The Village Renewal Plan has been developed by the community in conjunction with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council to meet the requirements of the Rural Development Programme for Northern Ireland 2014-2020.

Ove Arup and Partners (Arup) was appointed as the consultancy team to facilitate the delivery of the Village Renewal Plan for Belleek. This Village Renewal Plan has been facilitated by a stakeholder workshop. The outcome of this is a Village Renewal Plan which includes a range of projects and initiatives that we believe will have a real impact on the area.

The Village Renewal Plan was funded under Priority 6 (LEADER) of the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, European Union, and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

The Rural Development Programme uses the LEADER approach which adopts a community led model to assist rural communities to improve the quality of life and economic prosperity in their local area, through the allocation of funds based on local need. Village Renewal and Development is an important element of the Rural Development Programme.

The Village Plan is a working document that requires the support of the community and in many cases the community working in partnership with other agencies and statutory bodies.

It should be noted that the progressing of a Village Plan under the Rural Development Programme does not mean that the settlement or area, to which the ‘Village Plan’ applies, is designated as a village in the settlement hierarchy as identified in the current development plans that apply to the District (i.e. the Banbridge/Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015, and the Ards and Down Area Plan 2015) or in the Council’s new Local Development Plan for the District, which is currently under preparation.

*It is important to note that some projects and initiatives set out within the action plan may be subject to future feasibility studies and analysis, detailed design, landowner agreements, statutory approvals and available funding.*
BELLEEK VILLAGE RENEWAL PLAN

Newtown Road (Credit – Discover Northern Ireland)
Village Location

Belleek is a small village within the eastern rural hinterland of Newry City and lies between the villages of Camlough and Newtownhamilton, upon the A25 between the Newtownhamilton and Newry. Situated approximately 7 miles to the east of Newry, it provides adequate access to its urban counterpart with a mere 15-20-minute journey time via car. Belleek also offer adequate connectivity with Armagh which rests 15 miles to the North of the Village.

Village Character

The village situates itself within a drumlin landscape which shapes the topography of the land offering a unique descending landscape. Building on this, the village is elevated to the south east offering a descending pathway along Newtown Road towards the village core. Due to the built form, the panoramic views of the village are narrowed due to the building line on either side of the road, however continuing towards Main Street the panoramic views of the landscape is suddenly revealed to display the central green space and surrounding drumlin hills that frame the village setting.
History and Development of the Village

The current street layout and structure of the village remains identical in comparison to its historical inception. Like many rural settlements, the initial and fundamental growth of the village situated its development at the main road junction within the settlement. Building on this, Belleek primarily established its village core on the lands north of the junction, overlooking the central open space. By 1846, the village had established the need for a church, post-office and two schools highlighting the initial growth and development of Belleek. The settlement derived a form of industry from the quarry found on the south western periphery of the village core. A key landscape area would have been the vast Deerpark, located slightly east of Belleeks providing a key setting for locate nature and habitat to thrive. Today, the village has continued to consolidate and preserve its original setting by limited sprawl and growth and protecting the village core at the main road junction and open space.

Village Profile

Residing within the wider Camlough ward, the village of Belleek attains a predominantly youthful population with 26.34% of residents under 16 years of age whilst only 10.14% of the population are aged over 65. Additionally, in relation to the health of the village, 81.68% stated that their health was either good or very good, whereas 17.83% of residents have stated that they have a long term health problem or disability that limits their day-to-day activities. Building on this, it is vital that future development of services and amenities consider the needs and requirements for each demographic sector.

Settlement Development Limit

The settlement development limit is designed to protect a number of areas of significant landscape character. These include St. Laurence O’Toole’s RC Church and graveyard and adjoining landforms to the northern boundary of the settlement, the landscape and vistas of the standing stone to the south and an elevated landform to the east. The compact form of the settlement will be conserved whilst allowing for a restricted amount of development.
Future Development

A key role of the Banbridge, Newry and Mourne Area Plan is to designate and guide future development within the settlement area such as zoning of land for housing or illustrating environmental protection on land comprising key ecological assets. Building on this, within the current plan the village of Belleek does not comprise any land zoned for increased housing capacity or residential scheme, instead the settlement primarily expresses a wide range of local landscape policy areas which aim to protect the rich environmental quality, integrity and character of the village. However, the development of the emerging local development plan will outline the need for increased housing if deemed necessary for the village.

