

Annsborough Integrated Village Plan





Annsborough Integrated Village Plan

August 2012





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1. Introduction

1.1 Village Plan Introduction

Groundwork Northern Ireland was commissioned by the Annsborough Community Forum to compile an Integrated Village Plan for Annsborough, County Down.

The village plan is a comprehensive report of the village which provides a framework for future development.

The report identifies and recommends social, environmental and economic initiatives which will enable the sustainable development of Annsborough. The village improvements vary between smaller projects achievable in the short term to larger and more ambitious ideas which will involve further feasibility investigations.

The village plan is funded through East Down Rural Community Network.

1.2 Purpose of the village plan

The village plan provides a framework for the development of the village over a 20 year span. Consultation, research and analysis has been undertaken to ensure ideas suggested in this report relate directly to local needs and aspirations.

The village plan is a versatile tool which can be used by developers, statutory authorities and residents to plan for the future of the Annsborough. As a community tool, it helps villagers make informed decisions about the suitability of development. It can also be used to focus efforts onto particular projects when applying for funding.

As part of this project, one of the initiatives seen as a top priority by the community has been developed to a stage to include drawings which can be part of a funding application or planning proposal.

Other suggested initiatives, discussed in section 5.0, are at concept stage and need to be developed in more detail, including in depth consultation with landowners, statutory authorities and consultants for technical advice.

Due to the current economic situation in Northern Ireland, funding is becoming increasingly difficult to secure. This has been taken into account when prioritising the initiatives which are most likely to attract funding in the short term. The plan is designed to be implemented in phases to maximise the long term sustainability of Annsborough.

1.3 Methodology

To ensure the village plan gives an accurate picture of the needs and aspirations of Annsborough, it was compiled following a number of different stages. This included detail consultation with representatives from Annsborough Community Forum, residents, business owners and relevant agencies as well as baseline mapping of the village and surrounding area.

1.3.1 Baseline mapping

A detailed analysis of the village has been carried out through gathering existing data on the area as well as site visits and photographic records. This has been interpreted onto maps to give a clear representation of the village's assets, land uses, opportunity sites and problem areas. A brief overview of relevant statutory agency documents that have a bearing on Annsborough are summarised in section 2.10

1.3.2 Community consultation

An initial meeting was set up with the Annsborough Community Forum to confirm the scope of the project. Following this it was agreed that a leaflet drop would be carried out to invite residents to a community consultation evening. Those who were unable to attend the meeting were given contact numbers to respond to. The meeting gave residents the opportunity to identify issues and priority areas for development or improvement. The workshop included a combination of community mapping, discussion and a Quizdom PowerPoint presentation which allowed everyone present to vote on key issues.

1.3.4 Development of the Plan

Following the consultation, the results from Quizom and other information obtained through community mapping exercises were collated and analysed. Further consultation took place through telephone calls to business owners and residents of the village to ensure a wide section of the community was consulted. From this a clear set of aims and objectives were established and draft initiatives were presented in the Action Plan table with suggested levels of priority and potential timeframes for delivery.

1.3.5 Draft initiatives consultation workshop

A further meeting was held with members of Annsborough Community Forum to discuss the draft table of priorities to ensure they were in accordance with community needs. At this stage, levels of priority were agreed for each initiative as well as which potential priority project might be taken forward as part of the village plan.

1.3.6 Statutory consultation

Following agreement of the initiatives statutory authorities were consulted on relevant matters. It was important to gain an understanding of the feasibility of each initiative and the processes which would need to be employed in order to take them forward in conjunction with stake holders. Consultations with other agencies and organisations in the area such as the GAA and Mourne Heritage Trust have given a holistic view of Annsborough in its wider context.



Listed bridge over the Ballybannon River



Playground and playing fields



Annsborough Integrated Primary School

2.0 Village Context

2.1 Introduction

In order to gain a strong understanding of the village, a baseline study was carried out which informs the recommendations of this report. This included looking at Annsborough in its wider setting, the history of the village, the people who live there and the quality of its local environment. It also summarises relevant information from existing documents produced by various statutory authorities.

2.2 Demographics

The information provided on the demographic of Annsborough has been taken from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). Annsborough is classified as a small village, hamlet and open country side.

The results from the 2011 census were not available at the time of writing and the most recent figures were from the 2001 census. These statistics are over 11 years old and so it is assumed that the figures below may have changed substantially.

Demographical statistics taken from the 2001 census: (source- NISRA)

- Population: 593
- Total number of households: 213



The table below highlights that in 2001 there was a higher than average level of under 16 year olds living in Annsborough (29.4%) as compared to the Northern Ireland average of 23%.

There was also a below average access to cars or vans (65% compared to 73%) indicating a heavier reliance on public transport. Also the unemployment rate was higher than the Northern Ireland average (5.8% as compared to 4.1%) The recommendations made in this village plan take these statistics into account whilst appreciating that they are 11 years out of date and therefore of reduced relevance.

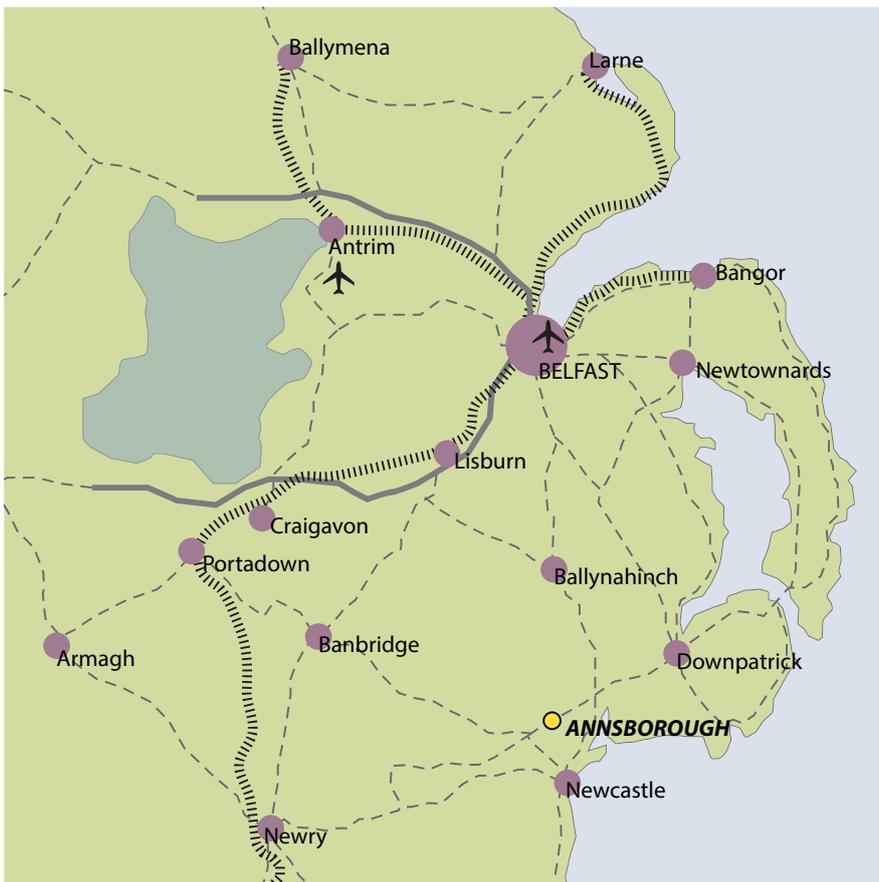
Percentage Comparason	Annsborough	Classification band	Northern Ireland
Under 16 years	29.4	24.3	23.6
Over 60 years	13.6	17.0	17.6
Catholic (community background)	93.6	47.5	43.8
Protestant (community background)	5.1	50.7	53.1
Owner occupied households	56.8	82.4	69.6
Access to car/van	65.6	81.9	73.7
Degree level or higher	10.6	14.5	15.8
Unemployed	5.8	3.3	4.1

2.3 Location

Annsborough is located on the A25 route between Downpatrick and Newry. It is approximately 0.5 miles from Castlewellan, 5 miles from Newcastle, 10.5 miles from Downpatrick and 11.5 miles from Ballynahinch. The closest major settlement with rail transport connections is Newry (20 miles) and Belfast (27 miles) for rail, airports or passenger ferries.

Annsborough is set in the Ballybannon river valley within the Mourne Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and within the Newcastle Valleys Landscape Character Area.

The Annsborough settlement boundary is defined by the Department of the Environment (DOE) Planning Service. This village plan is largely focused within this boundary although the surrounding hinterland and its bearing on the village has been considered and some of the initiatives in the report relate to the wider area.



2.4 History

The development of Annsborough is rooted in its industrial heritage and river valley location. The spinning mills remain a strong feature of the village and their history dates back to 1800 when James Murland and his brother William acquired two local bleach greens. James built his home, Annsborough House and in 1826 built the first spinning mill in the village which is located beside the main road. As business thrived, the larger spinning mill complex known as Standard Mill was developed in around 1836 and at the time boasted a 50ft water wheel.

The original settlement of Annsborough was built by the Murlands to house mill workers. By 1839 the number of employees amounted to 300 workers and was expected to expand to 500. In 1836 Annsborough Primary School was built which also housed a newsroom during the height of industrial activity in the area. By the time of his death in 1850, James Murland had transformed the social, economic and physical landscape of the Annsborough area. He had ensured that any profit made was kept within his control by issuing tokens to the mill workers instead of money. The tokens could only be exchanged for provisions in the village store. The company, James Murland Ltd. continued to trade until changing economic conditions forced closure in 1930.

The past three or four decades has seen the expansion of Annsborough to its outer limits through a mixture of private and social housing. This has led to a near amalgamation with neighbouring Castlewellan. The school and village store are still in existence and the mill buildings are currently used by small business but are becoming derelict.



Standard Mill

2.5 Local environment

The village is located within the Mourne AONB, at the bottom of the Ballybannon river valley and is divided by the long, straight approach route of the Mill Hill Road (A25) which leads down to the village on either side of the valley.

Despite its close proximity to Castlewellan, Annsborough's character and history is very different. The Department of the Environment (DOE) records that despite their closeness, 'Annsborough remains visibly removed from Castlewellan although further development would lead to the amalgamation of both settlements.'

The river and mills are located in the centre of Annsborough and are surrounded by meadows grazed by horses. The village has grown up around this central area which acts as a floodplain and provides local nature conservation and amenity value. There are a number of mature trees throughout the village particularly along the river corridor. The stone buildings of the former linen factory and spinning mill define the local character and the mill chimneys are a distinctive local landmark.

A feasibility report into flooding problems is currently being carried out by the Rivers Agency to propose flood mitigation methods in Annsborough. At the time of writing, the report was in draft format and awaiting economic appraisal before being released to the public. Rivers Agency were able to inform Groundwork that proposals include flood walls and banks which will be implemented within the next five years, subject to economic approval of the scheme. Further details can be found in section 5.3.8.

The main settlement is located east and west of the central meadows and to the south of Mill Hill Road. There are seven listed buildings and one listed bridge in the village. Most of the listed buildings are located in the old part of the village to the east and include the village school.

Because Annsborough is dissected by the main road and built up either side of the floodplain it does not have a clear village centre or focal point.

2.6 Transport and traffic

There are four approach routes into Annsborough, the main one being the Mill Hill Road, A25 which is a fast and straight road with minimal traffic calming measures through the village, the speed limit is 40mph. The A25 is the main route between Downpatrick and Newry and the traffic can be constant partially in rush hour.

Other approach routes include the Ballylough Road which is the signposted route from Ballynahinch to Castlewella. Although this is the shortest route is not the easiest or quickest, most local traffic is likely to travel the A25 and A24 via Clough from Ballynahinch.

Clarkill Road is a minor road and runs parallel to the Ballylough Road on the other side of the river and follows the valley around to the back of Castlewella Forest Park.

Down County Council signage marks the arrival to the village although the sense of place is negated by the lack of visual impact from the signage, the speed of the road and the location of the signs. This particularly the case on the A25, heading towards Downpatrick, where the sign is located almost in the centre of the village.

Two attractive 'Welcome to Annsborough' engraved boulders surrounded by planting have been installed by the Annsborough Community Forum which complement the village character.

The public transport provision for Annsborough is currently considered by residents to be reasonable although there is some room for improvement which is discussed in section 5.4. Concerns were raised by the lack of suitable bus stops and laybys which cause congestion and a hostile environment when waiting for buses especially for elderly people.

There are a couple of key places in the village where road safety is an issue, particularly beside the school on the Ballylough Road, several suggestions for improvement are discussed in section 5.4.

2.7 Services and amenities

Although most people travel to Castlewella for local services, Annsborough has a number of shops and amenities. Most of these are located on the Ballylough Road and include Annsborough Integrated Primary School which has been recently extended, a shop and post office and the GAA owned social club. At present the local Annsborough GAA club manage the social club which has a bar, pool table and seating and is hired out for events and functions. There are various classes run from the social club including yoga, guitar lessons, martial arts, an over 50's club, an advice centre and arts and crafts. A more suitable community building is needed however in order to run these events and expand the existing provision, especially for children.

The village school, established in 1835 is located on the Ballylough Road and was extended to include a school hall around 5 years ago. The school is very family and history orientated with villagers sending their children there generation after generation. Unfortunately number of pupils has been declining and have dropped below the threshold set by the Department of Education for schools at risk. The Primary School Review is currently being written by the department and is due to be published in September 2012. The South Eastern Educational Library Board, Department of Development were consulted as part of this village plan and were keen to state that the department's aim is to 'rural proof' small schools. The Primary School Review assesses all schools in the area in regard to their long term sustainability and potential paths forward. For more information, refer to the Sustainable Schools Policy.

Other amenities are located in the south of the village and include playing fields leased to the GAA by Down District Council. Provisions include a GAA pitch and football pitch, changing facilities and a playground. At the time of writing, the village had secured funding for the playground to be upgraded which was due for completion in autumn 2012. There is a significant need to improve the changing facilities currently available.

Elsewhere there are a number of light industrial and commercial businesses housed in the mill buildings and Corry Wood Industrial Estate. These provide small scale local employment.

2.8 Key buildings and heritage

Annsborough's heritage is characterised by its linear development, river valley location, historic mill buildings, and views of mill chimneys. The mills are mainly out of view from the main road and may easily be missed by those passing through the village. Although many of the buildings are used by small business and rented out as workspaces, most of them are in disrepair and appear derelict.

The water systems and infrastructure which powered the mills and are still visible, predominately the mill race, listed bridge over the river, and two mill ponds. These elements are integral to the character of the village although the largest mill pond is now drained.

A small round stone structure in the field beside the listed bridge is an interesting remnant of the village's industrial heritage and was used to house a lamp for workers to find their way in the dark. The field is known as the 'Bell Field' because a bell was hung in a tree and rung to summon people to work each day. Other than the mill buildings, listed buildings are mainly located on Ballylough Road and include Annsborough Primary School and several private dwellings. The listed Annsborough House is privately owned and located adjacent to the mill buildings.



Annsborough Integrated Primary School

2.9 Planning applications

There are a number of granted planning applications to develop land within the village. The sites are shown on the village plan (section 4.0) and details of larger proposals are in appendix 8.2.

The most significant proposal which will have the greatest impact on village character is the partial development of the fields in the centre of the village. Although the application was lodged in 2007 and is due to expire in September 2012, the developer is putting in for reserved matters which will give an extension of 2 years for the scheme to start on site.

The current application was restricted by the Planning Service to develop the whole site and around half of the central field will remain as a green field site. Proposals include landscaped areas and paths through the fields which will be of benefit to the community through the creation of public realm. (see 5.2.2)

This village plan would promote the careful retention of the existing character of the fields where possible. In particular the landscape value and important ecological habitat gained from the wet meadow, species rich grass land, mature trees and river setting.

The development of the central fields will considerably increase the amount of surface water runoff due to increased areas of hardstanding and therefore raise the risk of flooding.

Any proposals for development which may impact on river floodplains are referred by DOE Planning Service to DARD Rivers Agency who provide development advice.



Central fields

2.10 Existing statutory documents

Down District Council and the Department for Rural Development have a number of strategy's and action plans which take a holistic look at the region, its future development and investment. The following sections summarise each relevant document which has an impact on Annsborough and the instigation of this village plan.

Down District Council Corporate Plan 2011 – 2015

The Corporate Plan sets out the council strategy for a four year period to continued development of towns and villages and to improve quality of life for local people. Underpinning the council's vision is job creation and economic development in light of the economic downturn, whilst also 'servicing the leisure and recreational needs of the local people.' The Corporate Plan sets out a series of 'Priorities for Action'. Those affecting Annsborough include:

- Making Newcastle the premier activity resort for Northern Ireland,
- Making good leisure services (public and private) available and accessible to local people and visitors,
- working in partnership to create town and village development plans to encourage distinctive and attractive towns including investment in the public realm.
- Preserving the distinctive character of areas within the district to create competitive advantage based on: tourism; farming; coastal; mountains; and vibrant towns and villages

The Corporate Plan also supports rural development in smaller settlements, and focuses on the creation of sports and leisure facilities as well as the development of tourism within the Mourne Area. The council's role in the delivery of this village plan will help to achieve the aims of the Corporate Plan.

