected members further conversations have taken place.

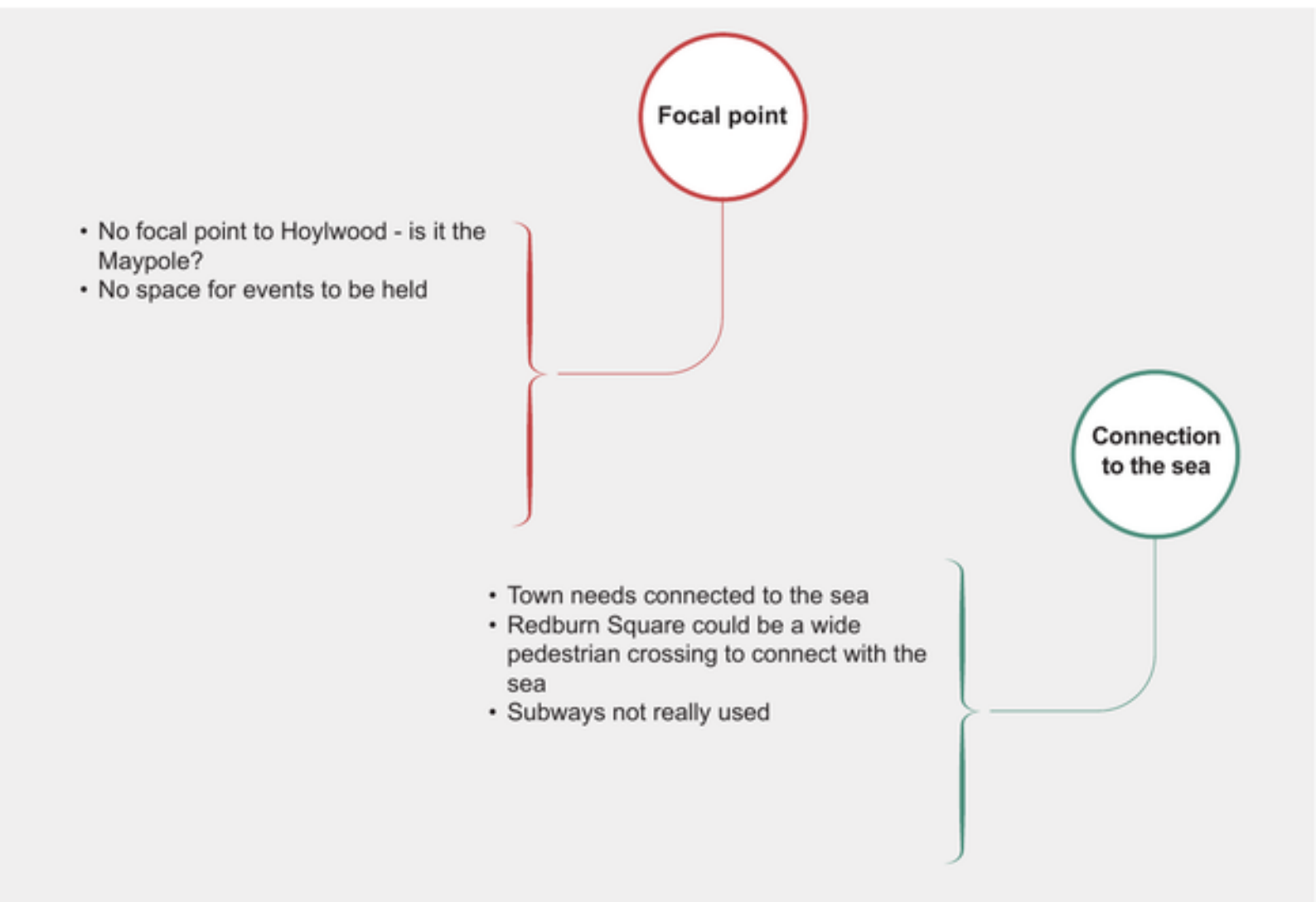
The future of Kinnegar was discussed and it was recognised that the nature and the way it is developed will impact on the town.

The need for better youth engagement and lack of facilities and things to do was recognised throughout discussions.

Queen's Hall and its future was discussed including the facilities that it used to house, such as theatre and cinema but those no longer exist. The complex was identified by the Advisory Group having potential to make a more significant contribution to the local community and town centre.

There is a need to provide for the community through a shared town concept, with ideas such as allotments and walking tours.







## e. Hollywood Today - Urban Design Analysis

Hollywood sits on the shore of Belfast Lough and has dramatically changed from its historic beginnings as a small settlement concentrated around the intersection of roads. The introduction of the railway and connection to Bangor in 1865 resulted in substantial residential growth.

Owing to its proximity to Belfast the town has grown along the A2 commuter corridor. The connectivity the road brings has both benefited and detrimentally impacted the town, severing much of the town and the centre from the railway station, shoreline and water. Leaving a pocket of residential and the Kinnegar Army Barracks in a prime waterside location but disconnected from the town.

As the town has expanded along the coast the traditional town centre form has remained, centred around the junction of Shore Road, Church Road and High Street.

The long linear nature of the town has resulted in much of it being out with a walkable distance of 800 metres (approximately a 10-minute walk).