Recent Development

Enhancements at St. Laurence O’Toole’s Primary School. Planning Ref. LA07/2015/0138/F. Status: Permission Granted

Proposed single storey flat roof extension to accommodate staff room, office, comms room and lobby to include level ramp access, steps and railings. Additionally, the Primary School has recently improved facilities by enhancing parking provision and the installation of perimeter fencing.


Proposed conversion of existing restaurant/licensed premises to a 36 bed residential care home to include extension to the rear of premises and new second and third floor accommodation at 16 Main Street.

Residential Housing development. Planning Ref. LA07/2015/0151/F. Status: Permission Granted

Erection 5 housing units comprising of 1 pair of semidetached and 3 town houses at land between Carrickananny Road and immediately north of Rockview Crescent.
03 | Policy Analysis

3.1 Planning Policy

Regional Development Strategy 2035 ‘Building a Better Future’

The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) is a statutory plan, and sets the spatial vision for the region up to the year 2035. One of the central aims of the RDS is to support our towns, villages and rural communities to maximise their potential.

Our rural areas including our towns and villages have a key role in supporting economic growth. They offer opportunities in terms of their potential for growth in new sectors, the provision of rural recreation and tourism, their attractiveness as places to invest, live and work, and their role as a reservoir of natural resources and highly valued landscapes (RDS, p19).

The RDS sets out Strategic Guidance for the economic, society and the environment. RG7 highlights the need to support rural renaissance which is about revitalising the centres of small towns and villages so that they meet the immediate needs of the communities they serve.

The RDS emphasises the need to sustain rural communities living in smaller settlements and the open countryside and to improve accessibility for rural communities.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) ‘Shaping a Better future’

The SPPS covers the whole of Northern Ireland and sets out the strategic policies for the sustainable development of the region, which it defines as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

The achievement of sustainable development is guided by the following six principles:

- Living within environmental limits
- Ensuring a strong, healthy, just and equal society
- Achieving a sustainable economy
- Using sound science responsibly
- Promoting opportunity and innovation; and
- Promoting good governance

These principles should form the basis of good development across the region, and are a key consideration in decision making process for growth and development.

Banbridge / Newry and Mourne Plan 2015 (BNMP)

The BNMAP was adopted in October 2013 and sets out a number of site specific statutory policies relevant to Belleek village that should be taken into consideration by developers, landowners, the Council and the local community in the forward planning of the Village.

The plan outlines the designated settlement development limit for the village highlighting the protection of a number of areas of significant landscape value. These include St. Laurence O’Toole’s RC Church and graveyard and contiguous land to the north of the settlement, the setting and views of the standing stone to the south and an ascending landform to the east.

The compact form of the settlement will be retained whilst allowing for a limited amount of development. Additionally, the plan outlines key areas of Archaeological potential and local landscape policy areas within the village such as St. Laurence O’Toole’s RC Church, The Deer Park Estate and the rising landform to the east of the village.

Living Well Together: Newry, Mourne and Down District Council’s Community Plan (2016)

Community planning is a new function of Councils here in Northern Ireland since the reorganisation of local government in 2014. Councils have a requirement to create a Community Planning Partnership for their District whose role is to work in collaboration with all partners to achieve the aspirations of the Community Plan.

The overarching principles of the Plan are ensuring effective community engagement in the planning and delivery of services, utilising the strengths and resilience within communities, promoting equality and tackling inequality, adopting a preventative approach, driving efficiency and performance improvement, supporting a sustainable approach to development, holding each other as partners to account for delivering the community plan outcomes in collaboration and creating a Partnership Board responsible for monitoring and directing impact.