Down District Council Enabling the Future 2008 – 2011 Draft Economic Development Strategy

At the time of writing the latest Economic Development Strategy was being finalised and due for public release in September. The current strategy recognises that there are private sector development opportunities in professional services, retail and tourism in the Down Region while also pledging to promote the interests of rural communities.

The strategy highlights the need to create a flexible rural economy, to create jobs and to reduce the number of people commuting to Belfast. Tourism is cited as a 'Headline Target' as well as 'People and Place' which focuses on community based regeneration, promoting sustainable villages and implementing public realm works.

Shaping our Future - Regional Development Strategy 2025

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

- To maintain a working countryside with a strong mixed use rural economy
- To create and sustain a living countryside with a high quality of life for all its residents
- To support the network of service centres based on main towns, small towns and villages in Rural Northern Ireland
- To create an accessible countryside with a responsive transport network that meets the needs of the rural community;
- To continue to create and sustain an attractive and unique rural environment in the interests of the rural community and the Region as a whole
- To foster a stronger community spirit and sense of place in relation to local development proposals in urban and rural areas by the use of Local Development guidelines.

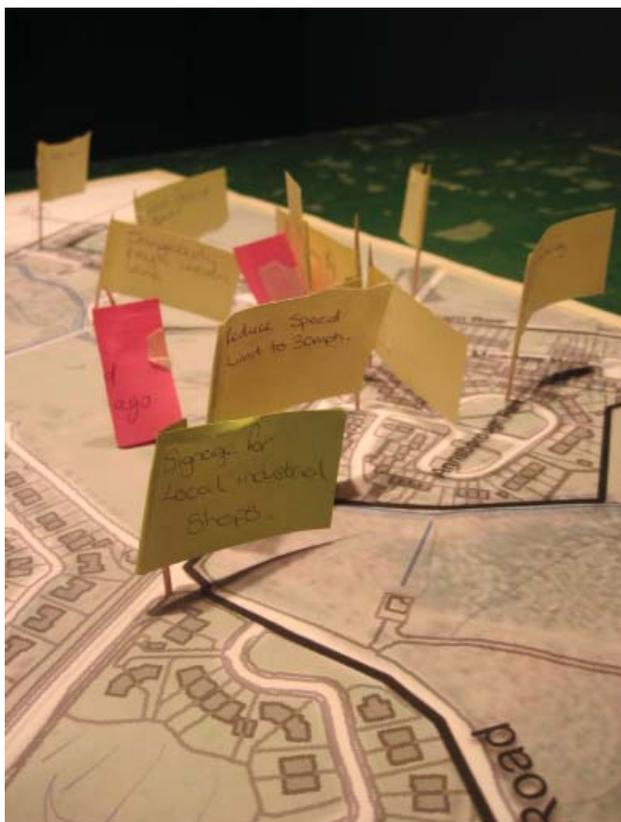
The RDS also notes the importance of the beautiful and unspoilt region of the Mournes and its unique natural heritage. It notes the development opportunity related to major walking and mountaineering activities associated with the mountains, forest parks and the coastal setting of the Mourne Mountains.

3.0 Consultation

3.1 Initial consultation summary

The Annsborough Community Forum met with Groundwork Northern Ireland in an initial consultation meeting on the 30th April 2012. At this meeting the scope of the project was agreed and issues affecting the village discussed. The initial meeting provided a framework for which this report is built on, existing problems were identified and a basic profile of the village was drawn up.

From this information and subsequent desk study, clear outcomes were identified for the consultation evening.



Planning for Real workshop

3.2 Consultation evening summary

The first public consultation meeting was held in the evening of the 22nd May 2012 in the social club. This workshop used a variety of different methods to allow the community to express their views on village issues through 'Quizdom' anonymous voting, community mapping, group discussion and comments sheets.

Quizdom is a consultation tool applied through a PowerPoint presentation. Each participant is given a handset which allows them to vote independently for an option projected on screen. The benefit of the process allows all those present to have their say where otherwise they may not have spoken out. The questions asked were derived from the key issues discussed in the initial consultation. Through analysis of the results, a clear understanding of top priorities was gained and developed into clear initiatives in this plan. The PowerPoint presentation and results are included in the appendix 8.1.

In addition to Quizdom, a general discussion was held around a table with large maps of Annsborough as visual prompts. The community were encouraged to mark on the map strengths and opportunities in Annsborough and weaknesses and threats. Notes were taken from discussions and comment sheets were available to write down any additional points.

A number of key points were raised during the meeting which this report addresses. The main concerns raised by the community were around the provision of a new community building, road safety, improved sports and recreation facilities and maintaining the character of Annsborough.

3.3 Secondary consultation workshop summary

Following the consultation evening, the Quizdom results were analysed together with the community's comments on what they perceive as strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities in Annsborough. From this information, a draft village plan was drawn up together with a table of initiatives and their priority for implementation.

A meeting was held on the 31st May with the Annsborough Community Forum to discuss the findings from the initial consultation evening and agree the priority of each project. The draft village plan was discussed and details amended accordingly to accurately represent the existing conditions within the village.

It was agreed that more people should be given the opportunity to have some input into the village plan. As no business owners came to the meeting, Groundwork phoned round various key business owners in the village as well as local residents. These comments were fed into the statistical analysis and their comments have been recorded.

3.4 Statutory agencies

Once the draft initiatives were agreed, statutory organisations were contacted to discuss any relevant initiatives. Telephone conversations were held with the DRD Roads Service, Department of the Environment, Planning Service, Eastern Educational Library Board, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development : Rivers Agency, Mourne Heritage Trust, Police Service Northern Ireland PSNI, Down District Council representatives and area councillors.

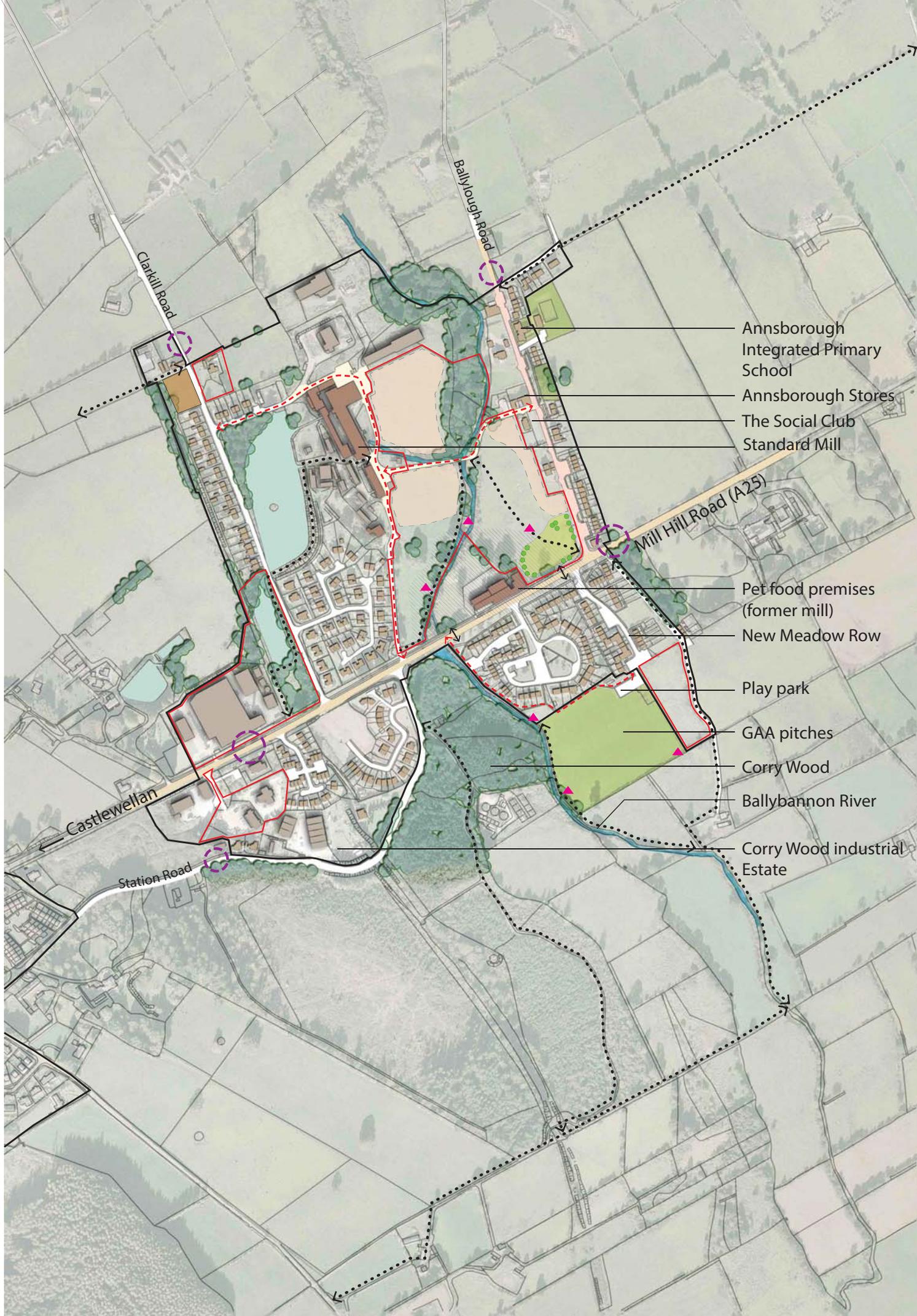
Relevant comments have been recorded in each initiative (5.0).

4.0 Village Plan

4.1 Map and summary of proposals

The village plan is the amalgamation of site analysis and community consultation. It clearly identifies the existing features of the village and highlights where there are particular issues. This is a visual tool which is to be read in conjunction with the proposed projects which are detailed in section 5.0.

-  Existing Settlement Limit
-  Existing housing
-  Existing heritage buildings / listed buildings
-  Existing agricultural / industrial buildings
-  Land with existing planning applications
-  Extent of proposed housing within application
-  Street with traffic safety issues
-  Key street / main road
-  Village gateway
-  Pedestrian crossing points
-  Existing pedestrian access to be upgraded to provide walks
-  Proposed footpaths
-  Proposed fitness trail
-  Area with flooding history
-  Existing public realm
-  Proposed public realm
-  Former mill ponds
-  Ballybannon River
-  Existing woodland / vegetation



Clarkill Road

Ballylough Road

Mill Hill Road (A25)

Castlewellan

Station Road

- Annsborough Integrated Primary School
- Annsborough Stores
- The Social Club
- Standard Mill
- Pet food premises (former mill)
- New Meadow Row
- Play park
- GAA pitches
- Corry Wood
- Ballybannon River
- Corry Wood industrial Estate



5.0 Proposed projects

5.1 Overview

The following proposed projects are a group of initiatives which have been developed in agreement with the Annsborough Community Forum. These initiatives form the strategic vision for Annsborough and are categorised into different levels of priority as well as a short, medium or long term time frame for delivery.

The top priority project agreed by Annsborough Community Forum has been developed to a stage to be included in a funding application or to gain planning approval. Details of this can be found in the appendix 8.3.

Other projects fall within the following 6 categories:

- Community development
- Environment and heritage
- Transport and Road Safety
- Tourism
- Business and services

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

5.2 Community development

5.2.1 New community building

The top priority for Annsborough is to provide a community centre for the village.

One of the key issues raised during the consultation period is that the community currently do not have suitable space for community events, clubs and groups.

While the existing social club provides space for some activities, due to its set up and layout, it is not suitable for use for summer schemes and other activities aimed at children.

The Annsborough Community Group will soon be losing their office space in Castlewellan and it would be beneficial to the ongoing sustainability and development of the group that they have office space available in the village as part of a community centre.

A number of solutions have been explored as part of this village plan and are detailed below:

New build community centre:

The creation of a new community building in Annsborough would be a highly valued addition to the village. However, due to funding constraints, it is very unlikely that the community would be able to secure funding to build in the near future. Therefore other solutions have been looked into which would involve less of a capital outlay. These alternatives to a new building may be short term to medium term solutions. The opportunity may arise to investigate the possibility of a new centre at a later date if circumstances change.

Michael Shields, the developer planning to build housing on the central fields, indicated in a conversation regarding this report that money may be available to provide a new community building in the future. However, this is unlikely to be progressed within the next 2 years as it will be integral to the proposed housing development.

Community centre in the village school:

As mentioned in section 2.7, the future of the primary school is not certain due to decreased numbers.

If, in the unfortunate event the village school should close, a natural use for the building would be a community centre. The school is central to the village, has car parking available, outdoor space and crucially a hall which can be used for community events.

Funding may be available to lease the building to the community group which would see the sustained use of the listed building as a public space.

Community centre in Standard Mill building:

The Standard Mill Complex currently has office space available which can be rented out at a starting price of £50/pcm for a 3.5x3.5m room. This could be an option for Annsborough Community Forum's office space.

There is also the opportunity to convert space within the mill building as a community venue. Consultation with the land owner, and specialist consultants will need to be undertaken to assess the feasibility of the project.

As the building appears derelict from the outside, it would be necessary to address the exterior as well as the interior to improve the appearance of the centre. Issues may also surround parking and access as the tracks to the building are in poor repair.

Although this venture would need to raise capital to set it up, it would be a sustainable use of the mill building and a picturesque setting at the centre of the village. As the building is listed, funding from the NIEA and Heritage Lottery etc may be available.

The benefits of these three options are that the community space would be perceived as a 'neutral location' by all residents of Annsborough.

Community centre on GAA playing fields:

There is the potential to develop a combined sports and leisure community centre with changing facilities beside the GAA pitches. There are currently very basic changing facilities available although they are in a poor condition and need upgrading.

The site is currently owned by the council and is leased to the GAA. The surrounding area includes a playground, small car park, GAA pitch and football pitch. At the time of writing, the existing playground (on council land) had secured funding to be upgraded.

The GAA are currently in negotiations with Down District Council to secure the site on a long term lease in order to carry out extensive improvements. Proposals include fencing the site, the provision of a full sized 3G Multi Use Games area (MUGA), a full size Gaelic pitch, an extension to the car park and a building to accommodate changing rooms, a referee room and meeting room. It is anticipated that this will be achieved within the next 2-3 years.

The location has impressive views over the Mourne Mountains and the river runs to the west of the site making it an attractive setting for a village civic area. Although the site is on the outskirts of the village it is within walking distance for most residents and would be linked into the newly formed walks recommended by this plan.

The Annsborough Community Forum saw the opportunity to develop a community hall space in conjunction with the GAA and a consultation meeting was held between the relevant parties to discuss the proposal. In the meeting the GAA advised that their organisation's remit is to work within the whole community, from toddlers to pensioners and therefore would consider a combining a community hall into their sports facilities. However, the Annsborough Community Forum would need to fund the additional part of the building as the GAA would not be able to justify funding a community facility as this would be a considerable extra cost to them. If the group were successful in securing money, then a working partnership could potentially be agreed.

The GAA have initial layout plans of the site drawn up and due to the proposed size of the pitches, larger car parking space required and the location of the play park, the space available for the building is fairly tight. If the size of the building was increased to accommodate community use, this could create problems with the available space.

Other limitations to the proposal would be the likelihood of community events clashing with the GAA use of the building. As the building will be fairly small, this could create logistical problems between users.

Due to these logistics coupled with the difficulties of Annsborough Community Forum securing enough funding to progress the scheme, it was agreed to consider other alternatives.



Playing fields



Changing rooms

Priority project:

Community centre in the Social Club:

The social club is a 60-70 year old metal, prefab type, single story building with high walls and locked gates surrounding it. The interior has recently been up graded and contains booth style bar seating, a pool table, projector and a raised stage area. It also has toilets which are in a good condition and a very small kitchen.

The club is owned by Down County GAA and run by the local Annsborough GAA. The Annsborough Community Forum currently run activities from the social club with the agreement of the Annsborough GAA.

Currently the future of the social club is unsure as the requirements of the landowners, Down County GAA, are not being met in terms of the running and organisation of the space. There is an opportunity for the Annsborough GAA and the Annsborough Community Forum to work together to secure the future of the social club by developing the buildings for use as a community space. Proposals include the phased improvement of the space as funding becomes available and are detailed below.