### Hollywood - Urban Growth





OS County Series 1st Edition c.1830

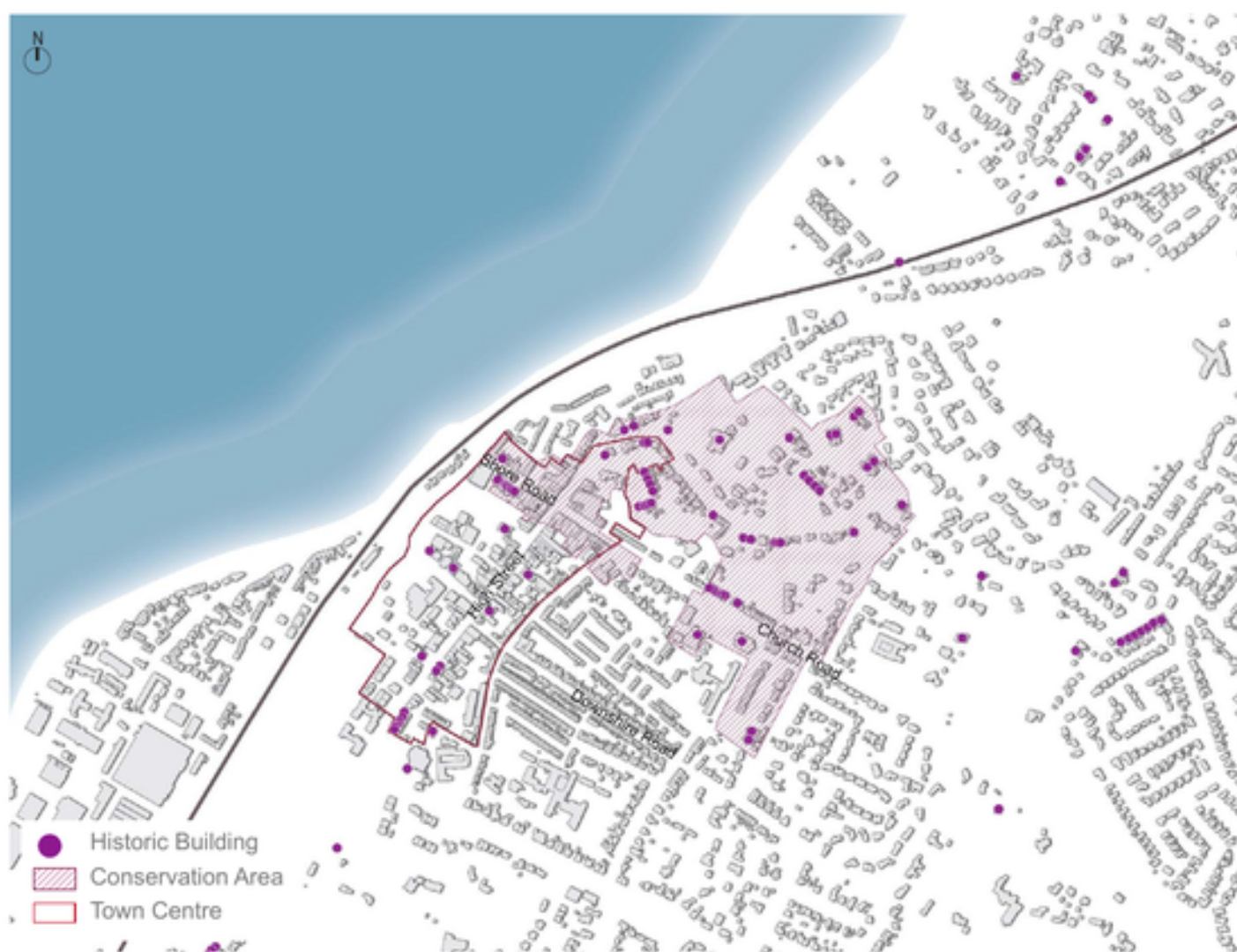


Town Wide Context



## Street Pattern & Grain

The town centre is focused around the early cruciform street pattern and the Maypole, which still forms the main axis of the centre today. Shore Road is formed by traditional terraces with a clear marked change in form and massing at the northern end. Modern four and five-storey development defines the edge of the town centre, fronting the bypass and providing a clear entrance point to the town.







The Maypole



Change in form and view along Shore Road

The Holywood conservation area covers a small section of the town centre, around the Maypole, but much of the designation is focused on the landscaped and winding residential streets which adds distinctive character to the town. The meandering nature differentiates between the more formal layout of the commercial core, creating two clear and well-defined character areas that tells the story of Holywood's heritage.

Within the town centre the form provides a consistent scale, massing and building line along High Street with predominantly two and three-storey buildings providing active frontage.

There are few public spaces within the town centre, and those that exist such as Redburn Square are missing activation due its edge being bound by significant road infrastructure.



Consistent scale and massing along High Street



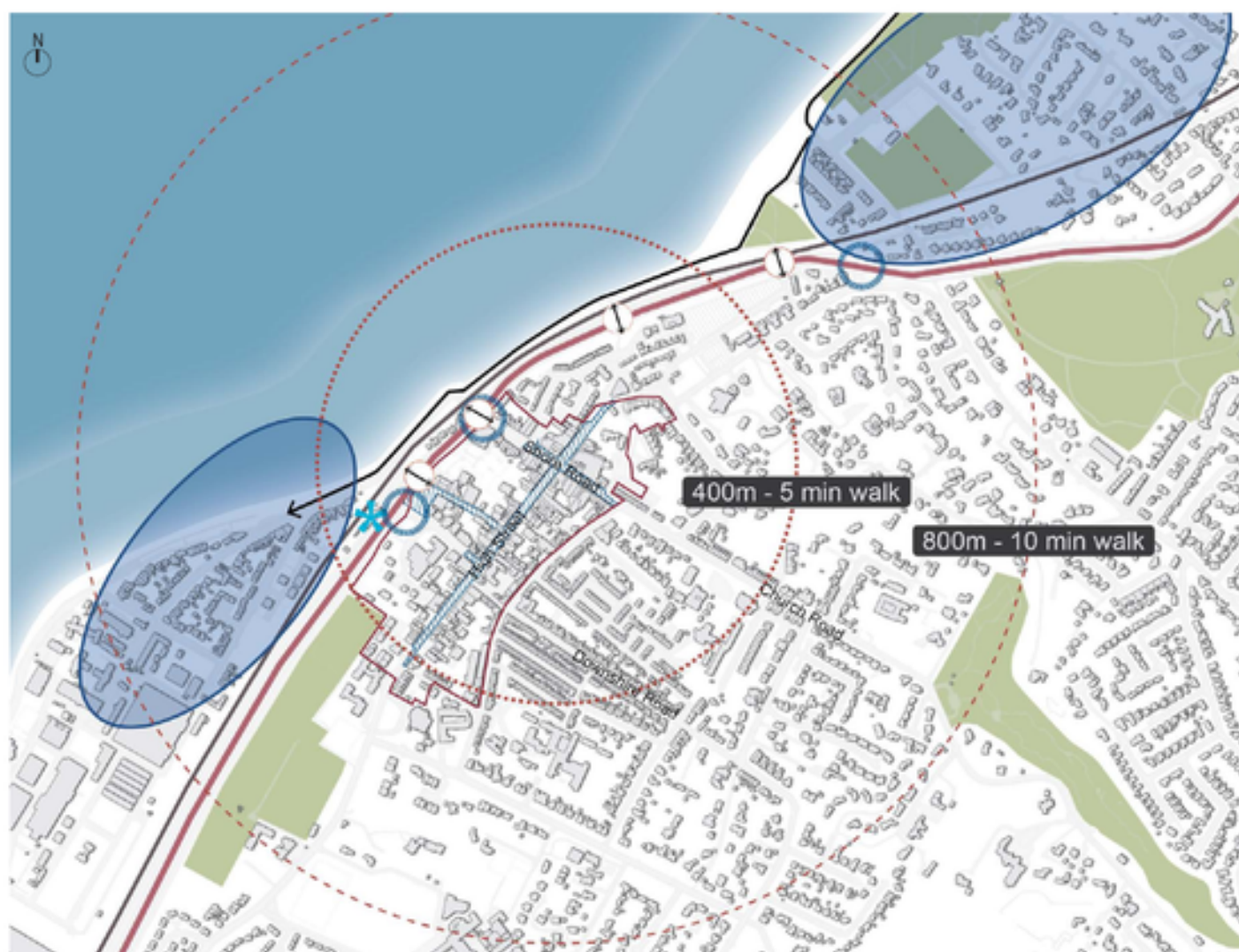
Heritage character within the conservation area

