

# DONAGHADEE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN



MARCH 2015



Northern Ireland  
Executive

[www.northernireland.gov.uk](http://www.northernireland.gov.uk)

Supported by the Northern Ireland Executive through the  
Department for Social Development

**AECOM**



**ARDS**  
BOROUGH  
COUNCIL



Aerial view of Donaghadee

## CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION
2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT
3. MASTERPLAN CONSULTATION
4. VISION, CONCEPT AND OBJECTIVES
5. MASTERPLAN PROPOSALS
6. IMPLEMENTATION
7. ACTION PLAN



Donaghadee Harbour

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Department for Social Development (DSD) in conjunction with Ards Borough Council (ABC) appointed URS (now trading as AECOM) in March 2014 to prepare a Masterplan for Donaghadee. The Masterplan process required continuous engagement with a wide range of stakeholders. This document is the culmination of that process and set outs an exciting range of short, medium and long-term proposals and actions, which will enhance Donaghadee and its neighbourhoods.

The Masterplan has been facilitated by a team led by AECOM; a multi-disciplinary consultancy which consists of a range of specialisms including town planning, landscape architecture and urban design. The AECOM team was assisted by Count Us In (Transport Consultants) and Roderick MacLean Associates (Retail Consultants). The consultancy team worked closely with the Project Steering Group which consisted of Local Councillors, Council Officers, DSD, Statutory Agencies, representatives from local businesses and the community/voluntary sectors. Their local knowledge was invaluable when identifying Donaghadee's strengths and weaknesses.

**All proposals contained within the Masterplan will be subject to further consultation and development.**



*Donaghadee War Memorial*

## 2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

### What is a Town Centre Masterplan?

The Town Centre Masterplan is an evidence-based document that sets out the strategic vision for Donaghadee over the next 15-20 years. The Masterplan aims to promote and guide growth and development, with the aim of creating a vibrant, high quality and fully integrated settlement. This Masterplan is a non-statutory document, therefore it is not required by law, but has been brought forward to help guide the future regeneration of Donaghadee for the next 15-20 years. The document can be used to help guide the community planning process and be used by a range of stakeholders to help draw down funding for particular projects. The Action Plan in Chapter 8 prioritises and establishes indicative timeframes for the delivery of identified projects. Generally, the delivery of this Masterplan will not fall to one group or organisation, but will require a concerted effort from a range of stakeholders. However the results will be rewarding to those who live, work, visit and conduct business in Donaghadee.

The Masterplan should not be confused with the current public realm scheme (also designed by AECOM). The public realm scheme once completed, will greatly enhance the aesthetics of the Town Centre. It is an integral piece of the jigsaw, whereas the Masterplan strives to provide an overarching framework within which the crucial elements of a vibrant town will evolve.

### Where does the Masterplan cover?

Town Masterplans typically focus on projects within the town centre boundary, as identified by the Local Area Plan (Ards Down Area Plan 2015). Donaghadee's Town Centre boundary includes the following streets: The Parade, New Street, High

Street, Bridge Street, Moat Street and Shore Street. In recognition that several of Donaghadee's key assets are outside this boundary a more holistic approach is being taken to ensure that the revitalisation of its surrounding assets will directly impact on the future success of the Town Centre.

### How has the Masterplan been produced?

This Masterplan has been prepared through four distinct stages as follows:

- Research, information gathering and analysis
- Preparation of vision and regeneration objectives
- Draft projects and proposals
- Preparation of Masterplan and Action Plan

The appendices to this Masterplan are set out in a separate document and include a range of information which was gathered to help inform the Masterplan.

The research involved a range of quantitative and qualitative techniques including workshops with key stakeholders, telephone household surveys, desktop research and questionnaires. At each of the key stages of the Masterplan process the team tailored the research method to suit the objective, for example at the draft projects and proposals stage the team prepared a public exhibition which aimed at gathering feedback from the public through the use of questionnaires.

The appendices to this Masterplan include the following information:

- Retail and Commercial Leisure Capacity Study
- Town Centre Health Check
- Chapters addressing retail, commercial/office, tourism, residential, evening economy, hospitality and leisure sectors, and traffic/parking.

## A brief history of Donaghadee

Around 300 years ago, Donaghadee was one of the busiest ports in Ireland, carrying imports, exports and passengers to and from Portpatrick in Scotland, less than 30 miles away. Donaghadee has been affectionately described as 'The Port of Newtownards' and 'the Dover of Ireland'.

The town was established by the Normans between the 8th and 11th Centuries. They built the large mound (where the Moat sits today) as a defensive look-out point to pre-empt attacks and raids from the Vikings. The Moat was constructed in 1818 and acted as a secure compound for the large quantity of explosives required for the construction of the current stone harbour, which is still standing after almost 200 years of the Irish Sea elements. On the 31<sup>st</sup> January 1953, one of the most famous Irish Sea marine rescues took place when the RNLB Sir Samuel Kelly rescued 32 survivors from the stricken MV Princess Victoria. The lifeboat is maintained and still exists to this day.

Donaghadee is steeped in history and with a rich legacy of architectural quality, it is largely a product of the Plantation of Ulster. The current architecture reflects the occasional medieval and Jacobean remnants, with a core of late Georgian buildings and predominance of late Victorian and Edwardian buildings.



*Shore Street, Donaghadee (circa 1908)*



*High Street, Donaghadee (circa 1920)*

## The development of Donaghadee

For centuries, the settlement of Donaghadee has developed around a healthy shipping industry due to the nature of its proximity to Portpatrick in Scotland. The Donaghadee to Portpatrick crossing was the shortest crossing point between Great Britain and Ireland, hence the harbour has been central to the morphology of the town through this period of time. The maps below indicate how Donaghadee has developed physically from 1835 through to 1957. In addition, Donaghadee has a relatively compact town centre surrounded by the sea front and the residential developments which have concentrically grown outwards from the town centre as development has occurred.



**Donaghadee 1835** – The town centred in a linear pattern around the sea front and harbour. The core of the town was founded around the collection of built form between The Parade and High Street. Mill ponds and fishing ponds were present, which reflects some of the traditional industries of the time.



**Donaghadee 1904** – The primary core of the town had not changed since 1835. The mill pond was infilled to allow the creation of a park which indicated the start of decline in the milling industry. Many suburban standalone dwellings were built on large plots. New link roads were implemented to support these developments. The railway and harbour remained important features of the town.



**Donaghadee 1957** – The town centre core continued to grow between The Parade and High Street. There was more development in support of the harbour, highlighted by the installation of the railway line linking to Belfast via Newtownards and Comber. Population growth is indicated by the beginning of development ribboning along the primary routes into the town.



## The current physical structure

Donaghadee's physical structure remains similar to what existed over the past two centuries. Although not utilised to its full potential, the harbour still dominates the physical environment along the waterfront. The primary retail core is still based around High Street, New Street, Bridge Street and The Parade. Residential developments have continued to grow and expand the population on the periphery of the settlement. Fortunately, Donaghadee has managed to retain a large proportion of its green space, which is comparatively high compared to other similar sized settlements. The removal of the railway line has created some additional recreational space along the east coast of the town.

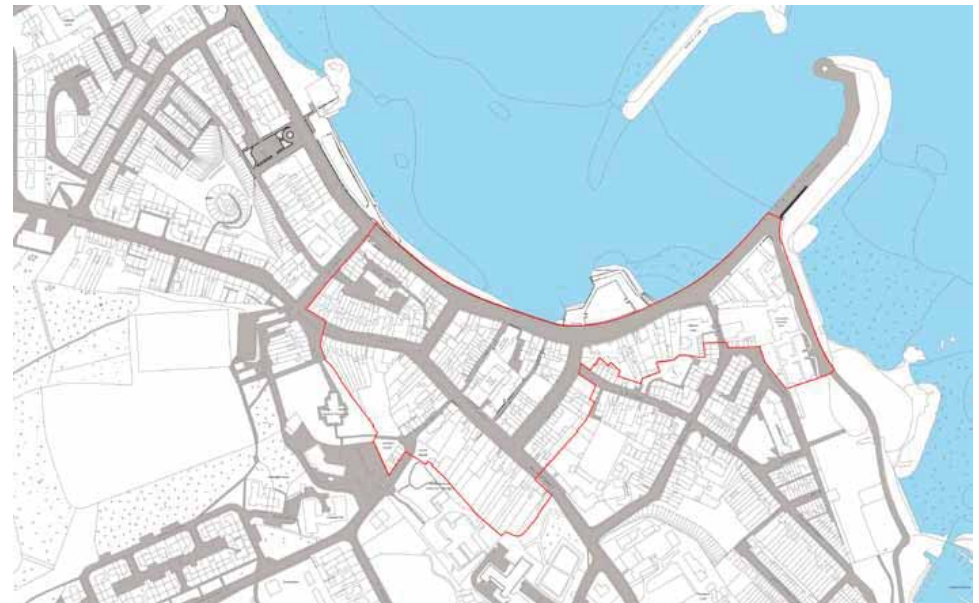
## Townscape quality

The quality of the town centre environment within Donaghadee is generally in good condition. The proposed public realm scheme will greatly enhance the quality of the environment for residents and visitors to the town. A new suite of street furniture and street lighting will help create a more legible and accessible environment for people of all ages. The Parade should be the centre piece for visitors to Donaghadee and the proposed scheme will reinforce this principle by creating a more pleasant walking environment for those who live, work and visit Donaghadee. This should also help to attract more business to the sea front and help establish the commercial leisure sector and evening economy.