Community hall space:

The most important asset to the village would be the creation of a hall space suitable for community events such as summer schemes. The existing building could be extended to include a small hall which would have versatile use. As the GAA own the building, they have certain requirements for its use which includes some sports provision. It has been suggested that the community hall could be marked out for handball as this requires a fairly small space and would therefore help to keep costs down.

Landscape grounds:

Currently the building is set behind high walls and has a fortified appearance. As the building is improved and secured it will be important to address the need to create more of a welcoming environment. The building is known locally as being a GAA centre and creating an inviting appearance will help to provide a shared community space.

The site has attractive views across the central fields and towards the Mourne Mountains. This setting can be taken advantage of through various landscaping opportunities. These could include a small play area

for a crèche, decked area for BBQ, improvements to the car park, planting and seating.

Meeting room / office space:

The Annsborough Community Forum require office space to enable them to continue to develop their work for the benefit of the Annsborough community. A meeting room and office space will enable this and provide a regular presence at the community building.

Kitchen:

Currently the social club has a very small kitchen which will not be fit for purpose if the building is extended to provide more day use facilities. It is recommended that a small kitchen is integrated into the extension to cater for small events and daily use.

A new name:

It will be important to change the name of the social club to communicate to the village the change in the running of the building and in an attempt to create a neutral facility that all residents of Annsborough can use. This will have to be agreed between both the GAA locally and regionally and the Annsborough Community Forum.

Later building phases:

Eventually the existing building will need to be rebuilt as funding becomes available. The village plan recommends this is carried out within the next 10 years as funding becomes available.

This proposal was agreed to be taken forward as a priority project as it best matches the approvals, timescale and available funding. See appendix 8.3.



Social Club

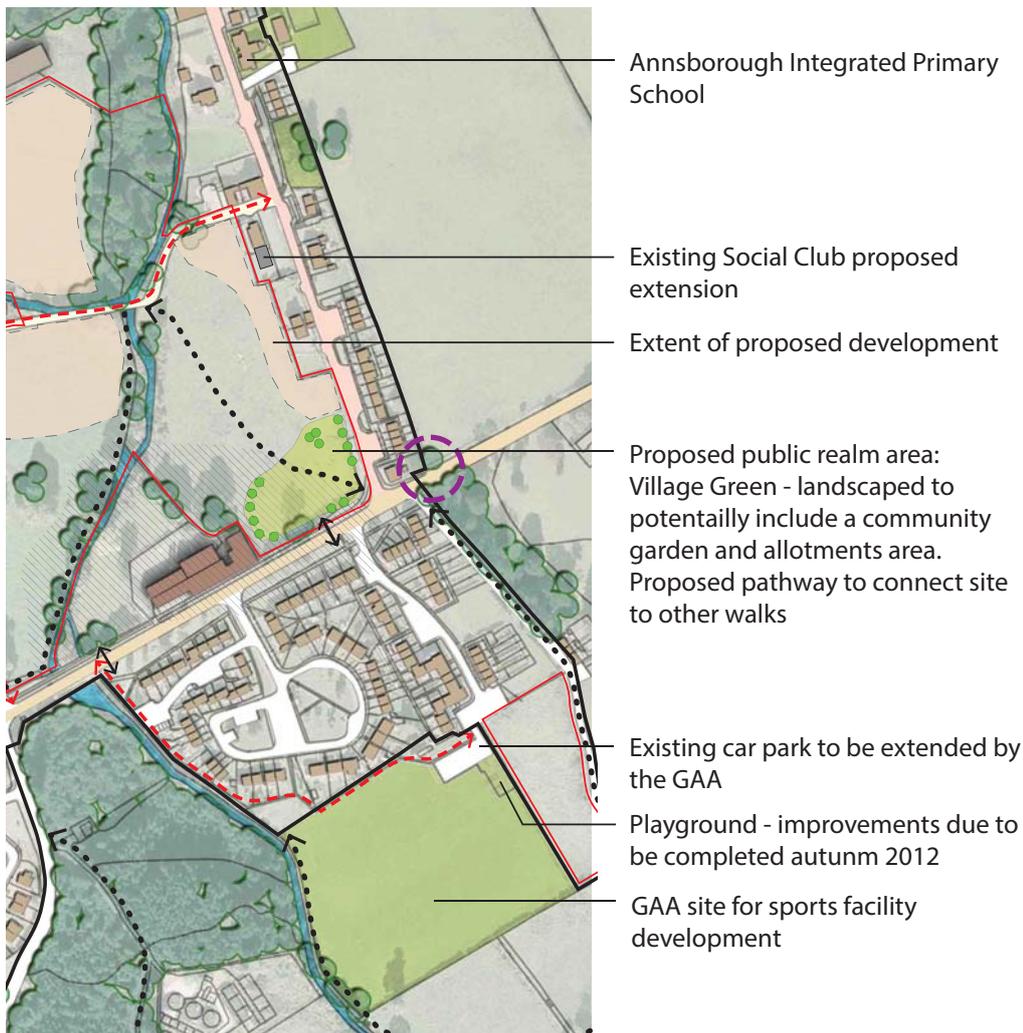
5.2.2 Develop a Village Green

As previously detailed, the GAA are in the process of finalising agreements with Down County Council to develop the playing fields. As this work is of a high capital value, the GAA require the area to be fenced off to ensure it is not damaged through misuse or antisocial behaviour. Although they are keen that the area should still have access for community use, there will be no open public realm in Annsborough following the development.

There is an opportunity and a need therefore to introduce a village green in the heart of the village. The area proposed is at the Ballylough Road, Mill Hill Road and New Meadow Row junction. This land falls within the development boundary for the housing scheme but cannot be built on as it is part of the river flood plain. Therefore, the plans for the housing development show the area as public amenity space.

Further consultation with the landowner and community regarding the design and final use of the land must be undertaken to ensure environmental sensitivities and safety concerns are addressed ie: the proximity of the road and river.

The area of open green space would connect with the proposed walking routes, provide recreation space in the heart of the village and a central destination for the residents and visitors. The green space would also improve the quality of life for residents of the three local nursing homes and help them to better integrate into the local community. The benefits of high quality public realm to tourism are discussed in section 5.4.



5.2.3 Develop village allotments / grow your own

From consultation with the community, the idea of developing allotments was met with mixed interest. Further consultation needs to be carried out to ascertain the true demand for developing growing space.

Allotments are becoming increasingly popular as the benefits they can bring are far reaching. These might include, reduction in household grocery bills, increased health and wellbeing, community interaction, intergenerational interaction, education and healthy eating.

There are a couple of sites which would be suitable for allotments, these include areas adjacent to the social club, near the GAA pitches and at the bottom of the Ballylough Road beside the proposed space for the village green. Individual suitability of each site needs to be gauged through more detailed inspection of ground conditions, flooding risk and consultation with land owners.



5.2.4 Community garden

From the consultation, it was ascertained that there is interest to develop a community garden although it was not seen as a top priority.

It is recommended that the provision of a central village green area as a community garden would significantly enhance the quality of life within the village as there is currently no formal space for community recreation. The key to the success of the community garden is a central location to benefit the whole community and choosing an area overlooked by houses which can help reduce the risk of antisocial behaviour. A maintenance programme would need to be established to ensure the long term viability of the garden.



The space should incorporate an amenity grass area large enough to be used as a kick about area, some decorative planting, seats and picnic tables. Simple landscaping can incorporate elements of natural play to add value to the area for younger children.

If a site is chosen on the central fields, a flood risk assessment should be carried out to ensure the proposed garden does not increase the likelihood of flooding.



5.3 Environment and heritage

5.3.1 Improve sense of arrival and village identity

Annsborough currently lacks clear visual clues of arrival to the village particularly on the Mill Hill Road coming from Castlewellan. The proximity of the two settlements is compounded by the direct nature of the road, the downhill approach and fast traffic resulting in poor village legibility and sense of place. In order to strengthen the distinction between Castlewellan and Annsborough, it is important to provide a greater impact to the entrance to the village. The existing small Down District Council signs are damaged and easily missed.

The village plan recommends the introduction of a hierarchy of signage to improve the legibility of the village. Primary features would be located on the main entry points on the Mill Hill road and secondary features on the Ballylough Road and Clarkill Road. The theme of the signs would be designed to mark other key points of interest in the village as part of the proposed heritage trail. (See 5.3.6)

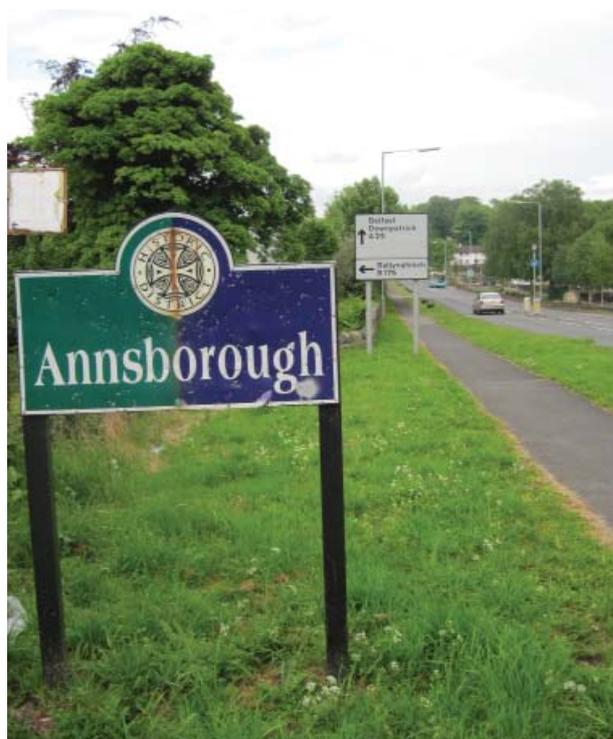
The benefit of strengthening the identity of Annsborough is part of the overall strategic vision for the village. Future developments such as walks and heritage trails and the possible renovation of mill buildings for business or recreational uses will benefit from a memorable and clear village identity.

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

5.3.2 Environmental improvements to key streets

Currently the council supplies bedding plants and half barrels which are planted yearly along the Mill Hill Road. The Annsborough Community Forum has funding to plant other areas although this funding is ending in December 2012. It is crucial for the village to secure further funding to enable the continuation of work done to maintain good quality public realm. It is recommended that these existing initiatives are enhanced by the following ideas to help increase the sense of arrival and sense of place along the Mill Hill Road:

- Re-seed grass verges to remove patches of bare earth.
- Low maintenance planting to give seasonal interest such as crocuses and daffodils
- Tree planting in certain areas may be appropriate and could exploit the long straight road by creating an avenue effect.
- Replacement of damaged trip rails. Paint white or other contrasting colour to increase visibility
- Simple landscape improvements to the bridge to increase the awareness of crossing the river. This could include raising the height of the bridge walls, paving, landscaping and 'Ballybannon River' signage.



Down County Council signs on the Mill Hill Road

5.3.3 Preservation of Mill buildings

From discussions with the Annsborough Community, it is clear that the village value the mill buildings and prioritise their preservation for future generations.

The Standard Mill is currently leased to several different businesses including small scale office space for start up business, arts and hobby workshop space and more commercial scale operations such as storage and warehousing for dry food stuffs. The other large mill building beside Standard Mill is the furniture store, Homelux.

In the past, developers have considered converting the buildings into apartments although this has not been progressed any further. From discussions with the owners of the buildings and a potential developer, the location is considered prohibitive and unsustainable due to the distance from major settlements and the disrepair of the buildings.

The likely hood of conversion has been further reduced due the current economic conditions. If a workable and economically viable model could be produced, housing would be a sustainable method of preserving the buildings, the setting of the complex is picturesque and it could be a desirable residential location.

As an alternative to housing, it may be beneficial to consider developing other uses as private businesses uses or social enterprises to allow the village to benefit directly from its industrial heritage.

These are long term initiatives and would be developed in conjunction with current owners, the NIEA and specialist consultants. A feasibility study would need to be commissioned to assess the business viability of proposals in conjunction with a comprehensive survey of the condition of the buildings.

It should be noted that due to the size of the buildings, it is likely that this would be a phased approach and that the mills would be developed for a variety of different uses.

Initiatives could include:

Community centre:- As discussed in 5.2, part of the building could be used as a community centre

Heritage centre: - A tourist destination to be combined with a visit to Castlewellan Forest Park.

Conference centre: - Easily accessible for businesses in Newcastle, Downpatrick and Ballynahinch.

Wedding venue: An alternative to the Ballydugan Mill, (Downpatrick) the meadows provide a picturesque setting suitable for photos.

Café: As a complement to the above business ventures and to draw people to the village.

Studio art space and workshops: Develop more space as affordable artist space providing good light from the large windows.

Hostel / campsite: Affordable accommodation for tourists to the Mourne area. Considerable demand may be gained from mountain bikers once the state-of-the-art mountain bike track at Castlewellan Forest Park is completed in spring 2013.

Hydro dam project: run as a social enterprise to elevate problems of flooding and to re-exploit hydro-power from the river which the mill buildings were originally built to benefit from.



Business in the Standard Mill

5.3.4 Preservation of mill ponds

The largest mill pond has recently dried up, the cause of which is disputed locally although it is recorded in the NIEA's summary of the mill complex (5th May 2009) to be due to subsidence of the embankment. This has resulted in the former mill pond becoming a mud flat. (NIEA)

As mentioned in section 2.9, a feasibility report by the Rivers Agency is being carried out to assess reasons for local flooding and methods of prevention. Although the report is not due for release for a couple of months, the Rivers Agency expressed that the condition of the mill ponds had no impact on the flooding. It is thought locally that previously the mill pond may have acted as an attenuation pond minimising risk of flash flooding.

There is the opportunity to re-instate the mill pond and use it as a local resource for amenity, ideas could include:

- Recreation, walks etc
- Educational resource
- Habitat creation
- Put and take fishery

Under the EU Floods Directive, the maintenance of dams and reservoirs falls to the land owner and extensive consultation will need to be undertaken to instigate the viability of this initiative.

If not fully re-instated, alternatively the pond could be developed as a wetland habitat. This will have significant benefits for local biodiversity and can be used as a recreational and educational resource if connected to existing walks around the village.

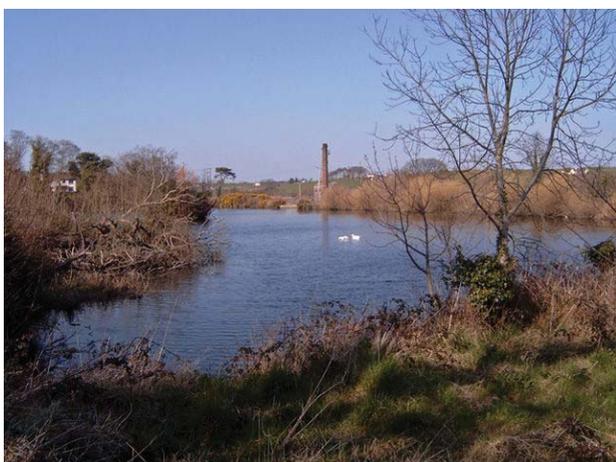


Photo of the mill pond before it was drained

5.3.5 Walks

The original routes between the mills and employees homes cross through the central fields and over the river via the listed bridge. These tracks form popular walks around the village and have the potential to be upgraded and expanded.

The Annsborough Community Forum recognises the potential of developing the existing walks as exercise and heritage trails. Currently a number of people use the steep hill between Annsborough and Castlewellan as an exercise route. There is an opportunity to provide better facilities for these people as well as encouraging more local people to be active. The improved accessibility of walks will also benefit the residents of nursing homes and provide them with additional recreational opportunities.

The existing walks are privately owned tracks, currently used as access but are in a poor condition. These could be upgraded to be accessible for elderly or disabled people and pushchairs. The Ballybannon River offers an excellent opportunity for a walk which could run the length of the village and connect to the GAA pitches to the south.

As longer term projects, a circular walk could be developed across fields and through Corry Wood to the GAA pitches and old connections between the village and the Ballylough can be reinstated via the existing McSherrys Lane, as named on the OS Map.

The layout plan for the development in the central field incorporates public foot paths and a river walk is included.