## Movement

The town centre has remained compact in nature with almost its entirety within a walkable radius of approximately 400 metres from the Maypole. The quality of the public realm and scale and massing of buildings has resulted in a comfortable, well used, and successful town centre.

Out of the town centre the dominance of the A2 and focus on vehicle movement has a detrimental impact on connectivity.

- Pedestrian / Cycle Route
- Disconnected Areas
- ⊘ Crossing Points
- \* Train Station
- ⊙ Gateways
- Public Realm Improvements
- Town Centre







View along coastline



Underpass

The barrier effect of the road prevents movement between the town centre and the water, limiting the relationship the town has with its shoreline. Glimpses of the water are visible throughout the town centre but physical connections are poor.

The quality of public realm along the waterfront does little to encourage interaction with the water. This huge asset feels tucked away and forgotten about, with little celebrating and connecting it back to the town centre.

The Kinnegar Army Barracks presents a real opportunity to capitalise on the waterfront location and provide connections with the sea. There is an opportunity to develop a mixed-use facility at the edge of the Borough that will greatly enhance Hollywood and the wider area.



High quality public realm within the Town Centre



Laneways

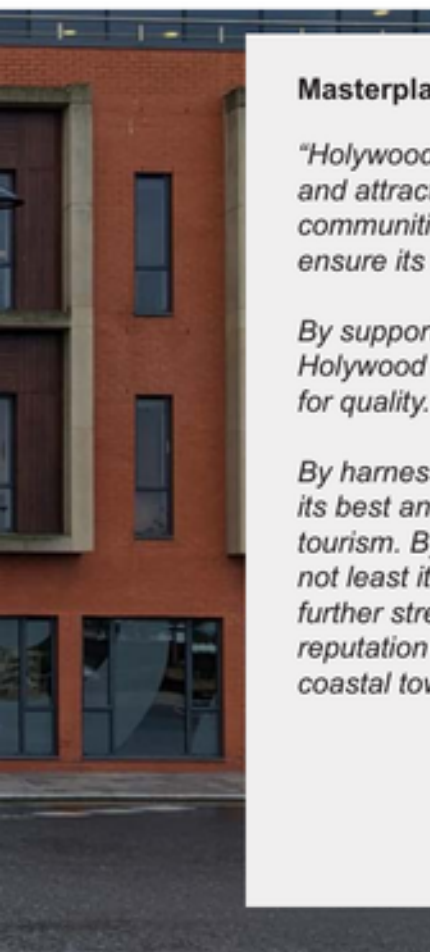


## The Way Forward

### Analysis Summary:

Continues to prosper as a town centre in comparison to many others	✓
Car dominance will always stymie its potential	✗
Waterfront remains a missed opportunity with connectivity still needing addressed	!
Community is key, largely successful activity but inclusivity remains important	✓
Compact and walkable town centre	✓
Queen's Hall and environs appears to hold much scope to address this and further transform the centre	!





### Masterplan Vision (2014):

*"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"*

### Masterplan Aims & Objectives:

#### 1. Linking Communities

- 1.1 Improving physical linkages
- 1.2 Creating shared space
- 1.3 Working Together

#### 2. Supporting Business

- 2.1 Maintaining quality
- 2.2 Nurturing emerging sectors
- 2.3 Enriching the offer