The majority of the town centre is within a conservation area. The built environment consists of some great examples of well-preserved high quality architecture. However, on the main retail streets such as Bridge Street and High Street, this has been blighted by neighbouring vacancy and dereliction of key buildings.



*Open space provision*



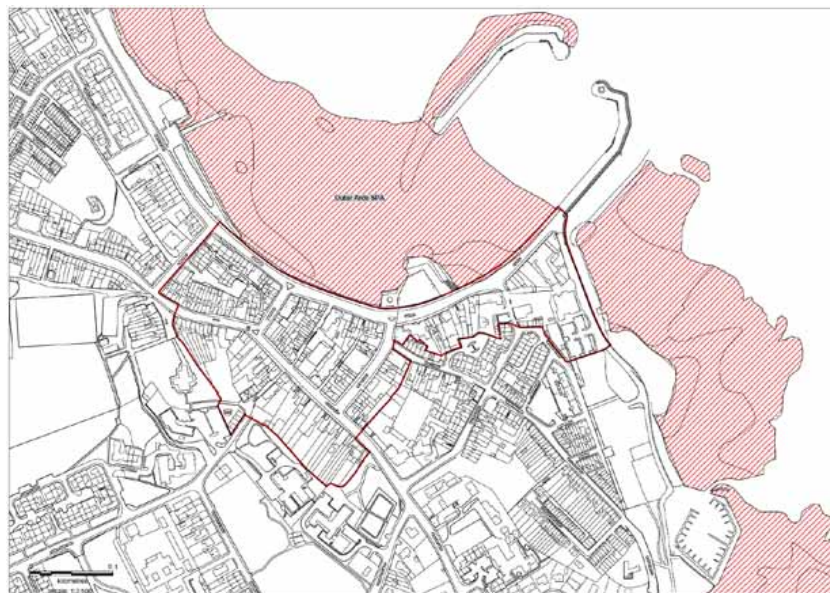
*Transport infrastructure*

## Environmental context

The coastline around Donaghadee is designated as the Outer Ards Special Protection Area (SPA), Ramsar and Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI).

The importance of these natural heritage designations cannot be overstated and will have a direct impact on the viability of the Masterplan proposals, especially those around the harbour and sea front.

Donaghadee has a wealth of built heritage assets including listed buildings, the listed harbour and historic monuments, including the Moat. The protection of these assets is paramount, however the Masterplan also seeks to bring these assets back into use where appropriate. Obviously all projects and proposals identified in the Masterplan will require detailed design and the necessary statutory consents prior to development. The Masterplan therefore focuses on providing the general vision and strategic actions.



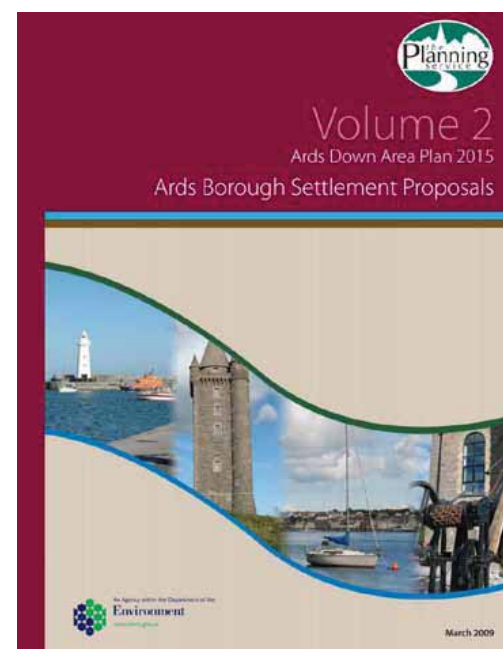
Extent of Outer Ards S.P.A. (NIEA)

## Planning context

The statutory planning context for Donaghadee is set out in the Ards Down Area Plan 2015. The plan identifies several policies and designations relating to the town which have been considered whilst preparing the Masterplan.

Several opportunity sites have been identified, the development of which would further promote the vitality and viability of Donaghadee Town Centre. These comprise a mixture of under-utilised and vacant sites, some of which were previously used by local government. Due to the density of building and the configuration of streets within the Town Centre, the number of opportunity sites is limited, but the potential exists for re-development or replacement of some existing buildings.

Development proposals within the Conservation Area will be required to comply with the guidelines contained in the Donaghadee Conservation Area Design Guide.



Ards Down Area Plan 2015

## Public realm enhancements

Ards Borough Council has received major funding support from the Department for Social Development for a public realm scheme in Donaghadee Town Centre. The £2.4 million scheme, currently under construction, is a key element of the Masterplan. The scheme is focussed on Shore Street, Bridge Street, High Street, New Street and The Parade.

The design proposals seek to develop the Donaghadee waterfront (Shore Street, The Parade and Marine Gardens) and the retail core, to complement the Town Centre and Conservation Area with a high quality public realm scheme.

The following elements are included within the scheme design:

- New natural stone paving to footpaths to provide a more appropriate setting for the town's historic buildings
- Providing a complimentary setting for the sea front
- Street furniture
- Street lighting
- Improving accessibility by removing channels in the footway where possible
- Semi-mature tree planting



*Artist impression of The Parade*



*Artist impression of New Street*

Traffic appears to move through the town well and does not create an unpleasant environment for pedestrians. The one-way system has been implemented for some time and works adequately to enable the successful circulation of vehicular traffic throughout the town centre. However, car parking to serve the town centre businesses is limited. This is not conducive to increasing town centre trade or visitor attractiveness.

The research identified an excessive amount of currently inaccessible backlands. An idea to generate more parking land is through opening alleyways and improving the environmental quality of existing alleyways. This would create the potential to exploit some of the space to ease town centre parking and possibly create other opportunities.

Some car parks which are relatively close to the town centre core are underutilised, including the car park along the Commons. The Masterplan considered how this part of the town can be made more accessible and widely used.



*The Beach/The Moat*

## Tourism and recreation

The current and future tourism opportunities associated with Donaghadee was assessed as part of the masterplanning process. It is recognised that few seaside towns and destinations operate in isolation. Rather, visitors often utilise certain known sites as a base from which to explore an area, or series of areas, that are easily accessible. It should be recognised that visitors tend not to understand destination boundaries. As a result, many of the visitors to Donaghadee are likely to be either living or staying in other areas outside of the town, such as elsewhere along the east coast, which has a strong visitor accommodation profile i.e. Bangor and Belfast. The extent to which Donaghadee is providing sufficient support to both staying and day visitors and how it's visitor offer could be improved is important.

The Masterplan seeks to develop and build on the existing assets whilst ensuring that themes of the NITB Tourism Concept are being developed where possible, in order for Donaghadee to provide a unique visitor experience.

The coastal zone is clearly subject to a series of tourism development opportunities, with the coastline recognised for having a high concentration of accommodation. The role of Donaghadee is not explicitly explored in existing tourism and recreation strategies, however the intimation at least is that there is a role for Donaghadee (as with other coastal towns), in forming part of the visitor experience and supporting key visitor services.



## Retail sector

A retail capacity study and town centre health check was carried out by Roderick MacLean Associates in conjunction with AECOM. Below is a brief summary of the findings.

### Retail capacity

Retail forecast would support minor additions to the comparison retail offer in Donaghadee, but more specifically, improvements in quality. The opportunities are shaped by the market, rather than by estimates of expenditure capacity.

Vacant and derelict properties in Donaghadee need to be assessed on their potential to contribute towards accommodating improvements to the retail offer. Most likely, many will now be redundant for retailing purposes, especially those in the peripheral areas. Those in the core of the town centre should remain as opportunities for retailing and non-retail services.