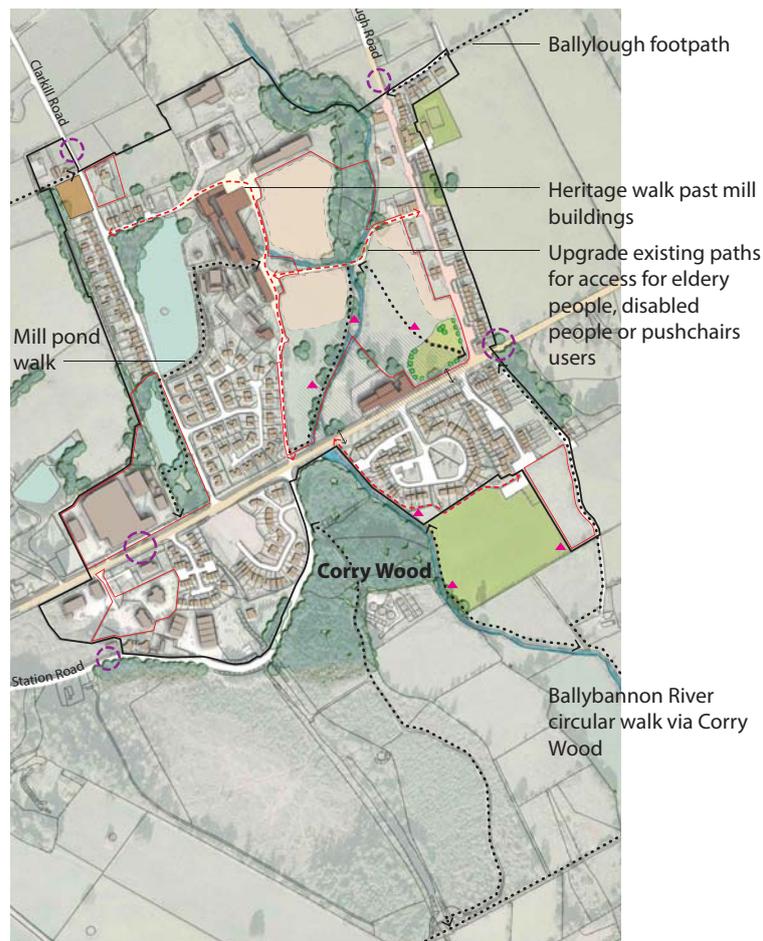
5.3.6 Heritage trail

The proposed walks pass past various areas of historic interest which can be signposted as part of a heritage trail and connect into the signage scheme proposed in section 5.2.1.

5.3.7 Fitness trail

Trim trail equipment and adult gym equipment can form part of the circular walking route and would connect to the GAA pitches. This initiative can be used as training for local teams, circuit training, informal exercise or cross county training by the public or schools.

In order to develop this initiative further, consultation will need to be undertaken with landowners, the GAA, NIEA and the Rivers Agency.



5.3.8 Flooding and water

Annsborough has experienced flooding problems in the past, the most serious of which occurred on 16th August 2008 and caused significant issues to residents concerned. The residents most affected were those with homes fronting onto the Mill Hill Road and Annsborough Park housing development. According to residents, some of these homes are uninsured due to the flood risk. In heavy rain, poor drainage along the road in the same location causes problems of standing water splashing onto the footpaths.

Anecdotal evidence from residents suggests that the flooding in 2008 was worsened by a tree blocking the A25 river bridge. However, Rivers Agency's investigations confirm that this was not the sole cause of the flooding. Elsewhere that day, exceptionally heavy rainfall caused extensive flooding problems across Northern Ireland.

Following the flooding, two studies have been carried out by DARD Rivers Agency in relation to flooding problems at two different locations on the Leitrim / Ballybannon River system, at Maghera Co Down and Annsborough village

The report relating to Annsborough, which is currently in draft form, is more complex than that for Maghera and Rivers Agency's preferred option for flood alleviation and the related business case has yet to be scrutinised by DARD economists. Therefore a draft has been completed which may be available within the next few months subject to the necessary approvals.

Proposals include the creation of flood walls and flood banks to protect the housing area of Annsborough Park and the pet food premises on the opposite side of the Mill Hill Road.

Works are estimated to be order of £0.5m and construction will be subject to availability of funding and prioritisation against other schemes.

Various options were investigated by Rivers Agency including:

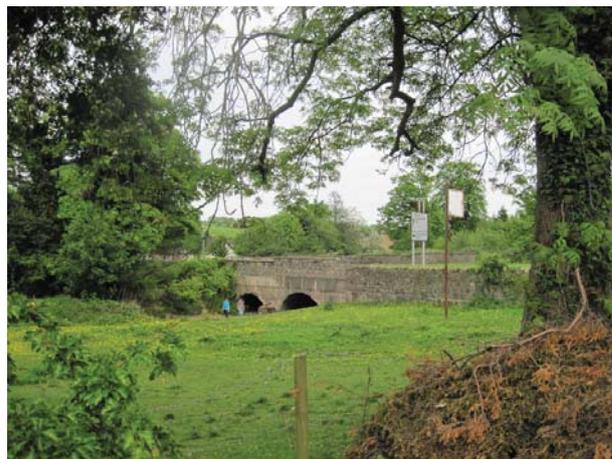
- Flood banks with upstream food storage
- Creation of multi-stage river channels
- Upgrading the road bridge / culvert system

DARD Rivers Agency confirmed the most viable option is to build flood walls and banks which will be of fairly simplistic construction.

The proposed flood alleviation works will have an impact on any future development of the central fields. Although outline planning has been granted to develop the central fields, the development has been limited to the northern end of the fields to elevate the problems of flooding.

All future development in the village will impact on the volumes of surface run off and therefore put more strain on the existing water system. All new developments must consider flood mitigation in accordance with best practice and Planning Policy Statement 15: Planning and Flood Risk.

This village plan recommends that all development proposals should incorporate sustainable urban drainage (SUD's) into each scheme so as to replicate as closely as possible the natural drainage from a site before development.



View across the central fields towards the Mill Hill Road bridge

5.3.9 Springwater

There is anecdotal evidence that there are a couple of sources of spring water in the village which have now been stopped up. Villagers have memories of collecting the water years ago which was considered to be good quality.

If the water is safe to drink, it could be directed through a traditional village fountain, this could become a feature of the village and reflect its heritage. Such village springs are used by walkers or cyclists passing through and would add to the overall quality of a visitors experience to the Mourne Area.

This is something which Annsborough could benefit from especially if the area is designated as a National Park and with the creation of the Slieve Croob Scenic trail (see 5.4) As a longer term idea, the water could also be bottled and sold locally as a social enterprise.

The possibility to reinstate the springwater would need to be investigated by the Annsborough Community Forum who would need to carry out independent tests of water quality.

As the water would be for public supply, a risk assessment would need to be carried out to look into potential contamination of the supply. To meet public water supply regulations, the owner of the drinking water would need to be established and registered with the NIEA and they, or the group would legally become a water supplier.

This initiative would be achieved through a feasibility study, business planning and in collaboration Down County Council Environmental Health Department and the NIEA Drinking Water Inspectorate who would advise on the legal issues of the proposal.

5.4 Transport and Road Safety

5.4.1 Installation of pelican crossing

As discussed in previous sections, the characteristics of Mill Hill Road create various problems for the village in terms of road safety. As the settlement has grown up either side of the road, residents naturally have a continual need to cross to either side. The current speed limit is 40 miles per hour although due to the downhill approach from either side, speeds can seem much faster.

Although there are existing crossing points with traffic islands, the risks of crossing the road could be reduced through the provision of formalised pedestrian crossings.

The possibility of installing a pelican crossing was raised with Roads Service who advised that the community would need to request a survey to be carried out by the department. This would record the amount of traffic on the road and the number of people crossing the road. If levels of traffic reach a certain threshold, a further more detailed survey is then carried out to analyse the type of people crossing the road – ie school children or elderly.

Roads Service advised that the decision to go ahead is based on the volume of traffic through the day and the number of people crossing the road. At peak times there needs to be either:

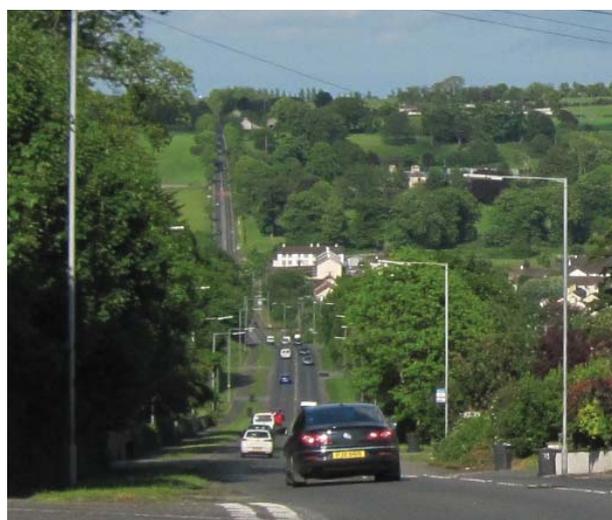
- more than 1000 vehicles and more than 20 people crossing
- more than 500 vehicles and more than 45 people crossing

An investigation into the feasibility of installing a pelican crossing in Castlewellan Primary School revealed that peak crossing times did not coincide with the peak traffic times. Therefore Roads Service advised the situation is likely to be similar in Annsborough. Unless the volumes of people crossing the road were measured to be higher, it would be difficult to justify a pelican crossing as there are already crossing islands. Further to this, Roads Service only fund one pedestrian crossing per region each year.

5.4.2 Traffic calming to reduce speeds

It is recommended that traffic calming measures would not only improve the safety of the Mill Hill Road but would also add to the sense of place and arrival to the village. Reducing the speed limit to 30 mph would be beneficial although without speed cameras this may have a limited effect. Other traditional traffic calming measures can include road narrowing, priority traffic, speed bumps or rumble strips.

A review would need to be carried out of traffic speed, volume and type to identify if this is something the Roads Service would consider.



View down the Mill Hill Road into Annsborough



View of the Mill Hill Road towards Castlewellan

5.4.3 Reduce traffic congestion at Ballylough Road

The Ballylough Road is another key problem area for traffic. This is compounded by the school and little available space for parents collecting children by car. Problems cited have included congestion, speed, the downhill direction into the village and hidden dips.

The PSNI has a frequent presence on the Ballylough Road to combat speeding with speed traps and temporary speed detection devices. Speed detection devices light up to individual drivers to make them aware of their speed and is considered an effective way of prompting people to slow down. The PSNI recommend temporary use of these devices as it has been shown that if they become a permanent feature, they lose impact as people stop to notice or pay attention.

Despite PSNI presence and existing traffic calming measures such as traffic gateway signs and enhanced 30mph signage, the residents would like to see further work to improve road safety at this location.

The village plan advocates additional traffic calming measures are implemented. Further in depth consultation will be needed in conjunction with the roads service, traffic police, residents and specialist consultants. One method which has been trailed recently is a new approach to traffic calming around the concept of 'Shared Space'. This is becoming increasing popular and could be investigated as an option at this location.

The evidence shows that the car speeds are influenced by street activity such as reducing the physical separation between vehicles and pedestrian, this can be achieved through landscape elements such as surface textures.

Any works carried out would need TAS approval from the Roads Service and any additional maintenance would need to be carried out by the Council maintenance teams.



Ballylough Road hippen dip



Ballylough Road leading away from Annsborough

5.4.4 Improve bus shelters provision

Throughout the consultation process, the provision and location of bus shelters and bus lay-bys was a reoccurring theme. Although there are two bus shelters in the village they are not considered to be located in the best places and do not relate to where most people wait to catch a bus. The following needs have been established:

- **Provide a bus shelter beside the pet food premises for the bus to Downpatrick.**
- **Relocate the existing bus shelter opposite the pet food premises (Newcastle direction)**
Most people catch this bus from the stop at the Ballylough Road / Annsborough Park junction. The existing bus stop is set back from the road and has poor visibility for haling the approaching bus in time to stop it.
- **Provide a lay-by for the Newcastle bound bus.**

Roads Service and Translink were both contacted to discuss a resolution to the problem.

Translink welcome the provision of bus shelters regardless of the numbers of people using them. In order to progress relocating a bus shelter or providing a new one, locations should be marked on a plan and sent to Roads Service, Robert Sharp, Professional Technical Officer. The suitability of the proposed location is agreed between Roads Service, Translink and Roads Police.

The Housing Executive would be supportive of the bus stop on their land although permission must be sought before progressing. Therefore a written request needs to be submitted to Gervase McGuigan, Land and Property Department for approval. Following this, planning permission would need to be granted and relevant approvals gained with Translink.

5.4.5 Improve bus lay-by provision

A new lay-by would be considered if a need is identified by Translink and dependant on site suitability and negotiation with Roads Service. It is possible that the reported congestion relating to bus stops on the Mill Hill Road is due to the existing traffic islands which deter people from passing a stopped bus.

Roads Service advised that full lay-bys can also create problems as a bus cannot pull back out if the traffic is heavy. A half width lay-by is considered better as it eases congestion as traffic has better visibility to pass the bus. A similar successful example has recently been installed in Dundrum. The community could request a new bus hard standing area and tactile paving and general review of bus accommodation.



Wall beside pet food premisis

5.5 Tourism

Annsborough is located in the heart of the Mourne Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which is currently being considered for designation as a national park. Increasingly the area is attracting more tourism as outdoor type activities are becoming ever more popular. Annsborough could benefit from its location in the AONB by developing facilities which may attract tourists to the village.

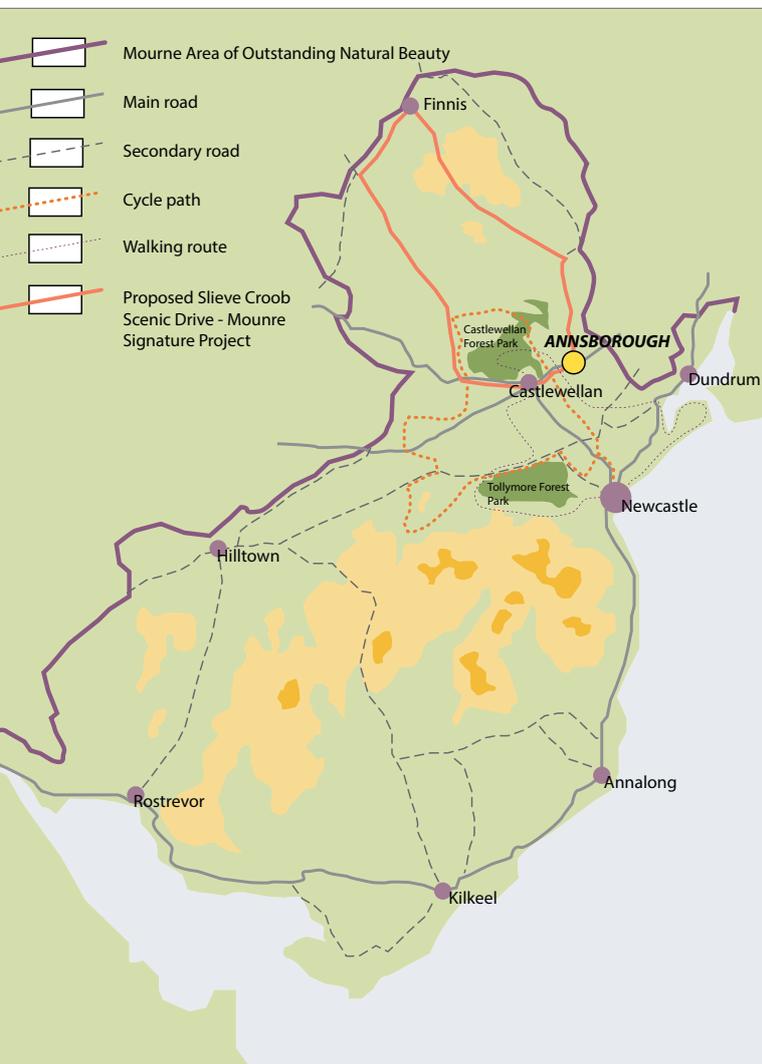
5.5.1 Mourne Signature Project

Currently the Mourne Heritage Trust (MHT) are at the final stages of securing a funding package to implement the Mourne Coastal Route, which will be a brown signed tourist scenic route from Belfast to Newry including four inland scenic routes. One of the inland scenic routes is designed to help integrate the Slieve Croob area of the AONB into the heart of the region and is directed along the Ballylough Road through Annsborough.

Annsborough is an important link for the cohesiveness of the region as Slieve Croob is often not perceived as part of the Mourne. It is expected that the tourist route will bring benefits to existing services in the area and raise the profile of the village.

The MHT suggested that Annsborough could take steps to encourage people to stop in the village through walks which would take tourists past heritage sites and through high quality public realm. Entrance features to the village could also encourage people to stop and take a look around as it could imply the village had something to offer a visitor. These initiatives are discussed in more detail in section 5.2.2 and 5.3.1.

The Mourne Signature Project is due to be completed by April 2013.



5.5.2 Castlewellan Mountain Bike Trail

A state-of-the-art mountain bike trail is currently under construction in the nearby Forest Park. Once completed in spring next year, the trail will be one of its kind in Northern Ireland and one of only a few in the island of Ireland. The MHT expects that tourism associated with the trail will grow steadily to bring benefits to the region. This might include cheap / budget accommodation, campsites, bike repair shops and other cycle routes being developed in the area.