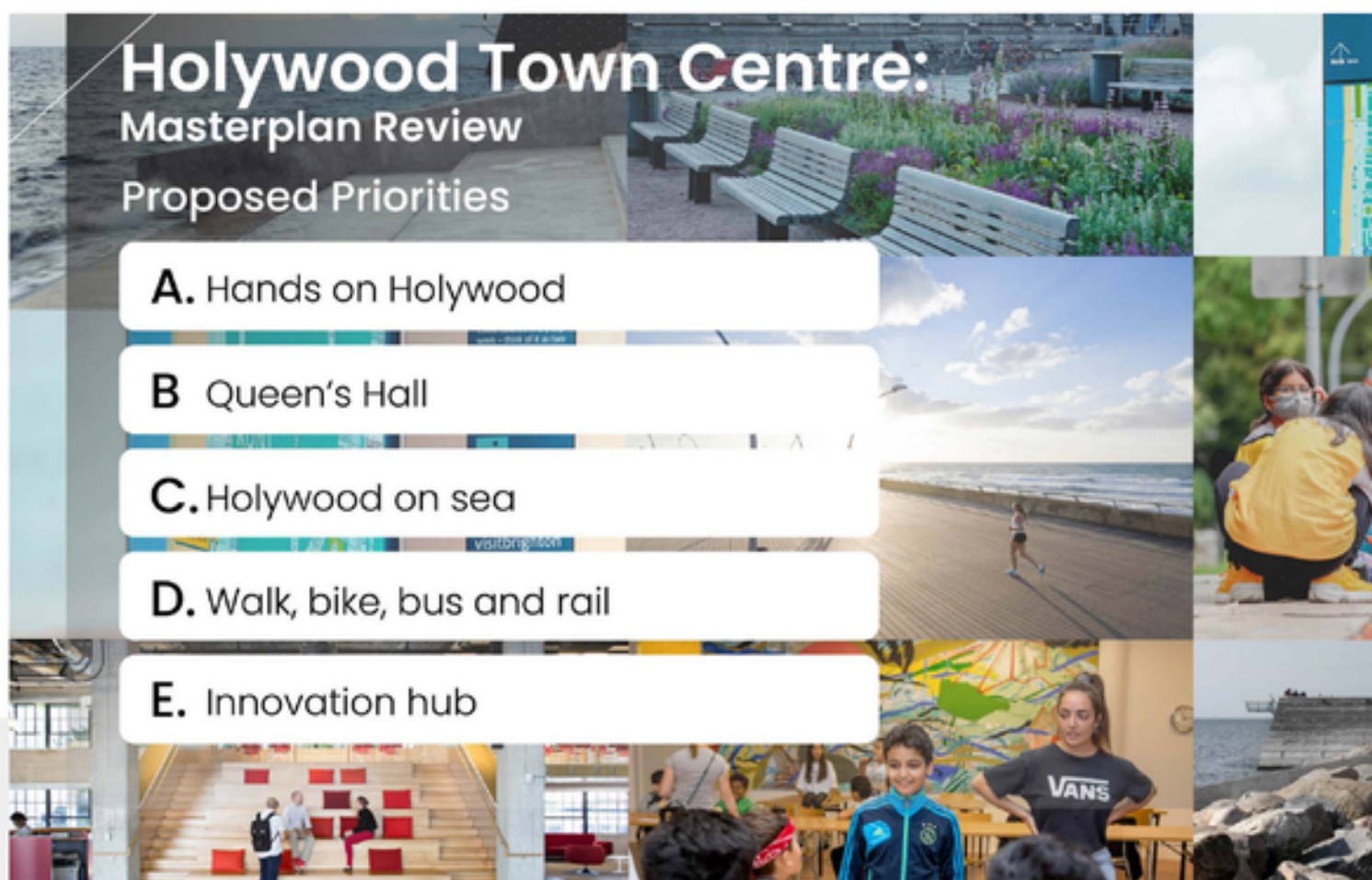
#### 3. Harnessing Heritage

- 3.1 Safeguarding assets
- 3.2 Reconnecting town with history
- 3.3 Unlocking tourism potential

#### 4. Strengthening Identity

- 4.1 Enhancing first impressions
- 4.2 Connecting land and sea
- 4.3 Developing a brand

In light of conversations the masterplan vision, aims and objectives are still relevant. The deliverability of proposals to achieve these goals will require particular focus, with potential for more smaller but impactful projects, over large more complex endeavours.



## New Priorities for Hollywood Town Centre

Five new priorities are proposed for Hollywood Town Centre, drawing upon the findings of the research and engagement process.



## A. Hands on Hollywood

Residents, local groups and organisations are proud of the town and with support, can play a greater role in enhancing its centre.

## B. Queen's Hall

The centrally located Queen's Hall has much potential to play a greater role as a meeting place for all the community and especially the young people of the town.

## C. Hollywood on Sea

The waterfront is one of Hollywood's greatest assets. Every effort is needed to enhance this area and link it with the town centre more effectively.

## D. Walk, bike, bus and rail

Hollywood is relatively compact and well served by public transport. This should become a Unique Selling Point of the town and be promoted as a place to visit by active and public transport.

## E. Innovation Hub

The town centre is a vibrant commercial centre. The Hub will provide much needed dedicated creative space to sustain and grow the economic activity in the heart of Hollywood.





## Engagement

A second round of conversations have taken place through a public engagement exercise. By listening to the people of Holywood during the first round of conversations the proposed priorities have developed. The public were invited to view information both online and at a drop-in event before providing their feedback through a short online survey. Community engagement was facilitated by members of the team, council officers and representatives from the Holywood Town Advisory Group.

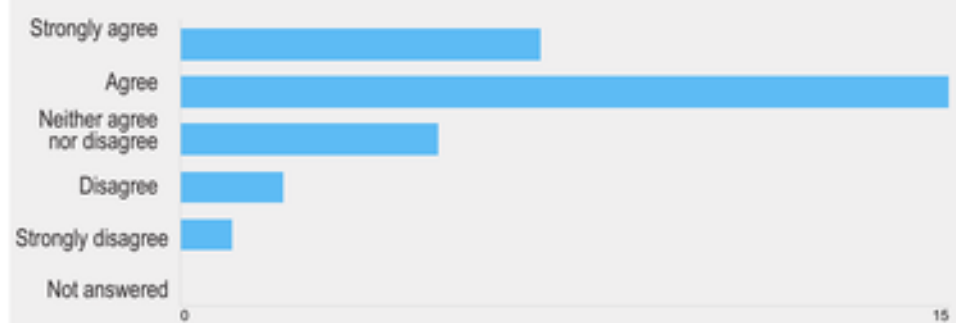
From this stage there was a total of **30 responses** to the survey with the results set out in the following section.



# Engagement Results

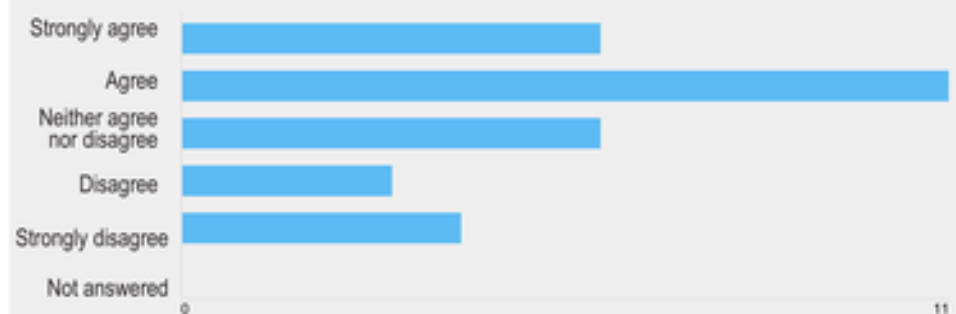
## A. Hands on Hollywood

To what extent do you agree with the priority: Hands on Hollywood?