Emerging Local Development Plan

The Local Development Plan (LDP) will deliver a 15-year plan framework to support economic and social needs in the District, in line with regional strategies and policies, while providing the delivery of sustainable development. The new Local Development Plan will be the key consideration in the determination of planning applications for the development or use of land in the Council area. The next stage of the LDP process is the publication of the preferred options paper which will contain a series of options for dealing with key issues in the District, as well as the Council’s justification for its proposed approach. The POP will indicate the Council’s preferred options for growth and development in the District. The POP will be subject to public consultation. It is at this stage in the plan preparation process, that the public and stakeholders will have their first opportunity to put forward views and influence the LDP.
3.2 Other Strategies, Plans and Initiatives

The Village Plan seeks to align with wider strategies and plans for the District, taking into account the importance of the Mourne Mountains and Ring of Gullion AONB in encouraging tourism and economic development into the area, and finding areas of complementarity where different stakeholders could work together to deliver such shared ideas and projects. Below is a snapshot of the strategies and plans that have been taken into consideration in the development of the Village Plan.

NMDDC Corporate Plan 2015-2019

The Newry Mourne and Down District Council Corporate Plan for 2015-2019 aims to envisage a new era for the District. The plan strives to strike a balance between the ambitions of the district whilst taking account of key issues which can influence the future of the district area and its population. Additionally, the corporate plan aims to create opportunities for local people and local communities to thrive by supporting sustainable economic growth over time and helping them to lead fulfilling lifestyles. The visionary stance of the strategy aims to create a district that is that is attractive to visit and do business, where people and communities can unlock their enterprising spirit as well as play their part in contributing to its social and economic development along with a district that facilitates and encourages healthy lifestyles. By 2019, the corporate plan will aspire to create a premier tourism destination for the island of Ireland, attract investment and support the creation of new jobs and support the improved health and well-being of its people.

Economic Regeneration & Investment Strategy 2015-2020

The Strategy aims to develop the Newry, Mourne and Down region to be recognised as a vibrant, dynamic and connected region of enterprise and economic growth; a place of sustainable natural beauty and a premier tourist destination encompassing excellence in culture and arts and enabling and creating opportunities for all. The Strategy is developed around five themes: 1.) Economic Development, 2.) Tourism Development, Marketing, Promotion and Events, 3.) Urban Development and Regeneration, 4.) Rural Development and Regeneration, 5.) Arts, Culture and Heritage. The strategy aims to develop a synergy between the five themes that need to be developed in the period to 2020. Within each theme we have a number of strategic priorities which will be delivered against.

Newry, Mourne and Down Tourism Strategy 2017-2022

The Tourism Strategy for Newry, Mourne and Down aims to maximise tourism growth for the district area by adopting a new and fresh approach that recognises the distinctive elements and strengths which sets the district apart to other destinations. The Tourism Strategy focuses on a key thematic headline ‘Mountains, Myths and Maritime’ which outline the core elements that shape a distinctive and strong image for Newry, Mourne and Down.

Newry, Mourne and Down Sports Facility Strategy 2016

The purpose of the Strategy is to identify the strategic need for Sports facilities in Newry, Mourne and Down District Council. This is one of 11 Local Strategies to be developed in the context of the NI-wide work. A consistent approach to developing the Local Strategies has been undertaken. The same methodology for applying supply and demand standards for sports halls, swimming pools and health and fitness facilities have been used in all 11 Local Authority Strategies and agreed with Sport NI. The Strategy rationale is to develop a framework for the future prioritisation and development of sporting facilities within the district.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Play Strategy 2017-2022

The purpose of the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Play Strategy is to establish an effective strategic framework for decision making as it relates to the development, maintenance and roll-out of play opportunities (both fixed and non-fixed) across the district.