There are very popular models of mountain bike trails especially in Scotland which cater for cheap adventure holidays such as stag weekends. A need for more budget accommodation has been highlighted by the MHT and the central fields in Annsborough could be developed as very basic farm style camping. This would be particularly aimed at visitors to the mountain bike trail who are looking for cheap accommodation. The mill buildings could also be partially renovated as a hostel to accompany the campsite.

Due to the economic climate there are very few grants available to develop services for the mountain bike track. It is anticipated by the MHT that investments for services will emerge over the next 5 years as people become aware of demand, allowing for lower risk investments.

5.5.3 Budget Accommodation provision

According to Mourne Heritage Trust research, there is currently plenty of self catering and Bed & Breakfast accommodation within the AONB. It is not clear what the occupancy levels are although the MHT estimates it to be around 35-45%.

Despite the choice of medium range accommodation, the options available for budget accommodation are limited. There is therefore a demand for cheaper accommodation which would attract hill walkers and people visiting the Mourne area for short activity breaks.

A larger selection of cheap campsites, hostels or camping barns is likely to attract visitors from the rest of Ireland and the UK who are more likely to come back for a repeat visit the cheaper the available accommodation.

The Annsborough Community Forum could look into developing an area within the village as a campsite/ hostel to be run as a social enterprise. A medium to long term temporary lease could be negotiated with the landowner as minimum infrastructure would be required to set up the project.

A business plan, feasibility study and agreement with landowners would be required as well as planning permission, consultation with the Rivers Agency and the NIEA. Consultants would need to be employed to develop the site to provide running water and toilet facilities.



5.6 Business and services

5.6.1 Improve lighting and pavement provision for businesses on Station Road

Station Road services around 14 private homes, the Corry Wood Industrial Estate and Corriewood Nursing Home. Currently there is no street lighting on Station Road and the footpath does not connect the Mill Hill Road to the industrial estate. This causes safety issues for the residents and staff of the nursing home as well as customers and staff of the Industrial Estate. This is particularly problematic during the winter months and because the nursing home employs staff 24 hours day, many of which live locally and walk to work.

DRD Roads Service would support the proposal for a footpath although acknowledge that it would be difficult to justify the cost as other projects would likely take priority. In order to qualify for the proposed footpath, an application would need to be submitted in writing to the DRD Roads Service, Forward Planning Department.

The case would be strengthened if the proposal related directly to the Roads Service Policy to increase walking and reduce car dependency. The Corriewood Nursing Home are currently in the process of expansion from 42 beds to 68 which will see a staff increase of 72 to 135. Increased numbers of elderly people and or visually impaired people using Station Road to access services in the village would increase the level of need as perceived by Roads Service.

Corriewood Nursing Home is keen to encourage the integration of residents into the local community and access improvements would be key to this. Additionally, the nursing home is a listed building and of local historical importance being the family home of the Annesley Estate. The home is set in 8 acres of attractive landscaped grounds and there are opportunities for other elderly people in the village to have access to the house and gardens.

5.6.2 Improved signage for Corry Wood Industrial Estate

Currently 8 out of 14 units are occupied in the Corry Wood Industrial Estate by a number of different companies from a pet shop, Fur Feathers and Fins to a car body repair shop.

The industrial estate is way marked by standard Roads Service signs on the Mill Hill Road although a need for improved signage has been identified at the entrance to the park. This would help provide a sense of arrival and would enable visitors navigate to the park and be aware of what businesses are located in the estate.

5.6.3 Improve the profile of the Standard Mill and Homelux Furniture Store

The businesses run from both the Homelux Furniture Store and Standard Mill would benefit from standardised or improved signage. This would enhance the area and provide clear visual prompts to attract passersby and therefore increase business.

It is recommended that the provision of signage is implemented as a priority to improve the visual impact of this part of the village and to draw visitors attention to the location of historic mill buildings.

Any signage will need planning permission, DRD Roads Service cannot supply signage to advertise individual businesses.





6.0 Action plan

6.1 Introduction

The Action Plan is a summary of all the proposed initiatives detailed in section 5. The table can be used as a point of reference when using the village plan and is designed to be used as a working document to be updated and altered as circumstances change.

To implement the initiatives, careful planning and joined up thinking will be required to build working collaborations with stake holders. Therefore it is important to prioritise projects and establish a potential timeframe to work towards.

The table shows initiatives as being low, medium or high priority and timeframes as short, medium or long term. A project may be of high priority but only achievable in the long term due to its complexity and likelihood of attracting funding. Short term time frames are initiatives which may be completed in 1-5 years, medium term initiatives within 10 years and long term initiatives, within the next 20 years.

Due to the economic climate and spending cut backs in the public and private sectors, funding for projects is becoming increasingly difficult to secure. The amount of money offered by funding streams is generally smaller than in past years and this is reflected in the Action Plan.



Initiative			Priority (Top / medium / low)			Time frame (Short / medium / long)			Stakeholders	Potential funders
			T	M	L	S	M	L		
5.2 Community Development	Community Building	Build new community building	✓					✓	ACF, PLO	DRAP, EN, BIG, DCC
		Extensions to social club to provide community space	✓			✓			GAA, A GAA, PLO, ACF, EDRCN	NIHE, DRAP
		Landscaping improvements to social club grounds		✓			✓		GAA, A GAA, PLO, ACF	NIHE, DRAP
		Re-name social club	✓			✓			GAA, AGAA, PLO, ACF	NIHE, DRAP
	Improvements to public realm & amenities	Develop a village green		✓			✓		ACF, PLO, JIHE	EN, BIG, DCC
		Develop allotments / grow your own		✓			✓		ACF, PLO, NIHE	EN, BIG, DCC
Develop a community garden			✓			✓		ACF, PLO, NIHE	EN, BIG, DCC	
2.3 Environment and heritage	Village identity	Improve sense of arrival and village identity		✓		✓			ACF, RS, DCC	RS, DCC, DRAP
		Environmental improvements to key streets		✓		✓			ACF, RS, DCC	RS, DCC, EN, DRAP
	Historical buildings	Preservation of mill buildings	✓				✓		NIEA, PLO	HL, PS, DRAP
		Preservation of mill ponds		✓			✓		ACF, PLO	NIEA, EN, DRAP
	Walks and trails	Creation and upgrade of walks around the village	✓			✓			PLO, RS, ACF	EN, NIEA, DCC
		Heritage trail		✓		✓			ACF, RS, PLO	HL, DRAP
		Fitness trail		✓		✓			ACF, GAA	DCC, EN, BIG
	Ballybannon River	Flooding and water management	✓				✓		ACF, PLO, RA, PLO	RA, PS
		Springwater enterprise			✓			✓	ACF, PS	PS, DRAP

Initiative			Priority (Top / medium / low)			Timeframe (Short / medium / long)			Stakeholders	Potential funders
			T	M	L	S	M	L		
5.4 Transport and Road Safety	Mill Hill Road	Installation of pelican crossing	✓				✓		RS, ACF	RS
		Traffic calming to reduce speeds	✓				✓		ACF, RS	RS
	Ballylough Road	Reduce traffic congestion	✓				✓		ACF, RS	RS
	Public transport	Improve bus shelter provision	✓			✓			ACF, RS, TL	TL
		Improve layby provision		✓				✓	ACF, RS, TL	TL, RS
5.5 Tourism	Integration of Annsborough into tourism opportunities	Moune Signature project - consider ideas to attract tourists		✓		✓			ACF, MHT, NITB, DDC	MHT, DDC, NITB
		Castlewellan mountainbike trail - associated business		✓			✓		ACF, MHT, NIYB, DDC	MHT, DDC, NITB
		Budget accommodation - campsite and hostel provision			✓			✓	ACF, PS, NITB	PS, NITB
5.6 Business and services	Corry wood industrial estate	Lighting and pavement provision		✓			✓		ACF, RS	RS
		Improved signage		✓		✓			ACF, RS, PS, DDC	RS, DDC
	Standard Mill	Improved signage		✓		✓			ACF, DDC, PS	RS, DDC

Stakeholders and potential funders:

ACF - Annsborough Community Forum
A GAA - Annsborough GAA
BIG - Big Lottery / Awards for all
DE - Department of Education
GAA - Down County GAA
DDC - Down District Council
DRAP - Down Rural Area Partnership

EDRCN - East Down Rural Community network
EN - Entrust - landfill tax
HL - Heritage Lottery
NIEA - Northern Ireland Environment Agency
NITB - northern Ireland Tourist Board
PLO - Planning Service
PSNI - Police Service Northern Ireland

PS - Private sector
PLO - Private land owner
RA - Rivers Agency
RS - Roads Service
TL - Translink

7.0 Conclusion

The compilation of this village plan highlights the extent of the good work already being achieved by the Annsborough Community Forum. They are successful in attracting funding and building a strong community, maintaining areas of public realm and running events for a wide section of the community to enjoy. They have good relationships with public sector bodies and hold regular interagency meetings to ensure issues in the village are addressed.

Unfortunately the Community Association will lose funding at the end of this year, 2012 and will cease to be able to build upon the work they have achieved with financial backing. Their current funding includes access to office space and IT equipment which is important to the function of the group and the organisation required to meet the needs of the community. The group are actively seeking further funding and it is very much hoped that they will be successful as this is key to the future implementation of this Village Plan.

The group have built up experience and expertise in applying for and securing funding and therefore are well equipped to tackle and deliver aspects of this plan. Some of the initiatives are straight forward environmental improvements which can be achieved fairly simply, others require imagination and blue sky thinking in order to progress. However, if approached proactively and in the spirit of community co-operation, Annsborough has the opportunity to pull together and stand out as a forward thinking village with a determination to secure itself as a vibrant place for future generations.



8.0 Appendix

8.1 Quizdom results

8.2 Planning application

8.3 Priority project

8.1 Quizdom Results

Question Number 1

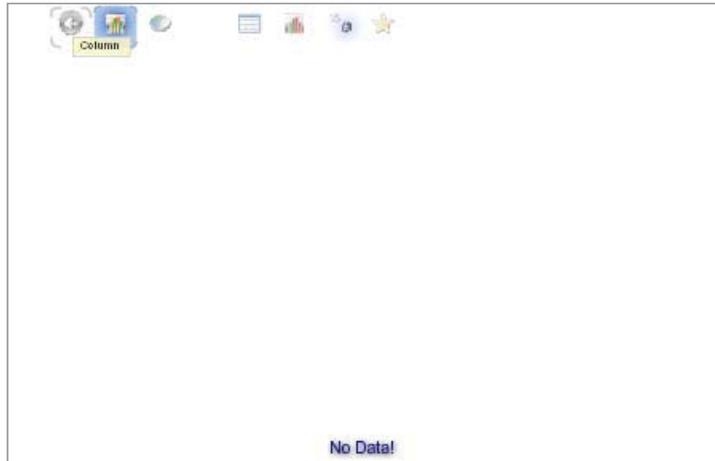
GROUNDWORK
NORTHERN IRELAND

ANNSBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN



VILLAGE PLAN
CONSULTATION EVENING
22nd May 2012





Question Number 2

GROUNDWORK
NORTHERN IRELAND

ANNSBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

Which are Annsborough's top 3 qualities?

- A) Tranquillity
- B) Good views
- C) Proximity to Castlewelfan and the Mournes
- D) Riverside setting
- E) Traditional picturesque village
- F) Community spirit






Question Number 3

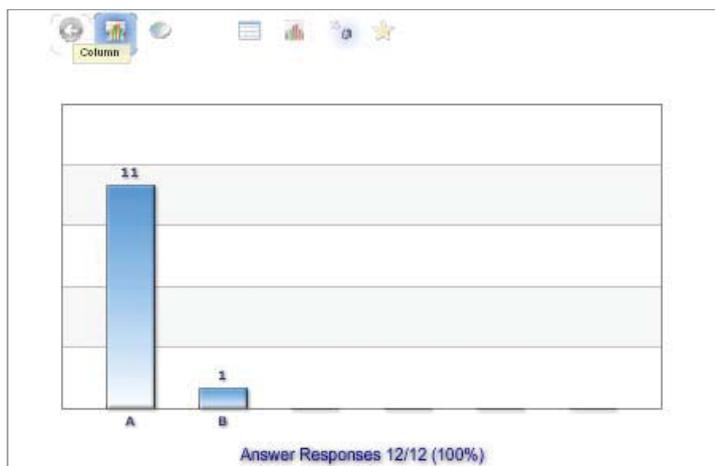
GROUNDWORK
NORTHERN IRELAND

ANNSBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

How important are the mill buildings to the character of Annsborough?

- A) Very important
- B) Quite important
- C) Doesn't matter



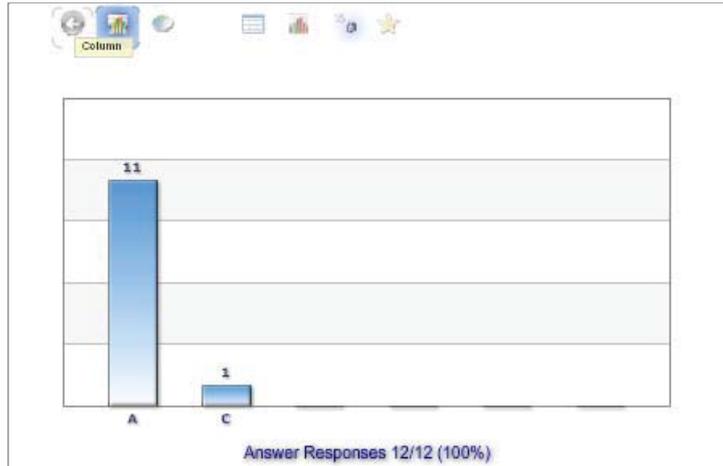
Question Number 4

GROUNDWORK
NORTHERN IRELAND

ANNBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

Is it a priority to renovate the historic mill buildings?

A) Yes
B) No
C) Maybe



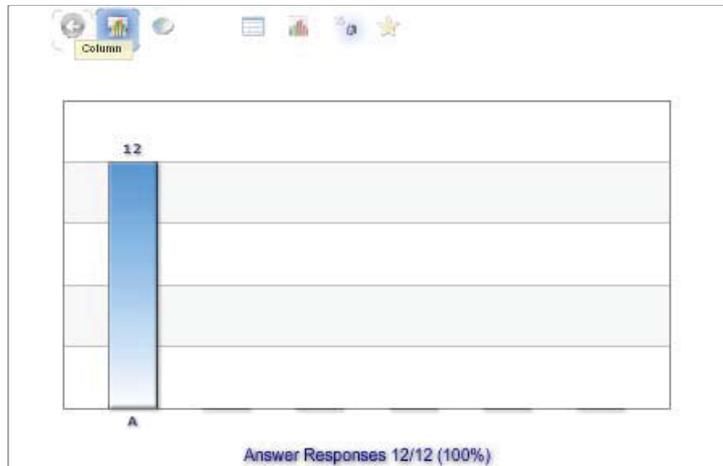
Question Number 5

GROUNDWORK
NORTHERN IRELAND

ANNBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

Would it be good to re-instate the dams for fishing / nature / walks / tourism etc?

A) Yes
B) No
C) Maybe



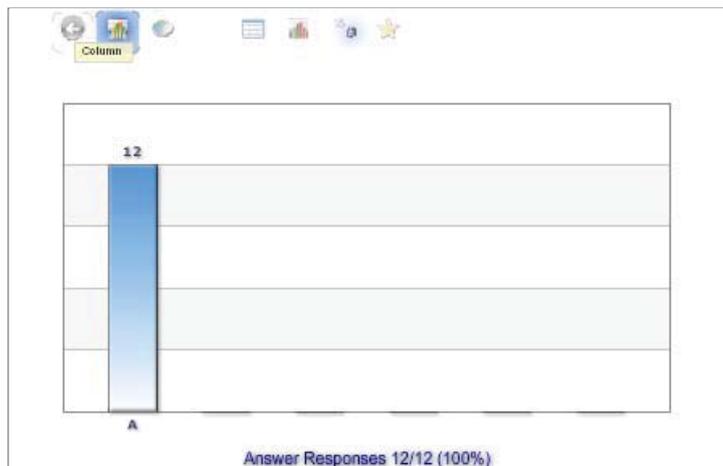
Question Number 6

GROUNDWORK
NORTHERN IRELAND

ANNBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

Would you like information boards and history trails around village?