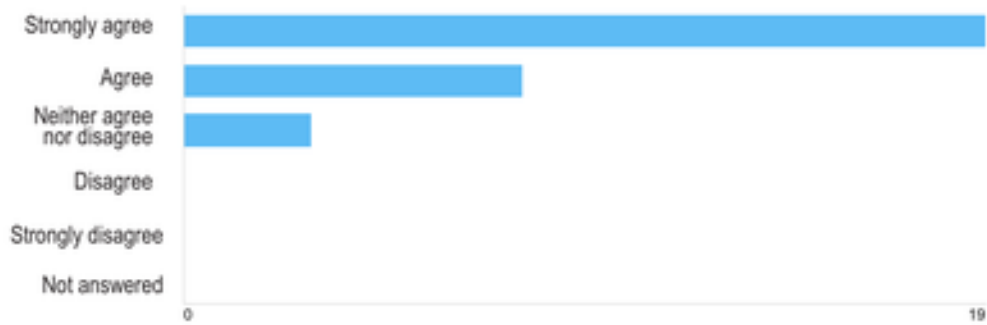
## B. Queen's Hall

To what extent do you agree with the priority: Queen's Hall?



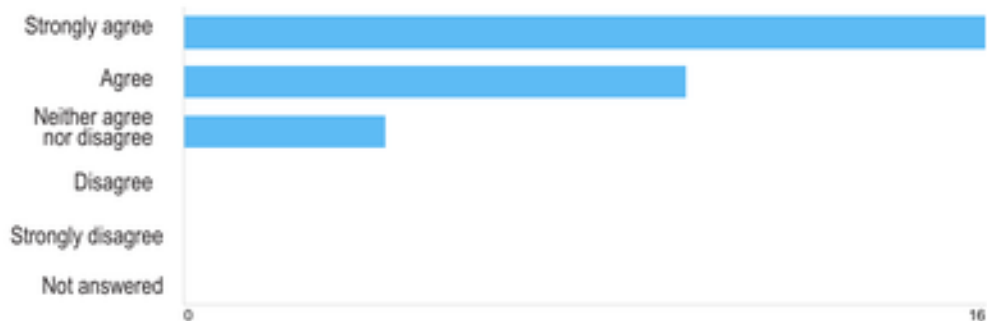
### C. Hollywood on Sea

To what extent do you agree with the priority: Hollywood on Sea?



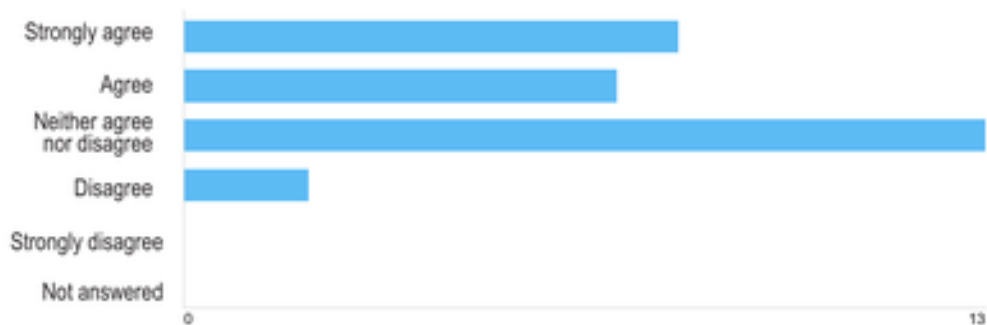
### D. Walk, bike, bus and rail

To what extent do you agree with the priority: Walk, bike, bus and rail?



### E. Innovation Hub

To what extent do you agree with the priority: Innovation Hub?





Other ideas for priorities for the Town Centre  
25 Responses



## PRIORITIES

### A. Hands on Hollywood

**Supporting the community to play an increased role in looking after the town centre, including the identification and delivery of placemaking projects, with an emphasis on youth engagement.**

Over the years residents have played an active part in projects around the town and its centre, including the care of green spaces, biodiversity and arts projects. Such activity is invaluable, not only for improving the way the town looks and functions, but also, in bringing people together, strengthening a collective sense of community and having fun in the centre of the town.

There is therefore a continued and important role for the community to play in looking after the town centre, supported by Council and others, contributing to interventions with short-term tangible results that make a difference.

Creative ideas are in no short supply and may involve temporary or permanent transformations to spaces and even buildings, helping achieve the objectives of the town centre masterplan and other initiatives. This should involve strategic coordination to maximise the impact of such projects.

Amongst these and alongside the Council and other partners, such as the Department for Infrastructure, the opportunity should be explored from time to time to temporarily open the town centre to people and bicycle and close it to cars, giving space for people to enjoy the town centre. Over time this should pilot different ways of using and therefore designing the High Street.



Hollywood event



## PROPOSED ACTIONS

- A.i** Identify and support community led placemaking projects

Yet to be sustainable and impactful, Hands on Hollywood will require more structured support and collaboration for community groups and organisations, likely to include capacity building, project planning, financial support, and practical and administrative support.

Finally, at the core of Hands on Hollywood should be inclusivity, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to get involved.



Car free day



Open streets festival, Stirling



## PRIORITIES

### B. Queen's Hall

**Developing a community hub that incorporates a youth aspect. Investigating and facilitating the potential for a community asset transfer enabling the community to take ownership and run the facility**

The Queen's Hall presents an opportunity to create an increasingly important civic use for the community in the heart of the town.

It has long been felt locally that a central meeting and events place for the community and especially young people, is lacking. While the Queen's complex partly provides this function at present, it has significant potential to play a greater role in this regard, including scope to provide valuable active frontage onto Sullivan Place throughout the day and evening.

Through detailed engagement and collaboration between the community, the council and current operators of the hall, specific needs and viable means of delivery should be explored.