### Town Centre health check

A Town Centre health check was carried out and informed by various surveys including householder surveys, retailer surveys and footfall counts. The health check provides broad guidance which assisted with shaping this Masterplan. It did not suggest any major change to the role and function of Donaghadee. All the

opportunities identified are suggested improvements which could be realised with appropriate actions. The main threats facing the Town Centre can be broadly divided into those which can be overcome by actions to improve the centre and those which simply impact on it, meaning economic and wider market trends.

### Commercial and office space

The commercial and office sector of the town is primarily based on the streets which make up the one-way system in the town, namely, High Street, New Street, Bridge Street, Moat Street, Shore Street and The Parade.

Non-domestic property in Northern Ireland is assessed on the basis of its rental value known as the Net Annual Value (NAV). Examining the NAV of non-domestic properties within the town centre gives an indication of the size of units within the town centre. The core retail streets (New Street, High Street and Bridge Street) consist of properties generally below the £5,000 rateable NAV. This indicates that most of the units are small units based on the original terrace footprint. These small units represent the bulk of the commercial offering within the town centre.

Sea front properties on The Parade tend to have larger footprints and frontages to take advantage of the excellent sea and harbour views. Restaurants and clubs are uses that generally require more space than other commercial units, which is reflected in the majority of properties being above the £5,000 rateable NAV level.



*Donaghadee Seafront*



*High Street residential properties*

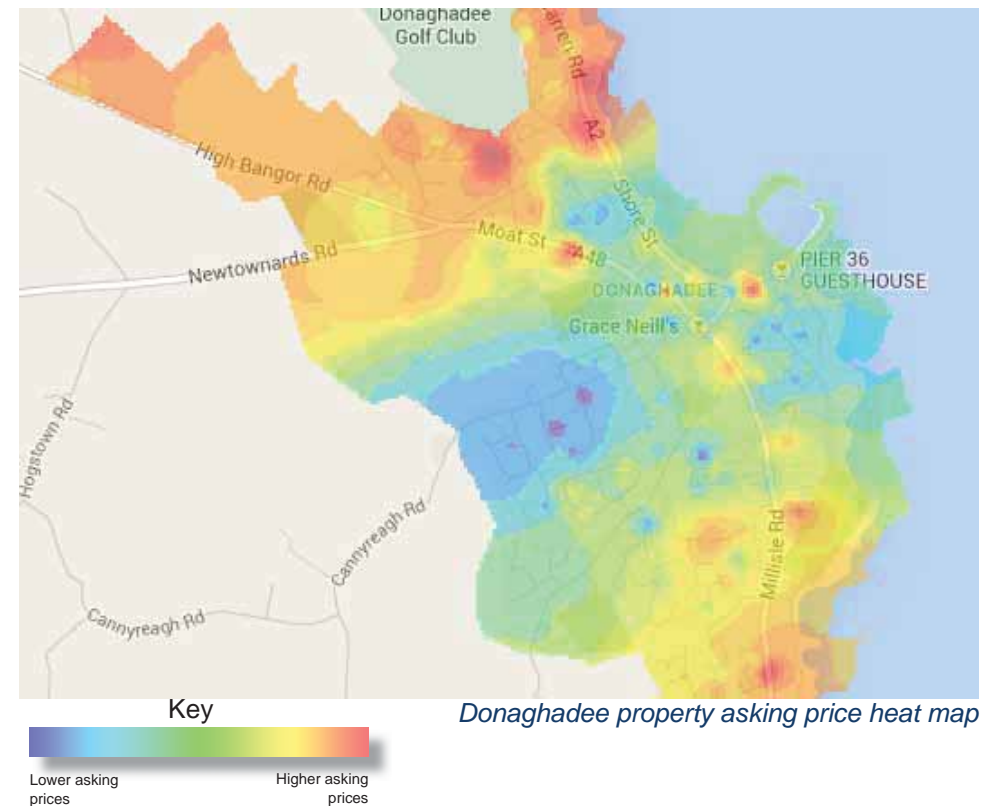
## Residential

The Ards Down Area Plan 2015, suggests that over the lifetime of the document, Donaghadee requires approximately 1000 residential dwellings to fulfil its role as a small town. The plan indicated a proportion of lands as protected housing to the north west of the town centre boundary.

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) and Housing Associations have cited Donaghadee as an area of relatively high demand for social housing, as well as an area in high demand for affordable housing. The identification of mixed use and cross tenure housing development in appropriate locations has been encouraged and will be important for the sustainable growth of the town.

The vision for Donaghadee to become a thriving seaside resort should mean that a viable attempt should be made to encourage more residential developments within the town, through development of brownfield sites or increasing the density of development sensitively e.g. apartments.

Donaghadee has a broad range of areas containing differing average house prices. This is indicated by the heat map opposite ([www.geopii.com](http://www.geopii.com)). The areas of high average value are indicated in red and include the suburban areas off High Bangor Road, Warren Road and Millisle Road. These are reflective of proximity to amenities such as excellent sea views or the environment around Donaghadee Golf Course.



### 3. MASTERPLAN CONSULTATION

The Masterplan process was guided and informed by a Steering Group consisting of Local Councillors, Council Officers, DSD, Statutory Agencies, representatives from local businesses and the community/voluntary sectors facilitated by the AECOM team. Consultation with the community and key stakeholders was an important element of the Masterplan process with various methods being utilised to reach the widest possible audience.

#### Stage 1 – Information gathering and analysis

Information gathering workshops were held to understand the problems and future requirements of Donaghadee. AECOM also undertook a site walkabout with members of the steering group to discuss certain issues. A consultation fact sheet and questionnaire was circulated to a broad range of stakeholders which was successful in gathering qualitative feedback. A random telephone household survey was also conducted at this stage. These components formed a solid statistical and evidence base on which the Masterplan was developed.

#### Stage 2 – Visioning and design

Visioning and design workshops were held with the Steering Group to discuss and agree on the vision and regeneration objectives for the Masterplan.

#### DONAGHADEE Town Centre Masterplan



##### WHO ARE WE?

URS are the consultants who have been appointed by the Department of Social Development (DSD) and Ards Borough Council to prepare a town centre masterplan for Donaghadee. We are experienced in delivering other highly successful masterplans throughout Northern Ireland – such as Bangor, South East Coast (Newcastle, Killeel and Warrenpoint), Ballymoney and Enniskillen.

##### WHAT IS A TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN AND WHAT ARE WE DOING?

The masterplan is an evidence based document that sets out the strategic vision for Donaghadee over the next 10 to 15 years. The masterplan aims to put forward many project options that have the potential to transform the current town into a vibrant, high quality and fully integrated settlement. The process is achieved through the following stages:

- Stage 1 – Information Gathering & Analysis
- Stage 2 – Vision/Objectives and Design
- Stage 3 – Public Consultation
- Stage 4 – Implementation

We are currently working on Stage 1, which involves gathering as much information as possible on the local issues within the town.

##### HOW WILL IT IMPACT YOU?

In April 2015 under the Local Government Reform, the local councils will receive urban regeneration powers that were previously held by DSD. They will also be responsible for planning, community planning, economic and community development. This means that your local council staff and councillors will be responsible for the implementation and management of these functions. The masterplan will provide a framework for the new council on the promotion, timing and implementation of

urban regeneration and tourism initiatives within Donaghadee. Projects identified within the masterplan may find it simpler to justify and acquire funding support.

##### WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO UNDERSTAND FROM YOU...

Local knowledge is critical to help form the basis of our analysis of Donaghadee. We would be keen to hear your opinions on the following issues:

- Traffic / Transport – Parking, Public Transport, Pedestrian Links, Cycling, Movement
- Environment – Quality, Attractiveness, Ease of movement, Buildings, Security
- Tourism / Recreation – Leisure (Indoor, Outdoor), Entertainment
- Community – Facilities (Family, youth, children)
- Retail – Quality, Amount, What's missing?
- Residential – Quality, Type, Proximity to services
- Business / Enterprise – Current facilities / opportunities
- Image / Promotion – Events, marketing
- Identification of Opportunity Sites – Vacant / under used land / buildings – Please let us know of any land or sites which you feel should be considered for future development / or any proposals which you might have for these sites.

##### WHAT NEXT?

Please complete the attached questionnaire and return via one of the methods below. We appreciate your time.