A) Yes
B) No
C) Maybe



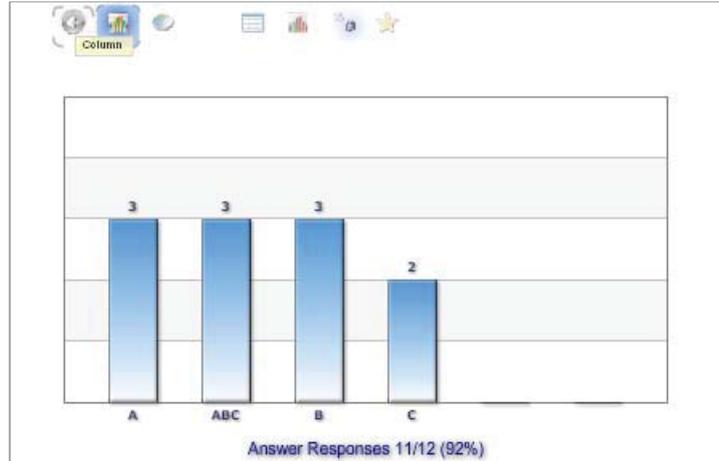
Question Number 7

GROUNDWORK
NORTHERN IRELAND

ANNSBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

Which age groups have the least facilities in the village?

- A) Young children
- B) Teenagers
- C) Older people



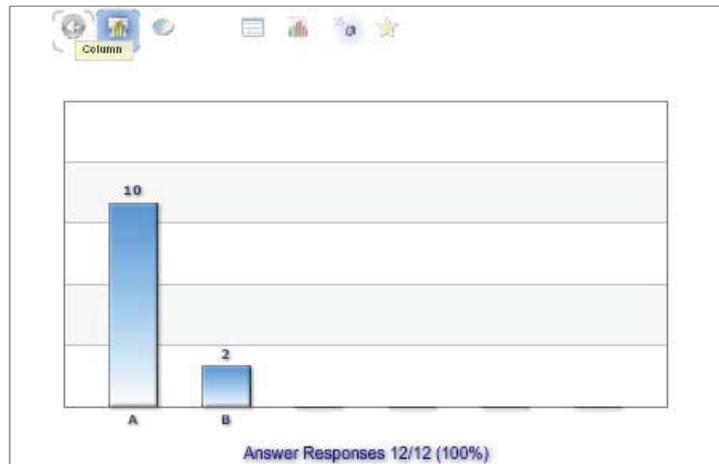
Question Number 8

GROUNDWORK
NORTHERN IRELAND

ANNSBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

Is a MUGA a priority for the Village?

- A) Big priority
- B) Medium priority
- C) Small Priority



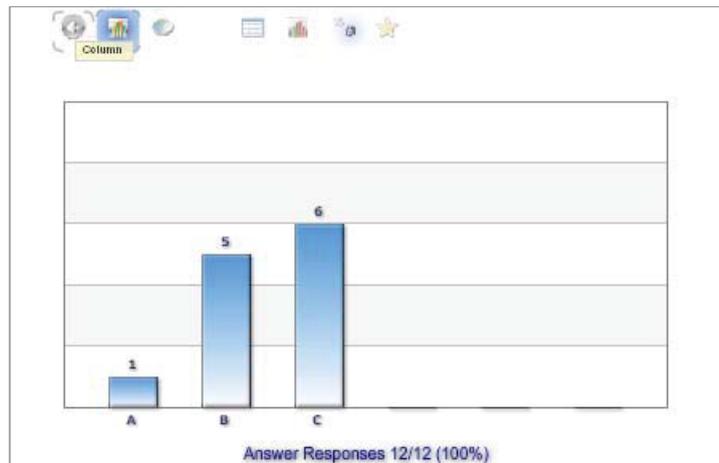
Question Number 9

GROUNDWORK
NORTHERN IRELAND

ANNSBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

Is improving the existing social club a priority for the village or creating a new community centre?

- A) Improve social club
- B) New community centre
- C) Both



Question Number 10

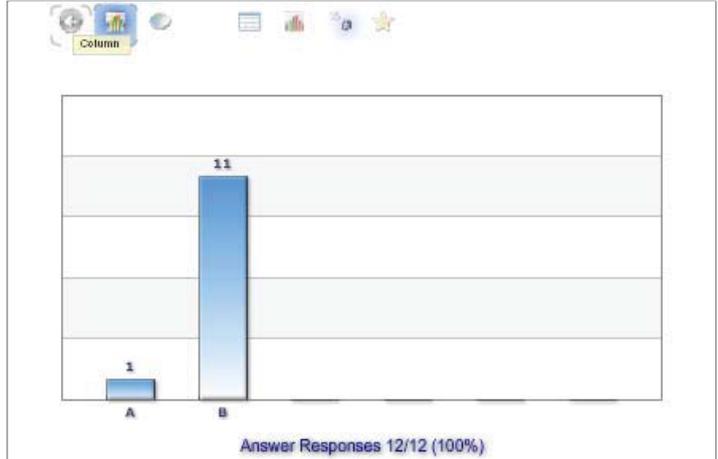
GROUNDWORK
NORTHERN IRELAND

ANNBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

If a new community centre is approved, which would be better for Annsborough?

A) Community centre in a restored mill building
B) Community centre in a new building



Question Number 11

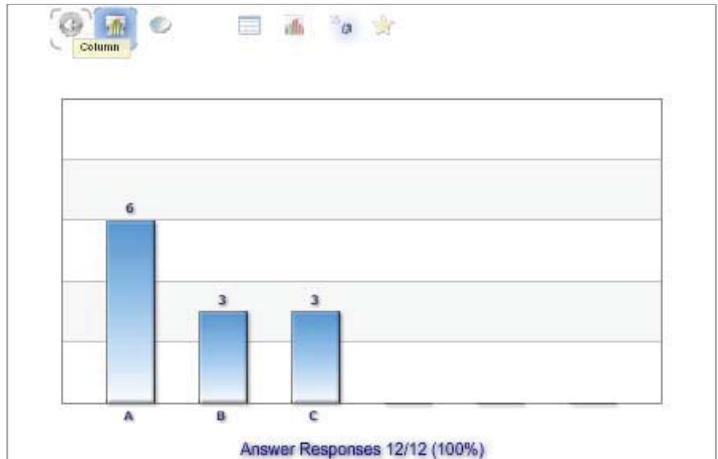
GROUNDWORK
NORTHERN IRELAND

ANNBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

Would allotments / grow your own be popular in Annsborough?

A) Yes
B) No
C) Maybe



Question Number 12

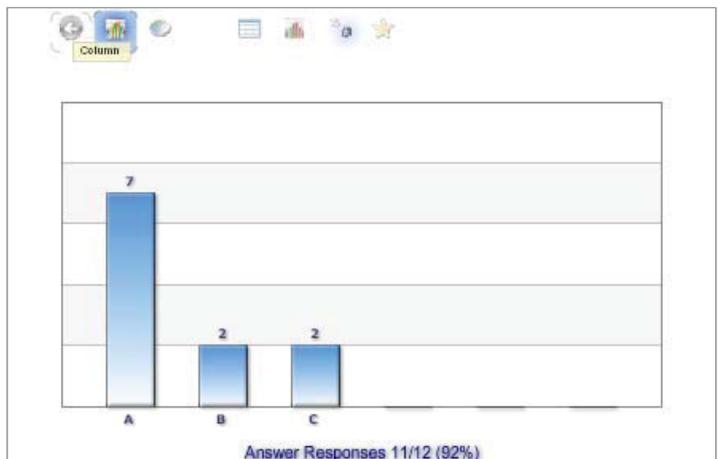
GROUNDWORK
NORTHERN IRELAND

ANNBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

Do you see the benefit in a community garden / sensory garden?

A) Yes
B) No
C) Maybe



Question Number 13

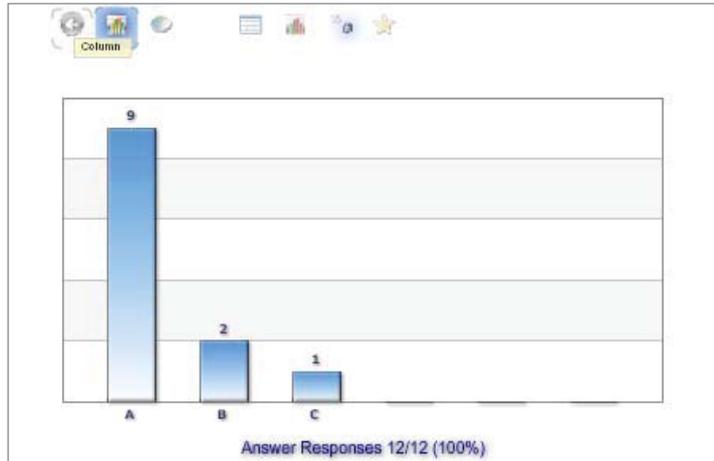
GROUNDWORK
NORTHERN IRELAND

ANNBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

Is there enough seating in the village?

A) *Yes*
B) *No*
C) *Maybe*





Question Number 14

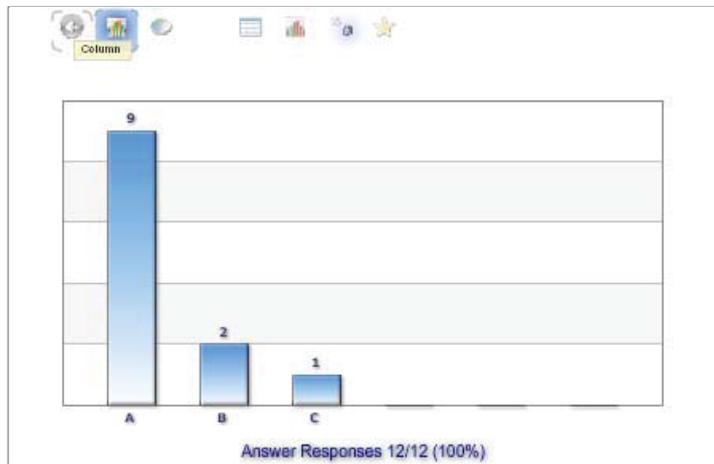
GROUNDWORK
NORTHERN IRELAND

ANNBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

Do you think people would use a fitness trail / adult exercise equipment?

A) *Yes*
B) *No*
C) *Maybe*



Question Number 15

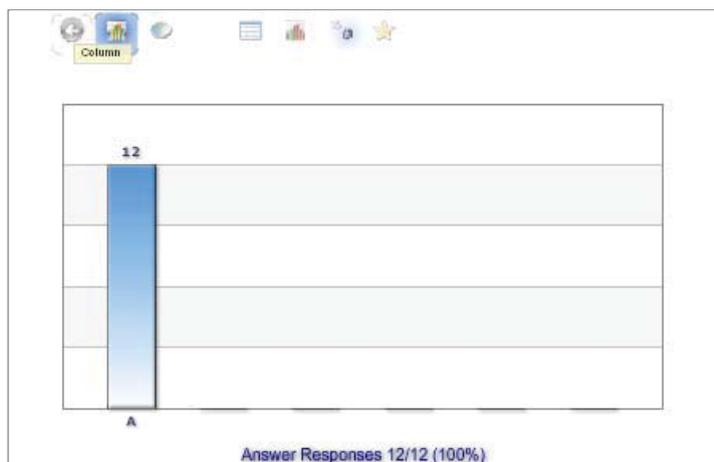
GROUNDWORK
NORTHERN IRELAND

ANNBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

Would you like to see improved walks / nature trails / a river walk etc through the village?

A) *Yes*
B) *No*
C) *Maybe*



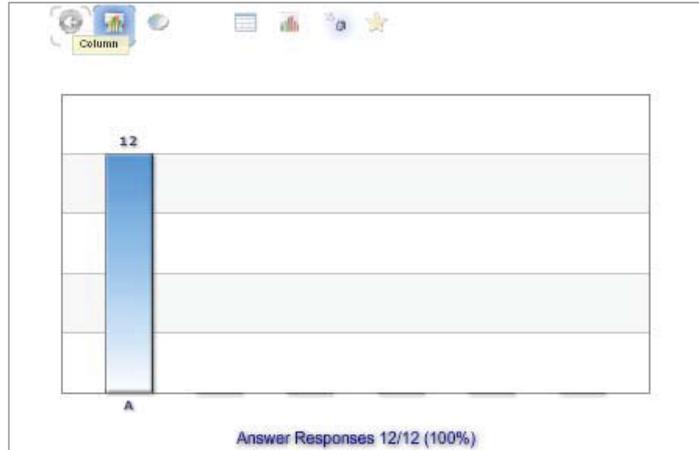
Question Number 16

GROUNDWORK
NORTHERN IRELAND

ANNBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

Is improving road safety a priority in the village?

- A) *Big priority*
- B) *Medium priority*
- C) *Small priority*



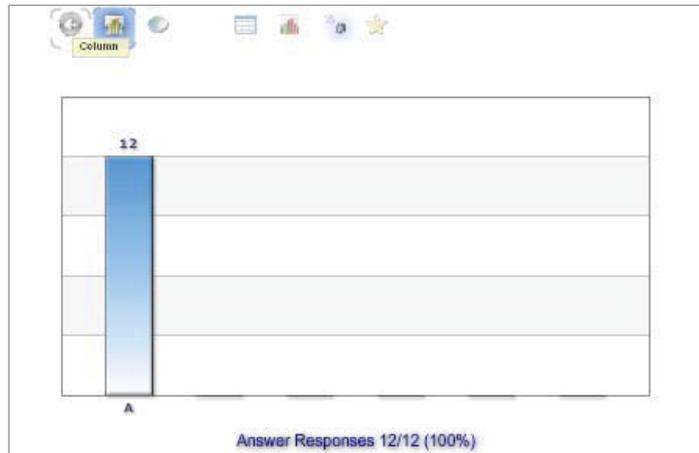
Question Number 17

GROUNDWORK
NORTHERN IRELAND

ANNBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

Would a pelican crossing improve the road safety on the main Castlewelan Road?

- A) *Yes*
- B) *No*
- C) *Maybe*



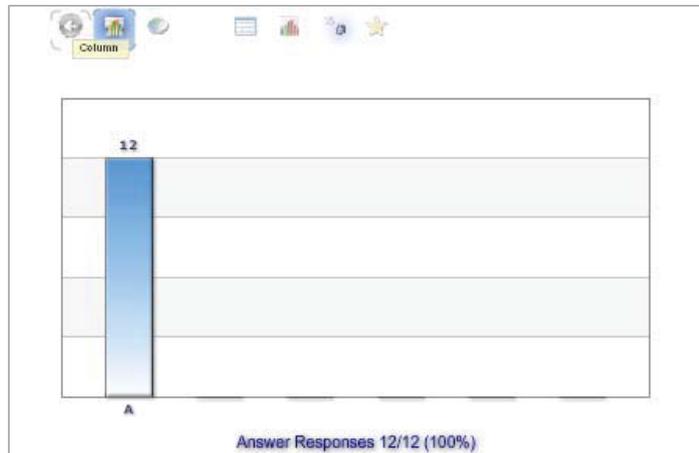
Question Number 18

GROUNDWORK
NORTHERN IRELAND

ANNBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

Is it important to improve visibility along the Ballylough road for school traffic?

- A) *Very important*
- B) *Quite important*
- C) *Not very important*



Question Number 19

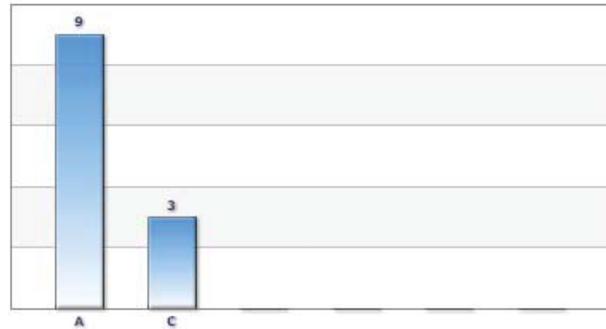
GROUNDWORK
NORTHERN IRELAND



ANNSBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

How much would a bus lay-by improve congestion through the village?

- A) A lot
- B) Not much
- C) Not at all



Answer Responses 12/12 (100%)

Question Number 20

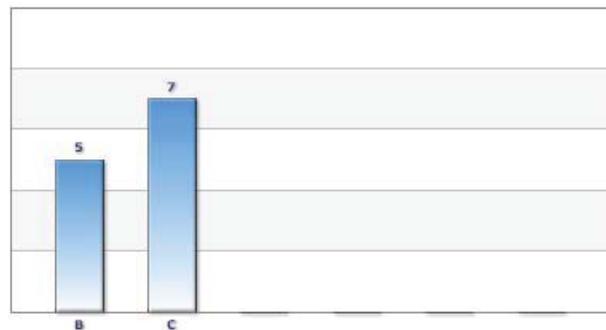
GROUNDWORK
NORTHERN IRELAND



ANNSBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

How would you rate bus connections to the surrounding areas?