Over time, one potential option could be a community asset transfer model, whereby the facility, or part thereof comes under the ownership of the local community.

Whilst the Queen's Hall presents an opportunity for the community, the facility and its car park are currently managed by a Leisure Operator until 2028.



Community Hub, Amsterdam

## PROPOSED ACTIONS

- B.i Investigate potential for long term use and improvements of Queen's Hall
- B.ii Engage with stakeholders to identify needs of the community
- B.iii Facilitate and support the process
- B.iv Explore funding opportunities



LORAG, Belfast





## PRIORITIES

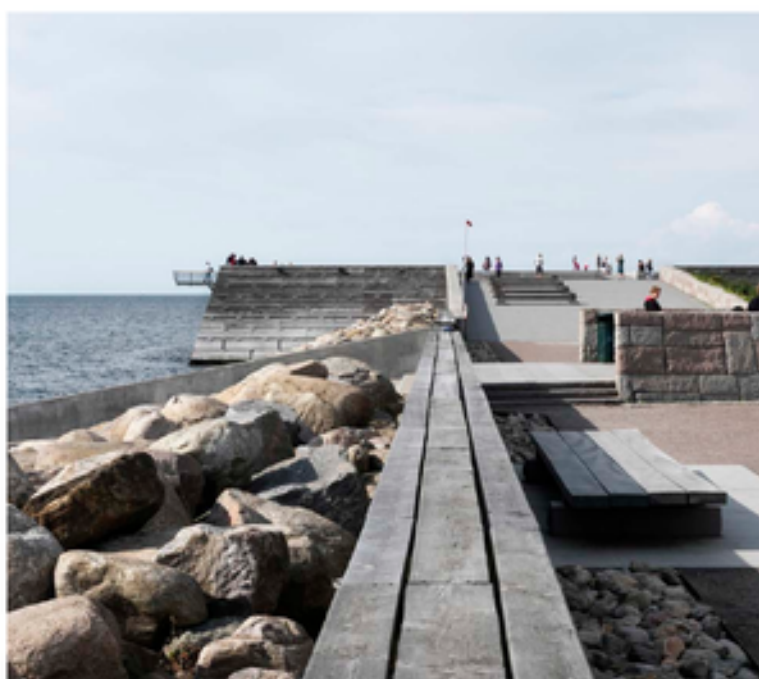
### C. Hollywood on Sea

**Enhancing the relationship between the town and the sea through improved public realm, signage and the potential for future possibilities.**

Hollywood is very fortunate to be located on the picturesque shores of Belfast Lough and has long benefited from pathways and green space at Seapark Recreation Ground. However, many of these lengths of pathway, often in association with sea defences are dominated by unsightly concrete and limited in space for use by people.

As arguably the town's greatest asset, great potential exists to invest in the quality of its waterfront by improving walking surfaces, walls, street furniture and lighting, connecting Kinegar in the south and Seapark in the north. Walking the waterfront could and should be 'must do' activity while in Hollywood, whether as a resident or a visitor.

A well-documented challenge however, is the major barrier effect caused by the railway line and busy A2 road located between the town and its waterfront. Continued efforts must be made to address this issue, not only through long term infrastructural changes, but also in the short term through high quality improvements to underpasses, crossing points and the general environmental quality of this very problematic area.



Malmö, Sweden





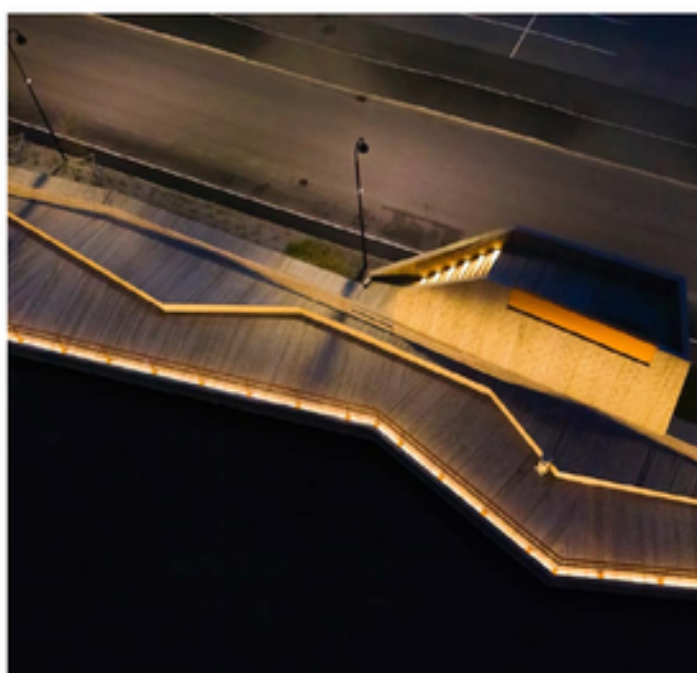
Attractive pedestrian signage, as part of a well designed wayfinding system, should also play a key part in connecting Hollywood with its waterfront. This would encourage more trips to and from the town centre, so benefitting local businesses through increased footfall, while contributing the health and well-being of residents in the town.

## PROPOSED ACTIONS

- C.i** Develop design proposals for high quality waterfront public realm improvements, working with key statutory agencies
- C.ii** Signage and wayfinding connecting to the town centre



Tel Aviv



Vestnes Sjøfront Norway

## PRIORITIES

### D. Walk, Bike, Bus and Rail

Enhancing the town centre by encouraging more people out of the car, including wayfinding & interpretation projects, enhanced routes, and the promotion of Hollywood as a railway destination.

Hollywood has the benefits of a train station on the edge of the town centre within close walking distance. It also has a relatively compact town centre that is easy to walk through and subject to traffic, cycle. Every opportunity should be taken to promote and encourage visitors arriving by train to experience Hollywood by foot. We can all walk, wheel, cycle and use public transport but if the option is attractive, safe and easy to make then more will be encouraged to do so. This will also go some way to tackling problems of traffic congestion experienced in the centre.

Providing clear and navigable routes that link between the train station and the town centre should enhance footfall and promote walking and cycling within the town. As noted earlier, overcoming barriers will also be a key part of such efforts, perhaps even linking the station and town by a footbridge in the future.