Email: [ian.lantinglor@urs.com](mailto:ian.lantinglor@urs.com)

Post: Donaghadee Masterplan  
URS Infrastructure and Environment Ltd  
Beechill House,  
Beechill Road,  
Belfast,  
BT8 7JF

Phone: 02890 705111





### Stage 3 – Public consultation

Public consultation ran for a 12 week period between the 20th October 2014 and the 16th January 2015. Draft project boards were on display at Donaghadee Library for the duration of this period. AECOM held a publicity event at the Donaghadee Christmas Festival, where many members of the public had the opportunity to discuss the plans and lodge comments. Key points raised are incorporated into the SWOT analysis overleaf.

AECOM also carried out several focused meetings with a range of ABC officers to ensure that existing Council projects and initiatives were considered.



Launch of the public consultation exercise

Consultation on Proposed **DONAGHADEE** Town Centre Masterplan

DRAFT

#### Help Plan Donaghadee's Future

What is the purpose of the masterplan? The masterplan is a long-term plan for the town centre. It sets out the vision for the town centre and the actions that need to be taken to achieve it. It is a key document for the town council and the public.

#### Donaghadee in Context

Donaghadee is a small town on the north coast of Ireland. It is a beautiful town with a rich history and a beautiful harbor. The town is a key part of the local economy and is a popular destination for tourists.

#### Consultation Process to Date

The consultation process has been ongoing since the start of the project. We have held several public meetings and have received many comments from the public. We are grateful for the feedback and will be taking it into account in the final masterplan.

**Have Your Say...**  
and help shape the future of Donaghadee!

HELP PLAN DONAGHADEE'S FUTURE

URS

Consultation on Proposed **DONAGHADEE** Town Centre Masterplan

DRAFT

#### Vision Statement

It is our vision for Donaghadee to be a thriving coastal town. The masterplan has provided the support for our vision and we are confident that it will be a success. We are committed to a vision that is inclusive and that will benefit the town for many years to come.

#### Concept

The concept is a vision for the town centre that is inclusive and that will benefit the town for many years to come. It is a vision that is based on the needs of the town and the public. It is a vision that is based on the needs of the town and the public.

#### Regeneration Objectives

- To protect the historic character of the town centre and to ensure that it is preserved for future generations.
- To create a vibrant and accessible town centre that is a key part of the local economy.
- To create a town centre that is inclusive and that will benefit the town for many years to come.
- To create a town centre that is based on the needs of the town and the public.

VISION & CONCEPT

URS

Consultation on Proposed **DONAGHADEE** Town Centre Masterplan

DRAFT

#### Key

- Key Locations
- Key Buildings
- Key Streets
- Key Parks
- Key Open Spaces
- Key Green Spaces
- Key Water Spaces
- Key Cultural Spaces
- Key Community Spaces
- Key Employment Spaces
- Key Residential Spaces

#### The Harbour

The harbour is a key part of the town and is a popular destination for tourists. It is a beautiful harbor with a rich history and a beautiful view. The harbour is a key part of the local economy and is a key part of the town's identity.

MASTERPLAN

URS

Public consultation presentation boards



Key words highlighted during the consultation

Strengths	Weaknesses
<i>Attractive seaside location with good levels of open or green space</i>	<i>No major supermarket with shops mainly serving a top-up food shopping function</i>
<i>Traditional small town with attractive setting/planting</i>	<i>High levels of retail expenditure leakage to larger centres</i>
<i>Strong local customer base</i>	<i>Limited retail offer</i>
<i>Strong community feel</i>	<i>Few multiple retailers</i>
<i>Strong culture and heritage - railways/maritime</i>	<i>Perceived poor street surfacing</i>
<i>Perceived quality of shops - good</i>	<i>Limited activities for people in the Town Centre</i>
<i>Survey indication that traders may invest following improvements</i>	<i>Lack of visitor and tourist facilities</i>
<i>Perceived locally as a nice place to visit (see also weaknesses)</i>	<i>Major dissatisfaction with parking provision</i>
	<i>Under-utilised harbour</i>
Opportunities	Threats
<i>Improve the level of parking provision and accessibility</i>	<i>Continuation of the economic climate causing reduced spending and investment</i>
<i>Review the level of vacant units - aim to reduce through flexible planning</i>	<i>Retail market trends with increasing market focus on larger centres and growth of the internet</i>
<i>Review the scope for improved visitor facilities</i>	<i>Possible further cuts in public sector funding support for town centre improvements</i>
<i>Invest in street paving and other public realm improvements</i>	<i>Failure to improve the town centre environment making Donaghadee less attractive as a place to live, compared to other choices</i>
<i>Review opportunities for introducing a small supermarket (retail study)</i>	
<i>Encourage continuing community engagement with improvements</i>	
<i>Improve the quality of retailing further</i>	
<i>To bring the harbour back to life and enhance the lands along the Commons</i>	
<i>To rejuvenate historical buildings and sites throughout the town</i>	
<i>To enhance the townscape generally</i>	

## 4. VISION, CONCEPT AND REGENERATION OBJECTIVES

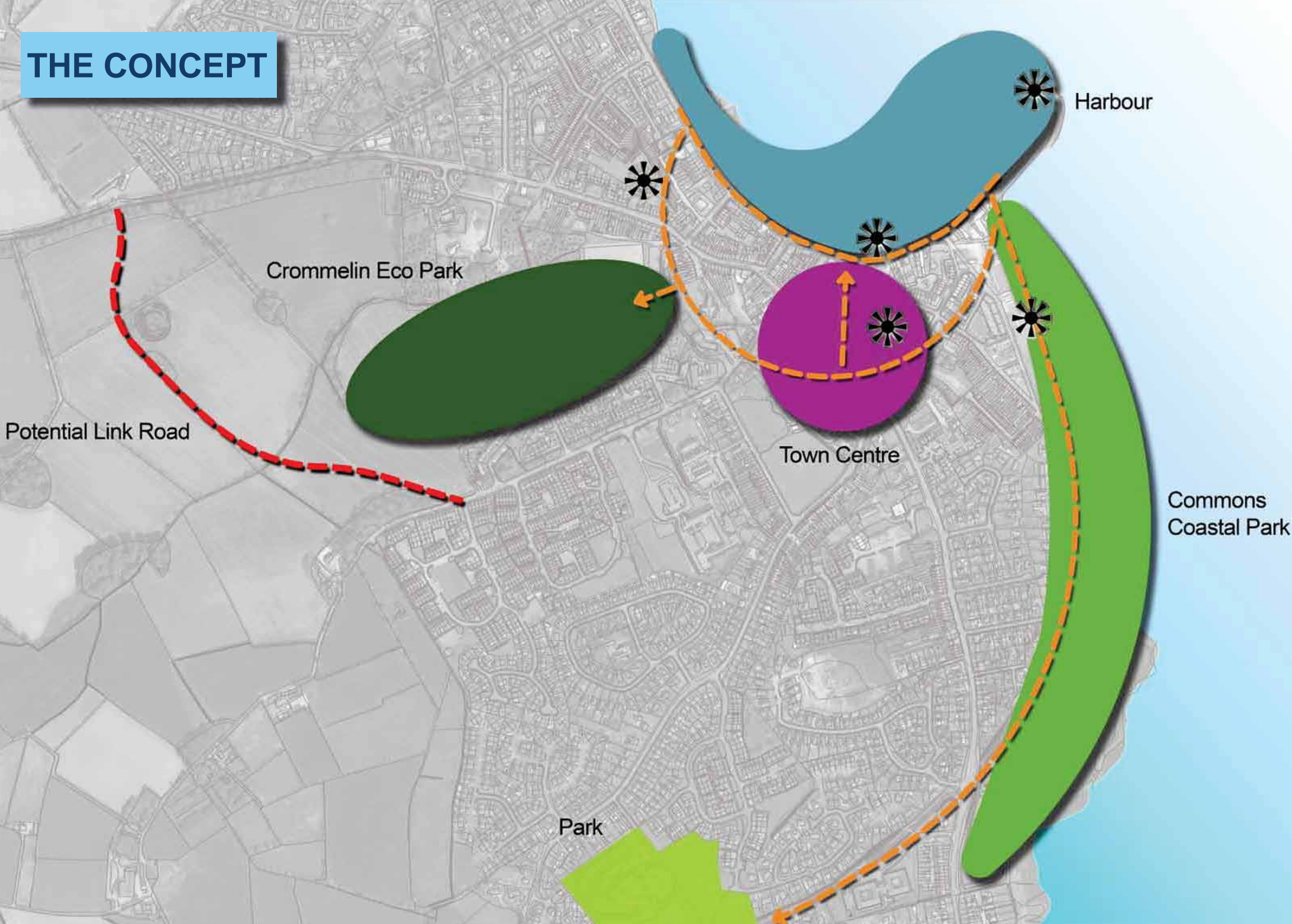
### The Big Idea!