At the core of the strategy is a recognition that play is a natural, fundamental part of children and young people’s lives that supports growth and development, enhances health and well-being, supports social and intellectual development, and enables children and young people to develop essential life skills. Importantly for children, play is fun.

Department for Infrastructure Strategic Plan for Greenways (July 2016)

The village of Belleek is strategically located to benefit from the proposed Armagh to Newry via Markethill secondary greenway.
Surrounding Rural Landscape
The Belleek village Plan has been developed in collaboration with the local community, key aspects of
the process are outlined below.

Village Walkabout

A community walkabout took place in Belleek on 25th May 2017 with representatives of the Council, the
consultant team, and members of the local community. During this time a site survey was carried out to
understand the background and context of the Village, key assets, issues and potential ideas of how the
Village could be improved.

Community Event

A public consultation event was held on the evening of 5th October 2017 in the Forkhill Community
Centre. The purpose of the event was to present the findings of the desktop research, site walkabout
and roundtable workshop, together with draft proposals for actions and priorities for tackling the issues
identified by the local community and village analysis work.

The event was publicly advertised via the Council’s website. Council officers also distributed details of
the event to community and voluntary groups in the area, and a public advertisement was placed in the
newspaper.
This draft Village Plan was then prepared and published for public consultation in January 2018.
**Strengths**

- Green Space – Open green space in the heart of the village
- School & Church – institutions play a key role within the community
- Location - Connectivity with Newry, Armagh and surrounding rural area
- Community Spirit – expression of Close-knit and vibrant community
- GAA Club – Successful GAA Club within the village
- Setting – unique rural and picturesque landscape embodies rich character

**Weaknesses**

- Speeding – Intensity and speed of traffic flow is a major concern
- Lack of Focal Point – village core requires a distinctive refinement
- Gateway Sites – Tired and in need of urgent enhancement
- Drainage Issues – Issue as base of main street causing flooding at bus stop
- Broadband – village requires access to improved high-speed broadband
- Recreational Space – Little Play provision for older children

**Opportunities**

- Highway to Health – designated community walking route around the perimeter of the sports pitch
- Community Space – the community require a designated community space
- Green Space – high quality shared space within the heart of Belleek
- Traffic Calming - initiatives to sallow and manage traffic flows

**Threats**

- Funding – potential lack in funding for particular projects
- Youth Engagement – promotion of youth in future development of village
- Road Safety – will remain a concern if not addressed
Following consultation with the community of Belleek, various projects have been identified which could contribute to the social and physical renewal of the village. The projects outlined in this draft plan are aspirations which are achievable with the relevant support. Constraints will face all the projects identified such as land ownership, funding and the requirement for statutory consents. However, such constraints can be addressed and overcome through dedicated and ongoing work by the community and other key stakeholders.

The opportunities presented in this plan range from a community space to enhanced traffic management initiatives and designated walking route around the perimeter of the GAA pitch. One of the key projects identified aims to address the absence of a community space in Belleek by providing a designated community space or exploring the potential to use an existing space such as the GAA Club or lands at rear of the Belleek Country House. A further opportunity which would be of substantial benefit to the community is to introduce improved traffic calming measures. Due to the natural layout and form of the village, traffic passes through Belleek at a high rate and intensity thus reducing levels of road and pedestrian safety. Furthermore, a project to harness improved standards for walking within the village can be achieve through a highway to health project around the perimeter of the GAA pitch.

Please note that all illustrations within this plan are conceptual. Any improvements to Belleek will require the development of detailed designs through consultation with local businesses and residents.
A project focused on improving levels of road safety at key gateway sites within the village via traffic management initiatives alongside environmental, visual and physical enhancements.

The village of Belleek expresses a uniquely distinctive layout and form influenced by its historical development. The settlement comprises primary and secondary gateways which experience differing levels of footfall and vehicular activity. The primary gateways of the village are located along the Newtown Road and accommodate traffic flow between Newtownhamilton and Camlough. The secondary gateway within the village facilitates lower volumes of activity and is found at the Carrickananny Road.