- A) Very good
- B) Reasonable
- C) Bad



Answer Responses 12/12 (100%)

Question Number 21

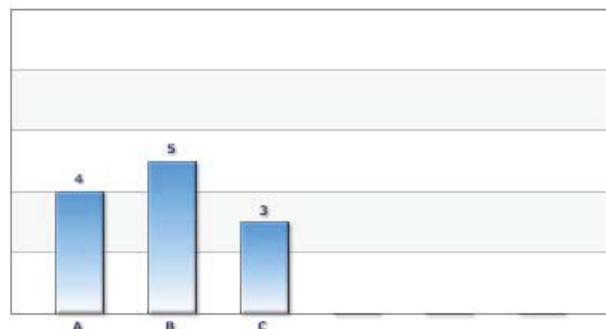
GROUNDWORK
NORTHERN IRELAND



ANNSBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

How important is tourism for the future of Annsborough?

- A) Very important,
- B) Quite important
- C) Doesn't matter



Answer Responses 12/12 (100%)

Question Number 22

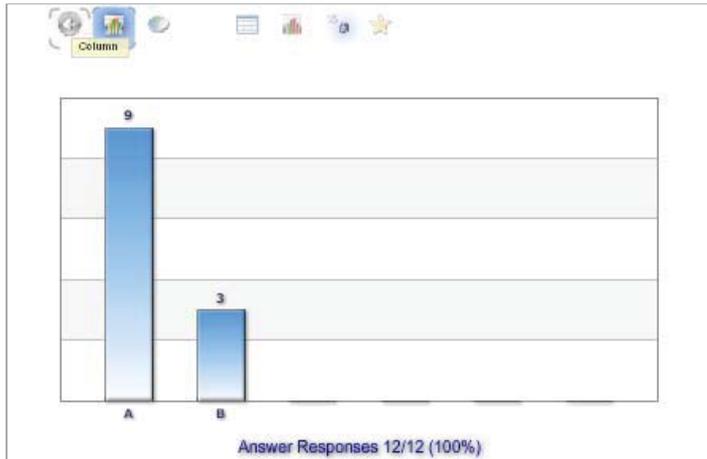
GROUNDWORK
NORTHERN IRELAND

ANNBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

Do you think connecting Annsborough with walks along the river to the Mournes would be good for tourism?

A) Yes
B) No
C) Maybe



Question Number 23

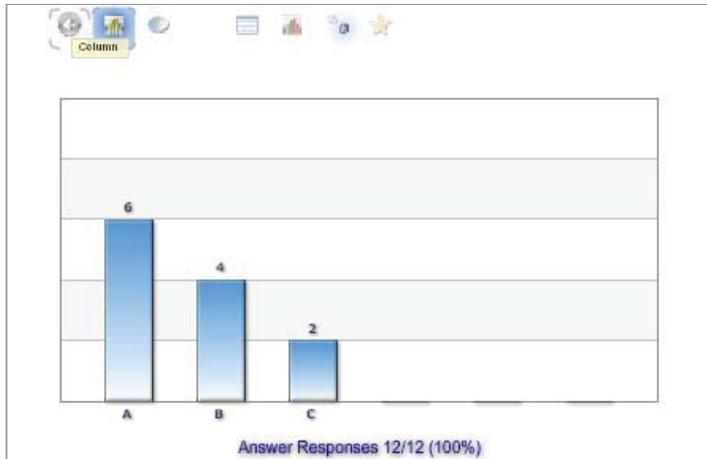
GROUNDWORK
NORTHERN IRELAND

ANNBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

Is there an opportunity to develop a cycle route along the quieter roads to bring tourists to Annsborough?

A) Yes
B) No
C) Maybe



Question Number 24

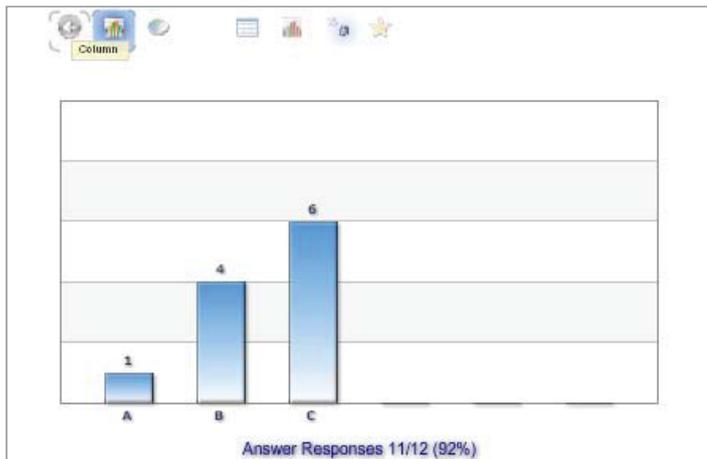
GROUNDWORK
NORTHERN IRELAND

ANNBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

Do you think there is a demand for B&B's or holiday cottages in the village?

A) Yes
B) No
C) Maybe



Question Number 25

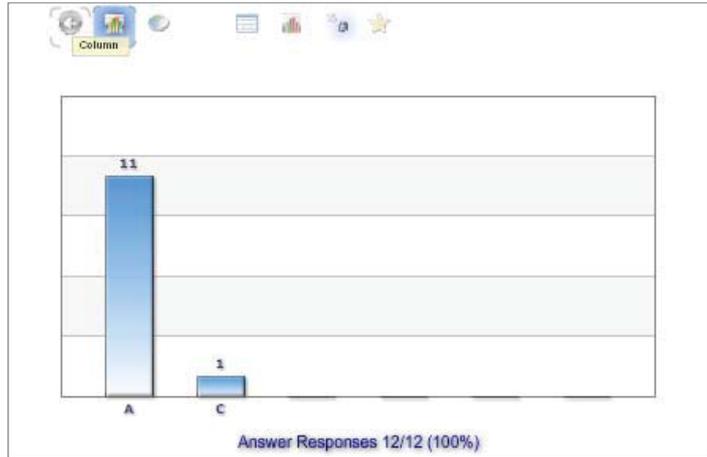
GROUNDWORK
NORTHERN IRELAND



ANNSBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

How important is business and industry for the future of Annsborough?

- A) *Very important*
- B) *Quite important*
- C) *Doesn't matter*



Question Number 26

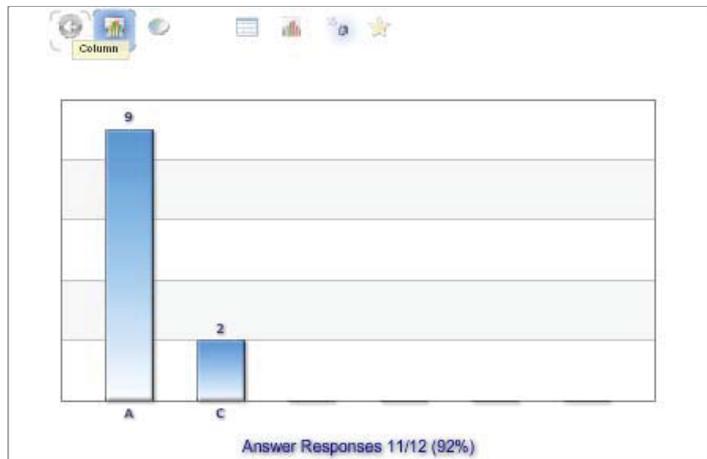
GROUNDWORK
NORTHERN IRELAND



ANNSBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

Would people support the development of new business and industry in Annsborough?

- A) *Yes*
- B) *No*
- C) *Don't know*



Question Number 27

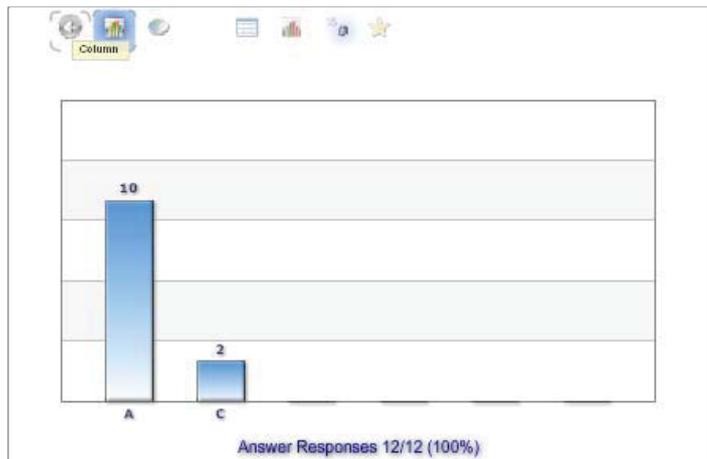
GROUNDWORK
NORTHERN IRELAND



ANNSBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

Is it a good idea to renovate mill buildings for industry / business?

- A) *Yes*
- B) *No*
- C) *Maybe*



Question Number 28

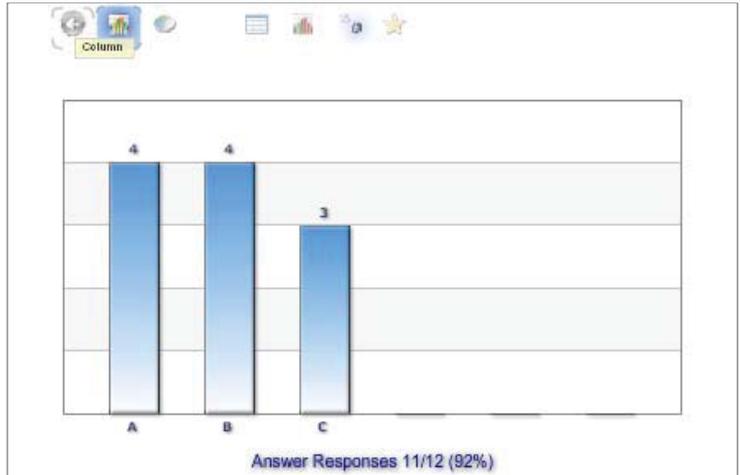
GROUNDWORK
NORTHERN IRELAND

AMNSBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

Is there a demand for more social housing?

A) Yes
B) No
C) Don't know



Question Number 29

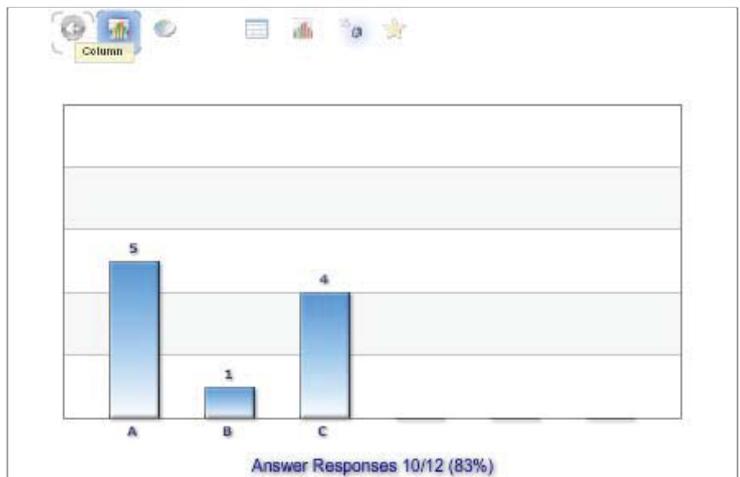
GROUNDWORK
NORTHERN IRELAND

AMNSBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

Is there a demand for more private housing?

A) Yes
B) No
C) Don't know



Question Number 30

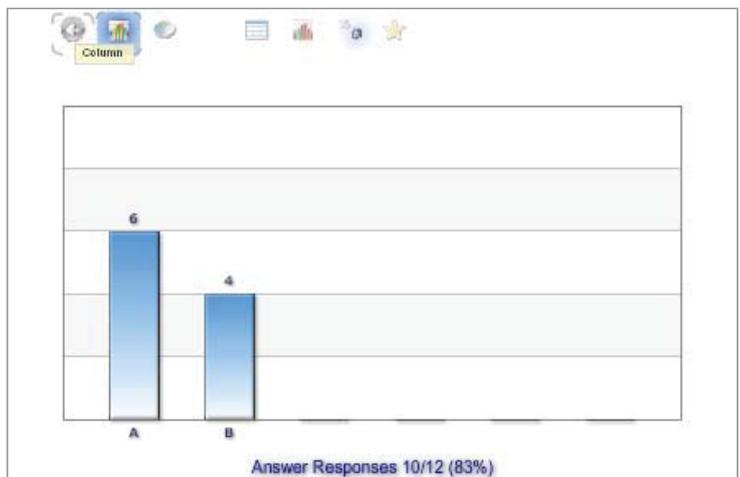
GROUNDWORK
NORTHERN IRELAND

AMNSBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

Would people support areas of new housing development in the village?

A) Yes
B) No
C) Maybe



Question Number 31

GROUNDWORK
NORTHERN IRELAND

ANNSBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

What do you think are the top 3 priorities for the future of the village?

- A) Improve community facilities
- B) Improve road safety
- C) Improve the local environment and preserve historic heritage
- D) Promote tourism
- E) Promote new and existing businesses
- F) Develop new housing





Question Number 32

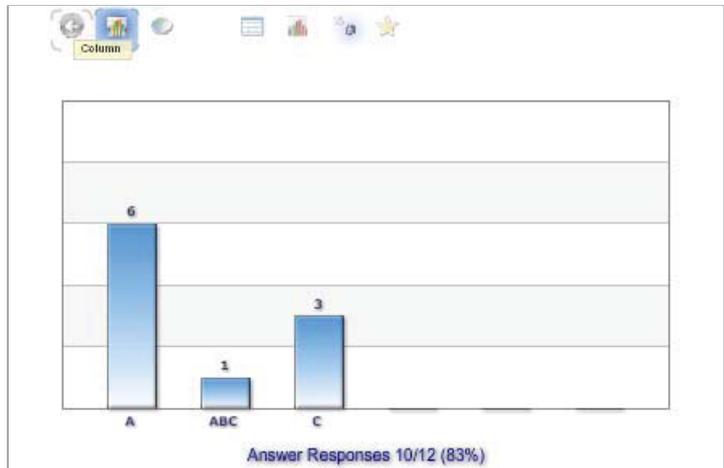
GROUNDWORK
NORTHERN IRELAND

ANNSBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

Would you like to be involved in further consultation on the village plan?

- A) Yes
- B) No
- C) Maybe



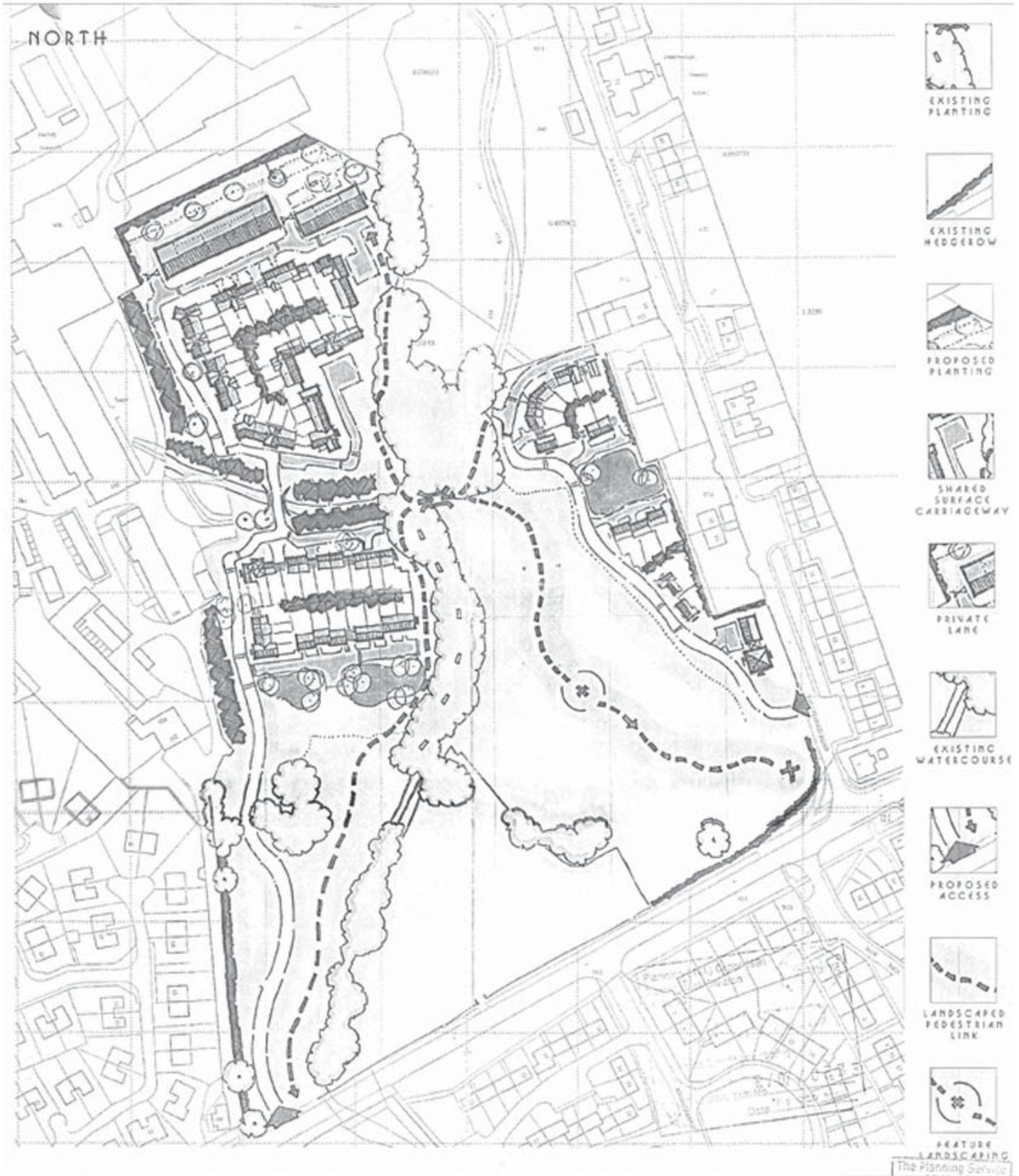


8.3 Planning application

Planning application R/2007/0533/03

Copy of drawing: Illustrative Proposal

Dwg ref: 2654-050-033 (Rev D)



8.4 Priority project

Designs are subject to detailed architectural drawings and once completed, may vary from the initial sketch proposals attached. The building shown may not be feasible within the available budget for this phase of the works.