**“In 2030, Donaghadee will have re-emerged as a thriving seaside town. The redeveloped harbour has provided the catalyst for visitor and community services to return. The increase in tourism activity has also stimulated a vibrant waterfront stretching to the Commons, acting as a focus for leisure and recreation.**

**The increasing popularity of the town has attracted local entrepreneurs and investment from further afield. The town has also become much more accessible with sufficient parking and public transport to service both local people and the influx of visitors throughout the year.”**

*(Vision Statement developed by Masterplan Steering Group)*

# THE CONCEPT



## Regeneration Objectives

### 1. To ensure the future protection of the harbour whilst fully exploiting the economic opportunity and acting as a catalyst for regeneration

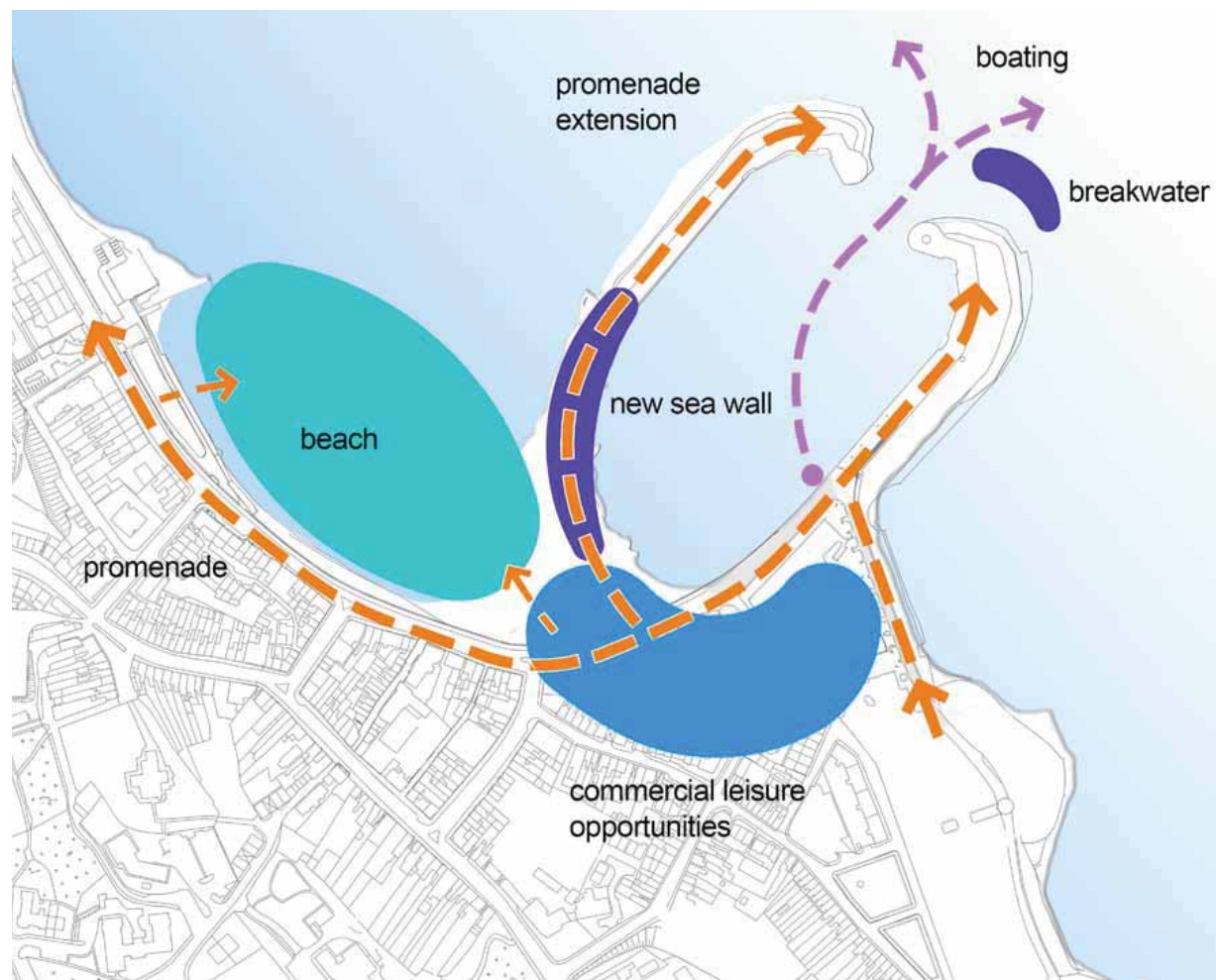
Donaghadee Harbour is one of the town's greatest strengths and opportunities. The harbour dates back to the 1820s and is one of the oldest in Northern Ireland on the historically important route to Scotland. The design of the harbour hinders its usage during strong south to south east winds, due to the absence of an outer nib acting as a breakwater.

#### Key projects:

- Providing an engineered breakwater outside the harbour mouth – this could make the harbour more accessible for boats
- Linking the outer pier to the shore as envisaged in the original design – this could provide a solution to the silting problem, create an exciting extension to the promenade and encourage a natural beach to form in the bay
- Encouraging commercial leisure opportunities along the harbour frontage



Donaghadee Harbour



Donaghadee Harbour/Seafront Concept

## 2. To provide an attractive and accessible town centre

It is envisaged that Donaghadee Town Centre will benefit from strategic projects at the harbour and sea front. However, it is crucial that these areas compliment the Town Centre rather than compete against it. Improving linkages throughout the town is essential. Significant car parking is available at The Commons and should be integrated with the Town Centre.

### Key projects:

- *Enhancing the historic built fabric throughout Donaghadee*
- *Aesthetic improvements to building frontages (Town Centre Revitalisation Scheme)*
- *Re-establishing and enhancing pedestrian routes throughout the town*
- *Public realm improvement and identification of priority areas for future schemes*
- *Improved vehicular, pedestrian and cycle connections to the Commons where significant off-street parking is available. Utilising a future greenway from Donaghadee to Belfast is a great opportunity to exploit. Cycle facilities could be located at The Commons*
- *Provision of additional off-street parking within and adjacent to the Town Centre*