A project to improve levels of road safety by introducing improved traffic management initiatives at key gateway sites within the village such as signage and traffic calming measures. Each traffic calming measure will be relevant to each gateway. A key issue is the speed and intensity of traffic flow at the primary gateways and throughout the core of the village along the Newtown Road, which in turn would benefit via effective traffic calming measures.

By managing the intensity and flow of traffic within the village, levels of road and pedestrian safety can be safeguarded and improved creating a safer village and community.

Additionally, enhancement of the visual and physical and condition of the gateways can be achieved through improved landscaping, boundary treatments and vibrant planting in order to uplift the appearance of key entry point into the village. The primary entry point to the village at the Newtown and Newry Roads would benefit via improved welcome signage, high quality landscaping and landmark features to regenerate the environmental quality of Belleek upon entry.

In order to successfully implement this project, further consultation with the community and key stakeholders would need to be undertaken. Furthermore, detailed design and feasibility studies would need to be carried out within the village to assess the relevant issues. Additionally, statutory approvals and necessary funding would need to be secured.

06 Opportunities

A | VILLAGE GATEWAYS

A project focused on improving levels of road safety at key gateway sites within the village via traffic management initiatives alongside environmental, visual and physical enhancements.

The village of Belleek expresses a uniquely distinctive layout and form influenced by its historical development. The settlement comprises primary and secondary gateways which experience differing levels of footfall and vehicular activity. The primary gateways of the village are located along the Newtown Road and accommodate traffic flow between Newtownhamilton and Camlough. The secondary gateway within the village facilitates lower volumes of activity and is found at the Carrickananny Road.

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In order to successfully implement this project, further consultation with the community and key stakeholders would need to be undertaken. Furthermore, detailed design and feasibility studies would need to be carried out within the village to assess the relevant issues. Additionally, statutory approvals and necessary funding would need to be secured.
A project to enhance and improve the green space within the heart of the village by introducing high quality hard and soft landscaping, boundary treatment and public realm enhancements such as improved seating, landmark features and floral planting.

The green space in the heart of the village plays a key role in offering a shared open space for the community however its current condition is tired, dated and in need of enhancement in order to fulfil its maximal potential. The village green space facilitates high levels of play, recreation and leisure which must be taken into consideration with any future proposals for the site.

This project will create and deliver a space that will increase community ownership within the village. The village green space acts as a key focal point within Belleek which expresses the character, pride and activity of the community.

In order to successfully implement this project, further consultation with the community and key stakeholders would need to be undertaken. Furthermore, detailed design and feasibility studies would need carried out within the village to assess the relevant issues. Additionally, statutory approvals and necessary funding would need to be secured.

IMPROVING THE OPEN SPACE
A project to enhance the visual and environmental quality to the entrance of the Green Space Project within the village at Slieve Brac Park. Public art and high quality landscaping have the potential to visually uplift the appearance of a place.
C | RIVER WALK TRAIL

A project to explore a designated walking route within the heart of the village to include a unique looping trail which passes alongside the River. The walking trail would offer a unique pathway which would begin at the village green space to proceed North along the Carrickananny Road and loop back toward Belleek via the natural path of the river. The trail would require re-entry to the village via private lands to the north of Main Street to complete the route at the village green.

The walking trail would include high quality hard and soft landscaping to intricately weave into the sensitive setting, lighting to illuminate the pathway for evening use alongside wayfinding signage.

The need for such a project is evident due to the absence and lack of designated, safe and attractive walking routes within the catchment of the village area. This project would explore the potential to implement a protected walkway within the heart of the village to improve access and provision to the community for improve walking within Belleek. The benefits of this project would harness improved levels of physical, mental and social wellbeing throughout the community by creating a safe and attractive walking trail to improve levels of physical activity throughout Belleek.