Brighton Wayfinding

Furthermore, opportunity exists for increased collaboration between public transport providers and local businesses to activate the evening economy, explore promotional offers and other incentives to come to Holywood, by means other than the car. This is especially relevant to the town's vibrant restaurant sector, which has great potential to encourage healthy travel with healthy eating.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

- D.i Wayfinding and interpretation at public transport arrival points and destinations, including walking times.
- D.ii Promotion of Holywood as an Active Travel/ Public Transport destination in partnership with relevant Statutory Agencies to assist in the delivery of effective change.



Wayfinding



## PRIORITIES

### E. Innovation Hub

**Deliver on the vision to create an innovation hub as part of the BRCD (Belfast Region City Deal).**

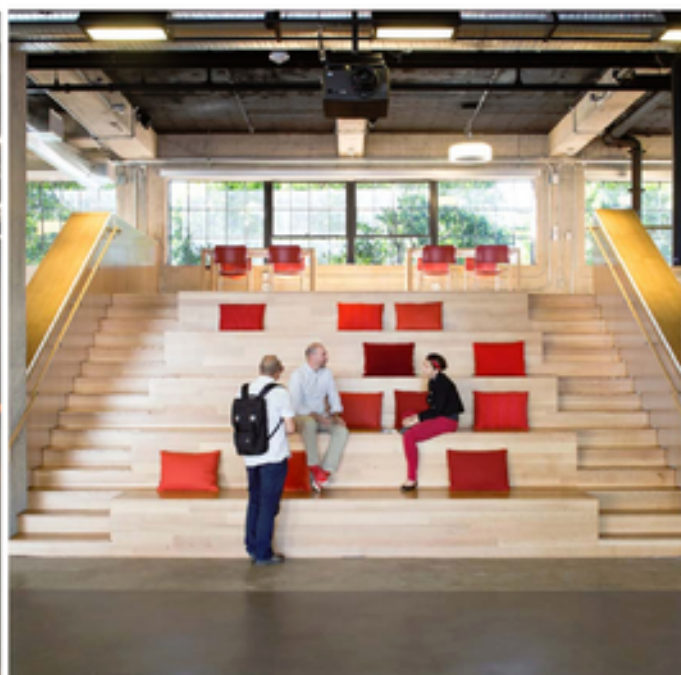
Thriving town centres are home to a mix of uses that in addition to retail, include places to live and places to work. Holywood has a strong small business community that enjoy the town setting, while being within easy reach of Belfast and transport links. The town has a particular strength in the tv/film and creative industries. Further supporting these businesses and encouraging the growth of new ones is therefore an important step for the economy of the town and wider area.

Belfast Region City Deal has agreed in principle to the development of an Innovation Hub as part of The Front mixed use development in Holywood town centre. The focus of the Innovation Hub will be supporting the creative industries within the Borough in order to promote innovation activity and new business growth.

Importantly the Hub should be designed to maximise and facilitate innovation and the wider Front development should be designed to encourage connections and increased footfall with high quality public realm and good lighting.



Innovation hub



PROPOSED ACTIONS

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- E.i Deliver on the Innovation Hub as part of the BRCD

## Making it happen

PRIORITIES	PROPOSED ACTIONS	COMMENTS
<b>A.</b> Hands on Holywood	i. Identify and support community led placemaking projects	Explore opportunities to temporarily open the town centre to people and close it to cars.
<b>B.</b> Queen's Hall	i. Investigate potential for long term use and improvements of Queen's Hall ii. Engage with stakeholders to identify needs of the community iii. Facilitate and support the process iv. Explore funding opportunities	Develop community hub that incorporates a youth aspect.
<b>C.</b> Holywood on Sea	i. Develop design proposals for high quality waterfront public realm improvements ii. Signage and wayfinding connecting to the town centre	Strengthening the connections and relationship between the town and the sea.



PRIORITIES	PROPOSED ACTIONS	COMMENTS
<b>D.</b> Walk, Bike, Bus, Rail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Wayfinding and interpretation at public transport arrival points and destinations, including walking times</li> <li>ii. Promotion of Hollywood as an Active Travel/Public Transport destination in partnership with relevant Statutory Agencies to assist in the delivery of effective change.</li> </ul>	Clear and navigable routes could enhance footfall and promote walking and cycling in the town centre working in partnership with statutory agencies.
<b>E.</b> Innovation Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Deliver on the Innovation Hub as part of the BRCD.</li> </ul>	



## Delivery

### Introduction

Central to the success of any masterplan is its ability to affect positive change on the ground. As documented in this review of the original town centre masterplans, the rate of project delivery has been varied to date when compared against the intentions set out in the published Action Plans. Reasons for this include the availability of funding, the buy-in of key stakeholders and changes in political context. It is therefore imperative that a clearer understanding is established on how the new regeneration priorities for each town can be taken forward in a manner which fulfils their potential, builds on public support, and actively contribute to the improvement of the settlement in question.

## Action Plan Lifespan

Through this review process it has been agreed that the remaining lifespan of the updated town and city centre masterplans is 8 years. This will correlate with two terms of elected Ards and North Down Borough Councillors. Yet unlike the original town centre masterplans, it is not advised to produce a single action plan that will remain unchanged over that period. Rather, the Actions Plans must be considered 'live' documents that are subjected to regular reviews and updates, with a major review and update taking at the halfway stage, in 4 years' time. This will allow for delivery progress to be accurately recorded and for reprioritisation of actions to happen in response to inevitable changed circumstances. After the 8 years period in 2030 it is recommended that new 'place plans' are commissioned for each town centre, based on multidisciplinary research and extensive public engagement.

## Monitoring of Progress

Every project takes time to deliver, and an effort has been made here to identify initiatives that can be brought forward relatively quickly, while other more complex actions will inevitably take longer. In recognition of this, all actions are broken down into 14 stages as shown here. This will enable a more accurate and transparent plotting of project progress to take place. A regularly updated masterplan 'dashboard' will show the current state of all projects, helping to inform decision making accordingly.