The Parade



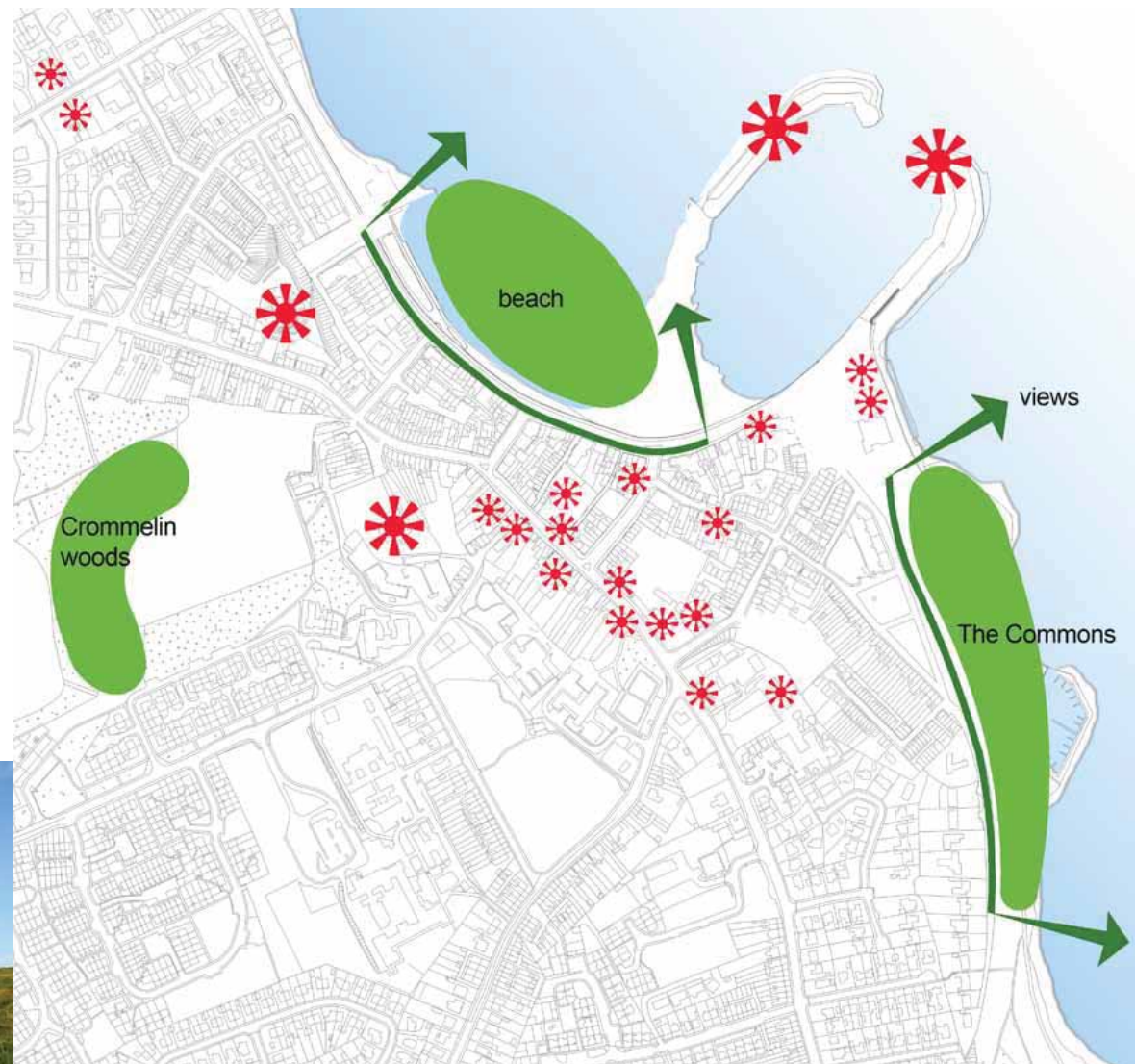
Donaghadee Town Centre Concept

### 3. To protect and enhance Donaghadee's natural and built heritage

Donaghadee has a wealth of built and natural heritage which the Masterplan seeks to protect and enhance. The coastal setting and key views to the sea should be protected. Historic buildings should be revitalised and traditional streetscape restored. Sensitively designed schemes can integrate new users, whilst protecting the historic character of the buildings.

**Key projects:**

- Revitalising the historic harbour
- Re-interpreting the Moat and Folly
- Bringing the Manor House, stables and courtyard back to life
- Re-establishing the historic gardens and pedestrian links
- Protecting and enhancing Donaghadee's coastal setting, sea views and shoreline
- Intensifying the use of The Commons
- Protecting the Sir Samuel Kelly Lifeboat by providing a permanent home
- Promoting and enhancing lands around Crommelin Wood
- Enhancing the maritime and railway heritage of Donaghadee



The Moat

Donaghadee Heritage Concept



## 4. To promote and encourage the development of services and facilities to support the growing tourism sector

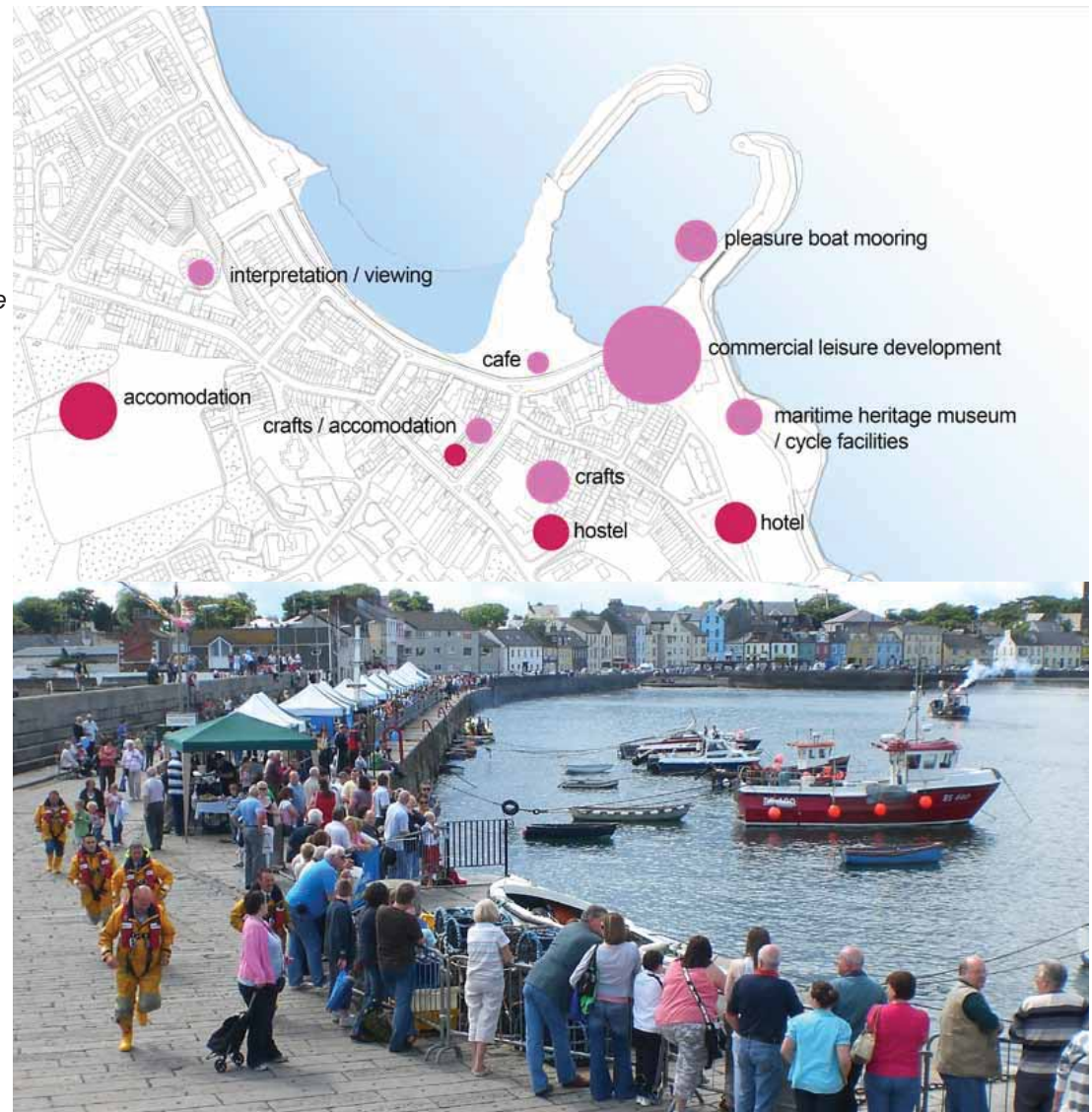
By developing the harbour and intensifying the use of the Commons and creating a town centre full of character, business opportunities could arise within the tourism, recreation and leisure sectors.

### Key projects:

- New leisure activities within the Commons
- Supporting the sea front and area around the harbour for commercial leisure development
- Supporting and encouraging a range of tourist accommodation – boutique hotel, self-catering and eco-tourism
- Creating opportunities for the arts and crafts e.g. former Town Hall
- Creating opportunities for small business start-ups
- Providing additional attractions such as a new Maritime/Railway Heritage Centre and associated ancillary uses (café, accommodation etc.)
- Promote Donaghadee as a key destination along the Mourne Coastal Route



Donaghadee Sailing Club Regatta



(Above) Donaghadee Tourism Concept ... (Below) Festival Fun in Donaghadee

## 5. MASTERPLAN PROPOSALS

When the regeneration objectives are expressed visually and consolidated, they provide an exciting illustration of how various individual enhancements can create a hive of activity within the town. It also illustrates how projects can benefit the realisation of more than one regeneration objective, highlighting the inter-relationship between many of the objectives.

The Masterplan Concept aims to bring together all the potential projects identified to meet the regeneration objectives and synthesises them into four key zones linked together to form a comprehensive plan for the town.

The following chapter addresses each element in more detail. The elements are:

**The Town Centre**

**The Harbour**

**The Commons Coastal Park**

**Crommelin Ecopark**

### Key

	Public Realm Phase 1
	Public Realm Extended
	Promenade
	Pedestrian / Cycle Linkages
	Car Parking
	Future Development sites
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Potential hotel site with sea frontage</li> <li>2 Residential/visitor accommodation</li> <li>3 Residential</li> <li>4 Potential mixed use arts &amp; crafts courtyard/accommodation</li> <li>5 Craft kiosks</li> </ol>
	Townscape Heritage Initiative
	Building Frontage Revitalisation
	Existing built form
	Commons Park landscaped areas
	Commons Park activity areas
	Sport & recreational spaces



The Harbour

The Commons Coastal Park

Crommelin Ecopark

The Town Centre

THE MASTERPLAN

## The Town Centre

The Town Centre is the heart and soul of Donaghadee. The primary aim is to create a town centre that is visually attractive to residents, businesses and visitors, whilst also improving the overall accessibility to everyone. A consolidation of the Town Centre's existing positive elements, together with the range of measures presented in the Masterplan, should create an environment of small successful retail outlets, busy cafes and a sense of heritage and character which is unique to Donaghadee.