In order to successfully implement this project, further consultation with the community and key stakeholders would need to be undertaken. Furthermore, detailed design and feasibility studies would need to be carried out within the village to assess the relevant issues. Additionally, statutory approvals and necessary funding would need to be secured.
D | HIGHWAY TO HEALTH (GAA PITCH)

A project to create a safe, attractive and designated walkable pathway at the GAA pitched located to the South of the village. The project will include high quality landscaping, planting and boundary treatment along the route. The need for such a project is evident as there are limited walking routes / trails within the village areas and issues of safety whilst walking throughout the village is a major concern due to road and pedestrian safety. The Highway to health project will offer a solution for the community by provided a designated walkway to facilitate social, physical and emotional wellbeing.

In order to successfully implement this project, further consultation with the community and key stakeholders would need to be undertaken. Furthermore, detailed design and feasibility studies would need carried out within the village to assess the relevant issues. Additionally, statutory approvals and necessary funding would need to be secured.
E | COMMUNITY SPACE

A project to deliver a designated community space within Belleek. The delivery of a designated community space could reuse an existing space within the village or develop upon vacant / underused land within the area. A possible location for this project may be to integrate a designated community space into the GAC Club situated South of the village or a unit within the Grand Belleek House. Building on this, the unoccupied first floor of the Grand Belleek House may have the development potential for community use with an ancillary car park capable of serving up to 80 cars. Additionally, planning permission has been granted for the site to accommodate a 36 bed nursing home, highlighting that any further proposal would require a material change of use application in order to facilitate a designated community space community space. This site would bode favourable due to its strategic location within the heart of the village safeguarding levels of access and connectivity.

The project would aim to explore the potential to deliver a designated community space to include necessary community facilities and amenities such as meeting rooms, activity / event space and potential catering services. The need for such a project is evident due to the absence of a designated community facility within Belleek. This project would offer a substantial asset for the future development of the community, settlement and immediate rural area.

In order to successfully implement this project, further consultation with the community, land owners and key stakeholders would need to be undertaken. Furthermore, detailed design and feasibility studies would need carried out within the village to assess the relevant issues. Additionally, statutory approvals and necessary funding would need to be secured.
This plan is designed to improve the social and economic fabric of the area. The Village Renewal Plan provides an indication of the key tasks which need to be undertaken to progress specific projects. This often includes detailed scheme design, preparation of the business case and funding application, and in some cases further feasibility and analysis.

The source of funding will often dictate the order in which tasks need to be undertaken, for example the Rural Development Programme expects all statutory consents to be in place before the funding application is submitted. There are potential sources of funding available for the projects and initiatives set out within this Village Renewal Plan. It is important to note that reference to potential funding is a guidance only. Other funding opportunities may become available during the lifetime of this plan, and all projects will be subject to appropriate eligibility checks, application and assessment procedures as set by each funding body.

The draft Acton Plan (Sector 08) provides an indication of the priority level of each project based on discussions with key stakeholders during plan preparation. Alongside this, a lead delivery agent and key stakeholders have also been noted. There may also be other interested groups who should be engaged during project implementation or those whose agreement must be sought, such as a private landowners or statutory bodies. It is also important to recognise that priorities may change as funding opportunities become available.
## ACTION PLAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regeneration Initiative</th>
<th>Priority Level</th>
<th>Timeframe for Delivery</th>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>Potential Funding Source</th>
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<td>H- High</td>
<td>Short (0-3 years)</td>
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<td>A Village Gateways</td>
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<td>B Village Green</td>
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<td>S</td>
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<td>Fund Raising, Private, NMDDC, HLF, DfC</td>
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<td>S-M</td>
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Com = Community Groups  
DfI = Department for Infrastructure  
DAERA = Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs  
NMDDC = Newry, Mourne and Down District Council  
NIHE = Northern Ireland Housing Executive  
Priv = Private Landowners  
TNI = Transport NI  
HLF = Heritage Lottery Fund  
RDP = Rural Development Programme  
St.L = St. Laurence O’Toole’s Primary School  
DfC = Department for Communities
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