		Delivery Stages													
		A Project Definition				B Project Development				C Project Funding				D Project Delivery	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Holywood	A Hands on Holywood														
	B Queen's Hall														
	C Holywood on Sea														
	D Walk, Bike, Bus, Rail														
	E Innovation Hub														

### (A) Project Definition

1. Identify Online Project idea & Scale (and ideally case study to help visualise)
2. Identify Project Lead
3. Identify Initial Community/Statutory Support
4. Identify Potential Funding (both to develop and deliver project)

### (B) Project Development

5. Determine Land Issue (land ownership, options, access, ability to acquire, likelihood of planning)
6. Identify Potential Project Partners (who, why, how)
7. Outline Key Issues: Need/Demand, Objectives/Aims, Project Management, Financing, 'Net Zero' Impact and Sustainability
8. Detailed Investigation - Proportional Economic & Technical Feasibility Study

### (C) Project Funding

9. Detailed Funding Case - Proportional Business Case, Designs, Costing
10. Land ownership/access confirmed, planning permission secured and working capital/project financing in place,
11. Funding Application(s) Submitted

### (D) Project Delivery

12. Managing Funding - Letters of Offer, Procurement, Construction, Delivery
13. Post Funding Delivery - Adaptation, Delivery, Launch and Official Sign-Off
14. Project Evaluation Complete

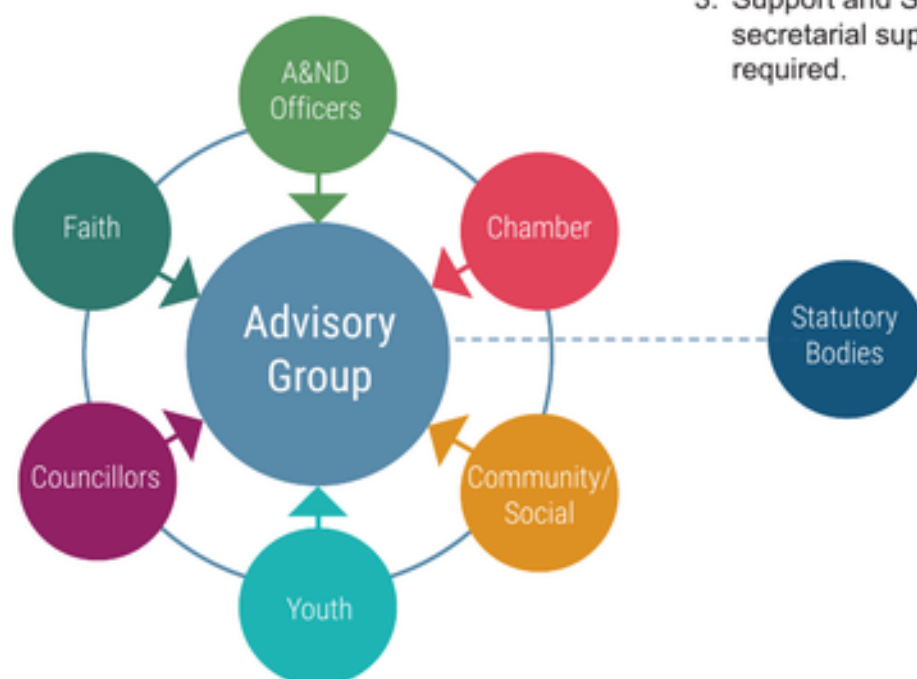


## Town and City Advisory Groups

The town centre masterplans identify the regeneration needs of each town centre and consequently do not neatly fall to the responsibilities of one organisation (public or private), council or government department. Furthermore, the process of developing viable projects requires the continued input of town centre stakeholders and the public. To reflect this complexity, Ards and North Down Borough Council constituted Town and City Advisory Groups in 2019. These groups, originally known as Town Steering Groups, comprise local representatives of business, community, youth and faith organisations, as well as councillors and officers of Ards and North Down Borough Council. The groups meet regularly through the year, convened by Council officers and led by an appointed chair.

The existence of such groups is to be commended and reflects current best practice being emulated elsewhere in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Yet the effectiveness of the groups requires review to ensure they play a fuller part of the delivery of masterplan priorities. A key area for review is examining how the groups can be given greater levels of responsibility in a manner that is compatible with the functions of both council and government departments. It is recommended that an independent review is undertaken by an external consultant to work with all the advisory groups to review governance and processes with the view to recommend changes and reference best practice models.

1. Strengthen – Make more representative by inviting more members and volunteers and ensure more regular representation from different council sections and relevant NI Executive departments (eg DfI).
2. Simplify – assign specific tasks to sub-groups, comprising members and invited parties.
3. Support and Signpost – provide training, secretarial support and professional advice when required.



## Locally Based Organisations

There is a need to support strong and capable locally based organisations both existing and new, such as Donaghadee Community Development Association and Comber Regeneration Community Partnership. The success comes from dynamic, driven people coming together and making projects happen for their community. Often one project leads to another, and locally based organisations become crucial partners for the public and private sector, promoting a shared understanding of place and the need for a more integrated approach to delivery.

## Potential Funding Streams

A range of funding sources are likely to be available for delivery of action plans. These include committed council budgets and DfC regeneration funding, although noting the challenging fiscal environment at present.

A key issue is the current use of NISRA Town Centre boundaries for the allocation of regeneration funding as those areas do not align accurately with the generally recognised town centre areas. It is advocated that this means of funding allocation is reviewed and ideally changed.

A range of other funding sources not restrained by these boundaries should be proactively explored as follows:

- Community Ownership Fund
- Levelling Up (future rounds)
- Shared Prosperity
- Peace Plus
- Shared Island Funding
- National Lottery (Heritage Fund)
- Ulster Garden Villages
- Groundworks
- Social Finance (e.g. Community Finance Ireland, NESTA)

## Outcomes / Indicators

It is proposed that arrangements are made to measure the success of masterplan delivery through the measures of outcomes or key performance indicators. This will require the commissioning of baseline surveys where existing data is not available.

Potential indicators are:

- Town centre footfall
- Town centre cycle journeys
- Biodiversity of key sites
- Animation
- Purple Flag Accreditation
- Residential Accommodation/Housing units within Town Centre
- Population numbers
- House prices (and/or rate income)
- Jobs
- Civic Pride/Perception, Business Perception