**Key Elements:** *(See corresponding images on page 29)*

1. The public realm scheme currently underway will act as a regeneration catalyst and enhancement to key routes and it's extension is encouraged.
2. Town Centre Wi-Fi has recently been installed which will enhance the visitor experience and provide a marketing tool for Donaghadee.
3. A shop/building frontage revitalisation scheme will improve the physical appearance of fatigued buildings along the main routes. The Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) scheme will help improve aesthetics of historic buildings, which qualify for this initiative.
4. Development of a mixed use arts/crafts centre within the grounds of the Manor House, enabling local artists to create and sell their wares in a creative and inspirational environment. This would consist of renovating existing buildings, sympathetic inclusion of additional small units and the provision of additional car parking in a high quality landscaped setting.
5. Character enhancements to the existing alleyways. Various public realm and character enhancement techniques to improve accessibility, character and safety of the alleys. The alleyways also provide an opportunity to create a walking and cycling link through the Town Centre as part of a wider town loop.
6. Reuse of derelict buildings e.g. permanent tenants if possible or meanwhile uses such as craft stalls.
7. Reuse of backland sites to increase the capacity of Town Centre parking. Potential for areas to be designated as "traders" car parks, freeing up on-street parking spaces for potential shoppers and visitors
8. Development of opportunity sites as identified on the Masterplan on page 27: (1) Potential sea front hotel, (2) Potential residential/visitor accommodation and relocation of car park to backlands site within the Town Centre, (3) Residential development, (4) Potential mixed use arts and craft development and (5) Craft kiosks
9. Restoration of the walled garden and civic space opposite the Manor House
10. Reinstatement of historical pedestrian routes

### The Vision for the Town Centre



1 Artist impression of New Street



3 Westport, County Mayo



4 The Buttermarket, Enniskillen



5 Joy's Entry, Belfast



8 Cafe culture

\* Indicative images

## The Harbour

The Harbour is the historical core of Donaghadee and one of the primary reasons why the settlement developed over the last 200-300 years. It is not currently being utilised to its full potential for a variety of factors, however the Masterplan aims to reverse this decline. The Harbour could once again become one of the focal points of the town, reminiscent of the days when the ferries crossed the Irish Sea to Portpatrick and the steam trains rolled in from Belfast. This new attraction could provide top class facilities for residents, businesses and visitors alike.

**Key Elements:** *(See corresponding images on page 31)*

1. Completion of the harbour as per its original design by extending the North Pier to connect at Lemon's Wharf. The extension could create a promenade along the North Pier to a new look-out area. A breakwater is proposed to create adequate shelter within the harbour.
2. The extension of the pier should naturally create a sandy beach in the bay.

Once established this should be enhanced with new steps and entrance points.

3. Lemon's Wharf could be reconfigured due to the new promenade and beach. The increase in activity should sustain the viability of small business opportunities such as a coffee/ice cream kiosk. A new toddlers play facility is to be included along with events facilities.
4. Boat pontoons are proposed so that Donaghadee can become a destination for small craft. This will become possible once the harbour enhancements are completed.

## The Vision for the Harbour



2 Beach play equipment



3 Bustling promenade



3 Improvements to Lemon's Wharf



1 Whitby Harbour, Yorkshire



4 Aberystwyth Marina, West Wales

\* Indicative images

## The Commons Coastal Park

Donaghadee's coastal setting and available land has resulted in a unique opportunity to create a linear coastal park which would extend from the Harbour through the Commons to the sports facilities. This could be a fantastic outdoor amenity for locals and visitors to experience the sea air and beautiful views. The Commons Coastal Park is situated on land once occupied by the Belfast railway line and this former heritage could potentially be combined with Donaghadee's maritime heritage, to create another distinctive opportunity. The site could potentially be integrated with the popular Mourne Coastal Route.

**Key Elements:** *(See corresponding images on page 33)*

1. Construction of a new heritage centre with the primary focus on Donaghadee's impressive maritime history. There is potential for this to become integrated with the railway heritage theme, subject to agreement between the key stakeholders. The facility would be a key visitor attraction to Donaghadee and located beside the Community Centre where a new access road and parking would be provided.
2. Creation of a high quality coastal park to become the hub for leisure and recreation. The old railway track bed offers the opportunity for a greenway

to operate along the length of the Commons Coastal Park and possibly further afield. A feasibility study is being undertaken to determine if the line could be reopened in its entirety from Donaghadee to Comber (via Newtownards). The Masterplan would build on this initiative by including additional recreation and leisure facilities such as maritime themed gardens, lookout points and cycle facilities along the route. The coastal park would also include a range of attractions for families and outdoor fitness equipment for fitness enthusiasts.

3. Screening of the boatyard and a new access road. This space should be rationalised and integrated into the park, despite being privately operated.
4. Enhancement of the Commons Recreational Grounds is to form an integral piece of the wider Commons Coastal Park.



## The Vision for The Commons Coastal Park



\* Indicative images

## Crommelin Ecopark

The Crommelin area of Donaghadee is an important sporting and outdoor recreation area. The Masterplan aims to build on these strengths to incorporate an Ecopark theme throughout the area.

**Key Elements:** (See corresponding images on page 35)

1. There may be the potential to develop a consolidated sports hub which could see the various sporting facilities within Donaghadee being incorporated onto a single site. This project is currently at the early discussions stage, however it has the potential to free up key sites for alternative uses. In the future, Crommelin Ecopark has the potential for more comprehensive development.
2. Rationalised nature trails throughout the park.
3. Motorhome, touring caravan and campsite facilities to cater for the predicted rise in tourists, enhancing Donaghadee's role as a key hub along the Mourne Coastal Route.
4. Fitness and nature trail – potential inclusion of outdoor gym equipment etc.



4 Woodland walks



Community allotments

## The Vision for Crommelin Ecopark



3 Motorhome and caravan berths



4 Car free cycling routes



2 Woodland walks



3 Landscaping features



3 Camping and alternative accommodation

\* Indicative images

## 6. IMPLEMENTATION

The Masterplan sets out a comprehensive programme of proposals and improvements that will transform the prospects for Donaghadee over the next 15-20 years. Private sector investment needs to be encouraged and it is essential that statutory bodies and the Council play their part, by seeking the right mix of development and by securing the high quality development expected by the masterplan.

A wide range of initiatives are outlined in the masterplan and accompanying Action Plan which together have the potential to increase the attractiveness of Donaghadee Town Centre, making it much more accessible and build on it's strong cultural and natural heritage.

### Management

The key to the regeneration of Donaghadee is the management of the masterplan delivery process, which will require input from a number of public sector organisations. The delivery of the masterplan will require a coordinated, yet flexible approach to ensure individual projects and aspirations can be achieved. The new Ards and North Down Council will be responsible for establishing the Donaghadee Masterplan Delivery Team, who will manage the delivery of the masterplan. This team should consist of council, statutory representatives, the business community and key representatives from the community and voluntary sectors.

This masterplan is being published during a unique period of transition for Local Government in Northern Ireland. The new Council will have much wider powers including regeneration, community and spatial planning and off street parking, which establishes the Council as the key delivery agent for the vast majority of projects. However, the Council will need assistance from other statutory bodies and also the

business community and community/voluntary sectors. Each of the stakeholders must support the regeneration objectives for Donaghadee and work together to see them delivered. There is a need for an emphasis on public services and resources being focussed and prioritised in a coordinated way in improving the physical, social and economic well-being of the community. Therefore, all bodies should be working in partnership towards achieving an overarching regeneration agenda set by the Council with reference to the Masterplan. The Donaghadee Town Masterplan is a working document and should be reviewed on a five yearly basis, to re-examine the ongoing regeneration needs of the Town Centre.