Existing Social Club



Proposed Community Centre Extension

Annsborough Village Plan

Community Building Extension cost estimate based on sketch design

Ref	Item	Approx Quantity	Approx Rate	Approx Cost
	Break out tarmac	209 m2	2	£218.00
	Excavate oversite and cart away	209 m2	4	£836.00
	Excavate bases	18 m3	12	£216.00
	Hardcore	209 m2	4	£836.00
	Dpm	209 m2	2	£418.00
	Concrete bases	18 m3	100	£1,800.00
	Concrete bed	209 m2	18	£3,762.00
	Steel portal frame and roof	Item		£15,000.00
	Rainwater goods	Item	incl	£0.00
	Holding down bolt boxes	Item		£500.00
	Cavity external walls insulated and externally rendered	313 m2	54	£16,902.00
	Internal blockwork	140 m2	25	£3,500.00
	Suspended timber floor	45 m2	30	£1,350.00
	Plasterboard ceiling	45 m2	10	£450.00
	Staircase	Item		£1,000.00
	Balustrades	15 m	65	£975.00
	Timber floor to court	117 m2	20	£2,340.00
	Line marking	Item		£150.00
	Plywood and battens	29 m2	20	£580.00
	Extra over blockwork for joinery etc	Item		£1,500.00
	Plumbing installation	Item		£1,200.00
	Electrical Installation	Item		£4,000.00
	Heating Installation	Item		£4,000.00
	Decoration	Item		£1,500.00
	Drainage	100 m	20	£2,000.00
	Manholes	3 no	500	£1,500.00
	Opening into existing	Item	750	£750.00
	Floor covering	137 m2	6	£822.00
	Kitchen upgrade	item		£2,000.00
	Total			£70,105.00
	Prelims			£2,000.00
	Contingency			£3,000.00
	Total excl planning fees professional fees and VAT			£75,105.00

ANNSBOROUGH STORES

EXISTING MAIN ENTRANCE TO SOCIAL CLUB

EXISTING ACCESS TO CAR PARK

BALLYLOUGH ROAD

EXISTING ENTRANCE FROM CAR PARK

EXISTING WALL TO BE RE PAINTED

EXISTING BUILDING

PROPOSED BUILDING CONNECTING TO EXISTING BUILDING.

PROPOSED BUILDING TO BE PORTAL FRAME WITH BLOCK WORK INFILL AND COMPOSITE ROOF

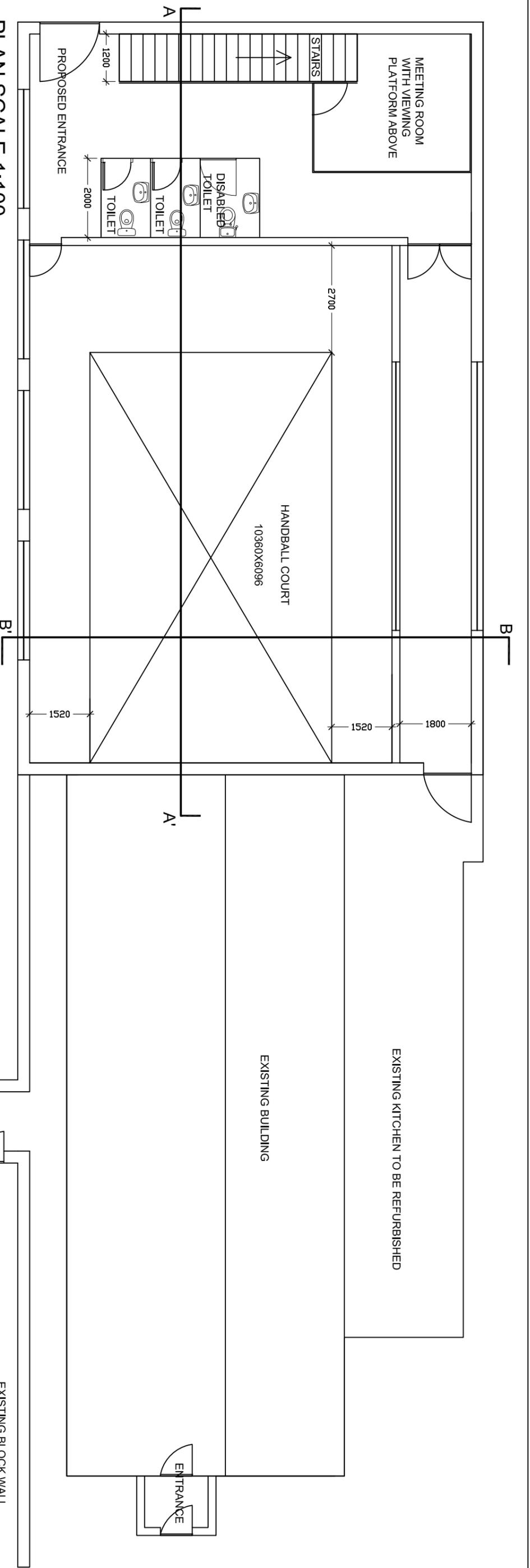
- INTERIOR TO INCLUDE:
- HANDBALL COURT 10x6m
 - VIEWING PLATFORM
 - MEETING ROOM
 - TOILETS

PROPOSED ENTRANCE

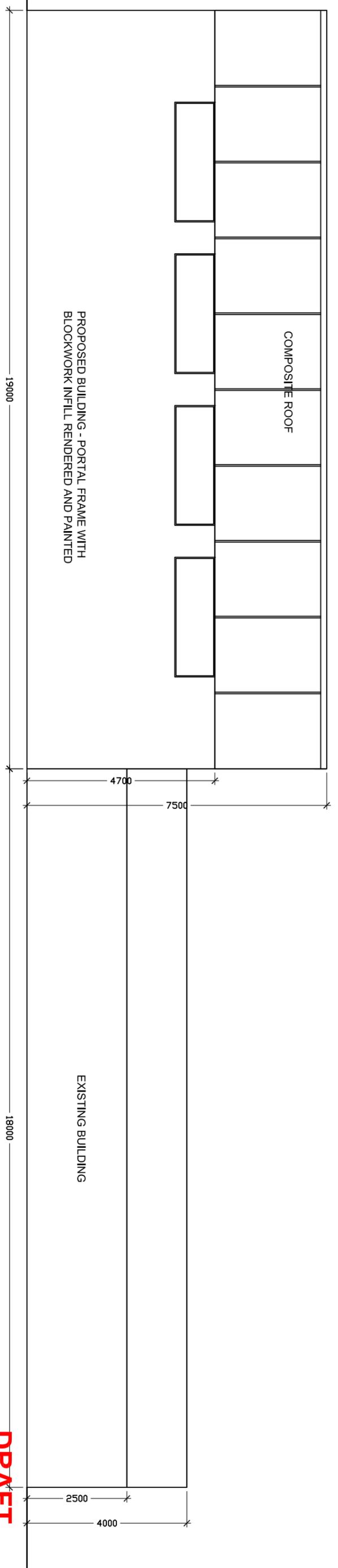
DRAFT

 <p>GROUNDWORK NORTHERN IRELAND</p>	<p>Groundwork Northern Ireland 63-75 Duncairn Gardens Belfast BT15 2GB Telephone 028 90 749494 Facsimile 028 90 752373 Email info@groundworkni.co.uk</p>
	<p>PROJECT: ANNSBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN</p>
<p>DRAWING TITLE: COMMUNITY BUILDING EXTENSION SKETCH</p>	
<p>DRAWING NCR.: LAYOUT PLAN</p>	
<p>1:200 @A3</p>	<p>DRAWN BY: HT</p>
<p>CHECKED BY: JM</p>	<p>DATE: AUG 2012</p>

DRAWINGS SUBJECT TO SURVEYS DETAILED DESIGN

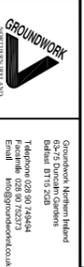


PLAN SCALE 1:100



ELEVATION SCALE 1:100

DRAFT

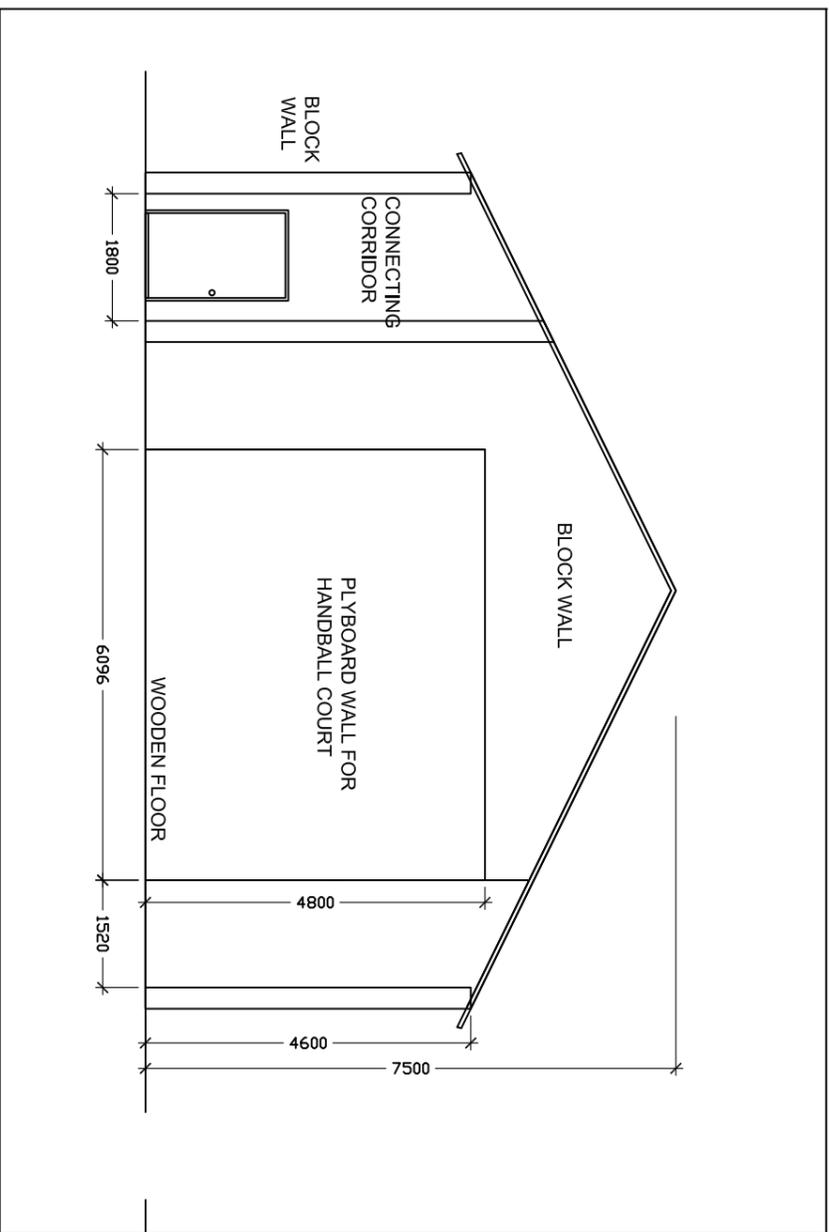


PROJECT:
ANNSBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

DRAWING TITLE:
COMMUNITY BUILDING EXTENSION SKETCH

DRAWING NO: PLAN AND ELEVATION
 1:100 @A3
 CHECKED BY: JM
 DRAWN BY: HT
 DATE: AUG 2012

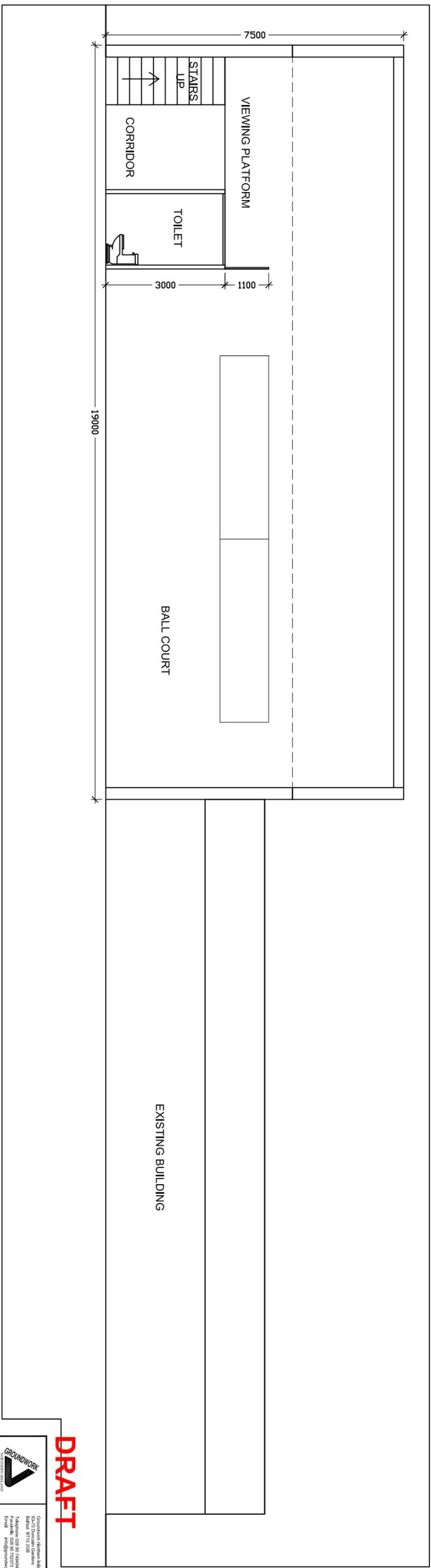
DRAWINGS SUBJECT TO SURVEYS DETAILED DESIGN



SECTION A - A' SCALE 1:100



VISUALISATION



SECTION B - B' SCALE 1:100

DRAFT

GROUNDWORK
 COMMUNITY BUILDING
 EXTENSION SKETCH

PROJECT:
ANNSBOROUGH VILLAGE PLAN

DRAWING TITLE:
COMMUNITY BUILDING EXTENSION SKETCH

DRAWING NO: SECTIONS AA & BB
 1:100 @A3
 DRAWN BY: HT
 CHECKED BY: JM
 DATE: AUG 2012

DRAWINGS SUBJECT TO SURVEYS DETAILED DESIGN

Annsborough Village Plan

Community Building Extension

Ref	Item	Approx Quantity	Approx Rate	Approx Cost
	Break out tarmac	209 m2	2	£218.00
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	Excavate bases	18 m3	12	£216.00
	Hardcore	209 m2	4	£836.00
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	Heating Installation	Item		£4,000.00
	Decoration	Item		£1,500.00
	Drainage	100 m	20	£2,000.00
	Manholes	3 no	500	£1,500.00
	Opening into existing	Item	750	£750.00
	Floor covering	137 m2	6	£822.00
	Total			£68,105.00
	Prelims			£2,000.00
	Contingency			£3,000.00
	Total excl planning fees professional fees and VAT			£73,105.00