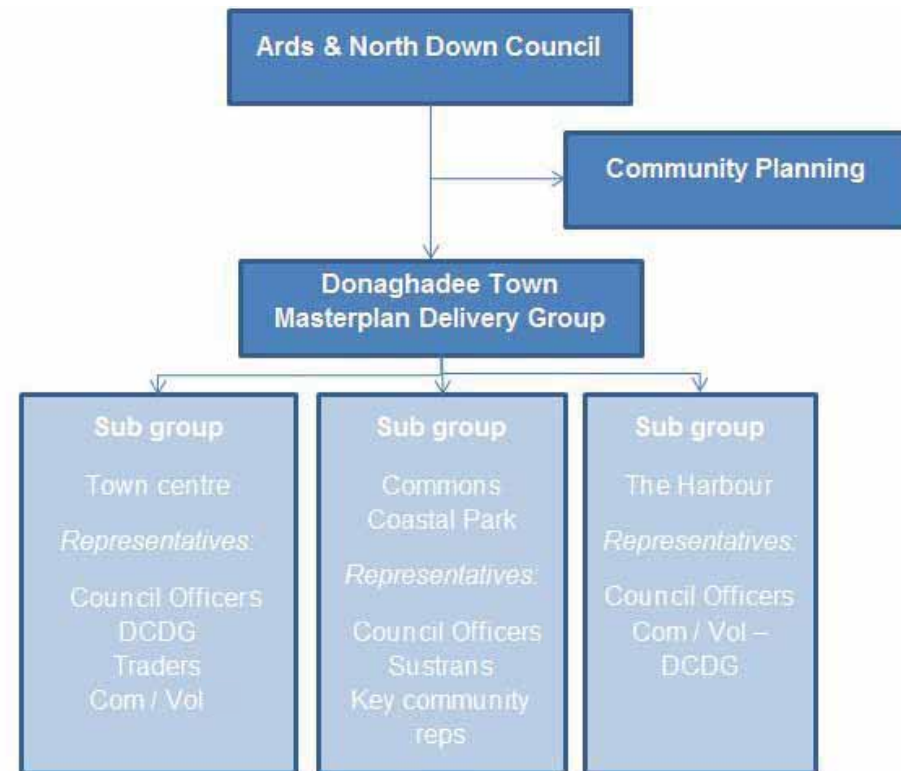
### Key stakeholders

The Donaghadee Town Masterplan Delivery Team, led by the Council, will take ownership of the Masterplan. The following stakeholders will act as a driving force:

- Ards and North Down Council will play a key role in the delivery of the Masterplan, particularly when the role of urban regeneration and community development passes to local government
- DRD Transport NI is the sole road authority in Northern Ireland. A function of Transport NI is to ensure that the public road network is managed, maintained and developed. There are significant enhancements to the public road network within this Masterplan. Transport NI must be fully consulted with and assist with its implementation
- The Business Community will be important partners in both the delivery and success of the Masterplan, therefore it is important that Council and all government bodies work closely with them.

- Community and Voluntary Sector: Donaghadee has several community and voluntary organisations who have a continued interest in the regeneration of Donaghadee who's input could be beneficial in the successful delivery of the Masterplan
- Other specialist agencies – Sustrans for example, could fall into this group of stakeholders as their interest is very specific to walking and cycling. They could play a key role in the delivery of the Commons Park extension
- Private developers/landowners will be key partners in the delivery of many of the proposals within the Masterplan. The Council and all government bodies will continue to work closely with private developers to ensure the implementation of the Masterplan

Opposite is an indicative structure, including stakeholders which could be utilised as a delivery mechanism for the Masterplan.



## Funding

It is recognised that public resources are limited. Rather than spreading those limited resources thinly, Donaghadee Town Masterplan Delivery Team should prioritise actions that will have the most significant impact. This prioritisation should be based upon the ability of the interventions/projects to help attract funding.

## Action plan and timeframes

The overall timescale to develop the 'vision', encapsulated within the Masterplan, will extend over a number of years. Some elements of the Plan will be more suited to meet short and medium-term goals, while other areas may be more appropriate for development in the longer term. In addition to the specific proposals contained within the Masterplan, a number of areas are identified as having longer term development potential.

The detailed phasing of the development proposals needs to be examined further as there will, for example, be issues relating to disturbance of existing occupiers, temporary arrangements during the construction phase, access to existing properties, parking provision, traffic flow etc, as well as provision of construction compounds.

The Action Plan within the next chapter sets out the key projects and proposals identified through the Masterplan process, followed by the priority level and timescales for delivery. These actions will provide a baseline by which the delivery of the Masterplan can be monitored. The Action Plan is a working document and should be updated on a regular basis to reflect progress and developments within the town centre.

All proposals contained within the Action Plan, will be subject to further **consultation, design and refinement.**

## 8. ACTION PLAN

NIEA	Northern Ireland Environment Agency
TNI	Transport NI
NITB	Northern Ireland Tourist Board
RNLI	Royal National Lifeboat Institution

Key Projects and Proposals		Priority Level	Timeframe for Delivery	Key Stakeholders and Delivery Agents
1	THE TOWN CENTRE	High	Short	
		Medium	Medium	
		Low	Long	
<b>Townscape Improvements</b>				
1a	Shop frontage improvement scheme	Medium	Short	Local Council, Landowners
1b	Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI)	High	Short	Heritage Lottery Fund, Local Council, Landowners, NIEA
1c	Public realm enhancements	High	Short	Local Council, TNI, Traders
1d	Improving the character and accessibility of existing lane ways	Medium	Short	Local Council, TNI, Traders
<b>Enhancing Heritage</b>				
1e	Restoration of the walled garden and civic space opposite Manor House	Medium	Short	Local Council, NIEA, Landowners, Community/Voluntary Sector
1f	Reinstatement of historical pedestrian routes	Medium	Short	Local Council, NIEA, Landowners, Community/Voluntary Sector
<b>Development of Opportunity Sites</b>				
1g	Restoration of the Manor House grounds to create an arts and crafts hub to include accessible town centre car parking	High	Medium	Local Council, Landowners, NIEA, NITB, Private Investors
1h	Opportunity for further residential development	Medium	Medium	Local Council, Private Investors
1i	Opportunity to develop a seafront hotel	Medium	Long	Local Council, Private Investors, NITB
<b>Parking and Accessibility</b>				
1j	Character and accessibility enhancements to the alleyways	Medium	Short	Local Council, TNI, Traders
1k	Preparation of a parking strategy	High	Short	Local Council, Landowners, TNI
1l	Reuse of backland sites for town centre car parking/implementation of a traders' car park	Medium	Short	Local Council, Traders, Landowners, TNI

Key Projects and Proposals		Priority Level	Timeframe for Delivery	Key Stakeholders and delivery agents
<b>2</b>	<b>THE HARBOUR</b>	<i>High</i>	<i>Short</i>	
		<i>Medium</i>	<i>Medium</i>	
		<i>Low</i>	<i>Long</i>	
<b>2a</b>	Redevelopment of the Harbour to include the construction of an outer nib and extension of the North Pier to the Lemon's Wharf – this project would require a feasibility study and economic appraisal as a key short term action	High	Short	Local Council, NIEA, RNLI, Commissioner of Irish Lights, NITB
<b>2b</b>	Explore commercial opportunities building on the redeveloped harbour – café/ice cream kiosks etc	High	Short – Long	Local Council, Private Investors, Traders
<b>3</b>	<b>THE COMMONS COASTAL PARK</b>			
<b>3a</b>	Construction of a new heritage museum focusing on Donaghadee's maritime and railway heritage	High	Short	Local Council, Private Investors, NITB, Community/Voluntary Sector
<b>3b</b>	Creation of the Commons Linear Park to include pathways, play areas, look-out points and new accesses. In the short-term a Site Specific Masterplan should be developed to guide future development	Short	Medium	Local Council, NIEA, NITB, Community/Voluntary Sector
<b>3c</b>	Formalised boatyard and screening	Medium	Long	Local Council, Landowners
<b>3d</b>	Realignment of the road to the rear of the Community Centre to greatly improve access to the Commons Coastal Park	High	Short	Local Council, TNI, Private landowners, Community/Voluntary sector
<b>4</b>	<b>CROMMELIN ECOPARK</b>			
<b>4a</b>	Transforming Crommelin Park into an Ecopark to include fitness and nature trails	Medium	Medium	Local Council, Community/Voluntary Sector, Sporting Clubs, Private landowners
<b>4b</b>	New motorhome, touring caravan and campsite facilities	High	Short	Local Council, NITB
<b>4c</b>	Development of the Donaghadee Sports Hub which has the potential to release several important sites including more comprehensive redevelopment of Crommelin Park	High	Short – Long	Local Council, Community/Voluntary Sector, Sporting Clubs, Private landowners





*Donaghadee Harbour*



Supported by the Northern Ireland Executive  
through the Department for Social Development

