

FINNIS

Village Renewal and Development Plan Addendum and Updated Action Plan: December 2017

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



1. Introduction

The Village Renewal Plan (Village Plan) was produced for Finnis in 2012. This has now been reviewed and updated by the community in conjunction with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council. The review has taken the form of an addendum to the Village Plan and should be read in conjunction with it. The addendum includes an updated Action Plan (see Section 2), which identifies which projects and initiatives have been implemented since the original plan was published and highlights projects which could be focused on over the next phase of implementation.

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

The review of the Village 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 and the 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 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.

2. Implementation

This plan is designed to improve the social and economic fabric of the area.

The Updated Action 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 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 Updated Action Plan also 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.

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 the Council's new Local Development Plan for the District, which is currently under preparation.



	Action substantially complete	2012 Action Plan				2017 Update			
	Ongoing								
	Major constraint to implementation								
	New Project								
	Regeneration Initiative	Key Stakeholders	Time frame	Potential Funders	Progress @ November 2017	Priority H, M, L	Time frame	Actions	
1. Community Facilities									
1.1	Investigate options for bulk buying of goods such as home heating oil through a village cooperative.	NMDDC, Massford Project Association Co Down RCN	S	Big Lottery	Community had stated that they aspire to raise the profile of this project and would support the project remaining within plan.	H	M	Project to remain in Plan.	
1.2	Introduce community noticeboard to foster community relations and advertise events.	NMDDC, Massford Project Association	S	NMDDC, RDP, Big Lottery, DfC	Initiative not carried out. However, active noticeboard in Parochial House used by various groups and individuals. Community had raised that there could be greater co-ordination of signage.	M	S	Explore potential location for community noticeboard and liaise with community with regard to management of noticeboard.	
2. Environmental Improvements									
2.1	Ensure attractive gateway signage on approaches to the village.	TNI, NMDDC	S	TNI, RDP, Liver Here Love Here	No Progress as yet, however community had stressed their support with regard to the project.	H	S	Explore potential Signage which identifies and expresses townlands. Urgent implementation of NMDDC gateway signage given council boundary changes. Additionally, explore potential for granite sculpture feature.	
2.2	Introduce signage to improve linkages to both St Michael's Church Hall and the School.	NMDDC, Massford Project Association, affected Landowners, local Residents	M	NMDDC, RDP, Live Here Love Here, DfC	Community had voiced their support for such a project, however no significant progress had been made.	H	S	Explore suitable locations and design of signage. This should complement the gateway signage outlined above. Identify existing or potential walking routes and circuits around the countryside surrounding the village Promote the health and wellbeing of the community.	

2.3	Introduce new interpretative signage at Peter Morgan's Cottage covering the local points of interest such as the Finnis Souterrain, Finnis Tree, Source of Lagan, Prefamine cottage, explanation of name 'Massford,' 'Blaeberry Sunday' walk, walks such as Darby's Loanin' and Glen Loanin' walks and incorporate information from the existing sign that covers the 'Gateway to Slieve Croob and the Dromara Hills' walking and cycling routes.	NMDDC, Local landowner, Massford Project Association, Sustrans, NI Tourist Board	S	NMDDC, RDP, HLF, NIEA, DfC	No significant progress has been made to date however there is still strong support for this type of project. The area has a strong heritage which should be promoted.	H	S	Commission local consultant to design the interpretative signage and advise on suitable locations. This should be done in collaboration with the community to ensure that the diverse heritage is fully explored. Seek funding to implement the project.
2.4	Liaise with BT over replacing the red telephone box at the bridge, which was knocked down in 2011.	NMDDC, Massford Project Association, BT, TNI	S	BT	Community are not aware of any progress on this action.	M	M	Continue to engage with BT regarding project implementation.
2.5	Improve general maintenance and tidying of the streets in the village, including the benches, roads signs and interpretative signage panels. Concern noted at the weeds growing in footpaths and broken sections of footpath surfaces. Undertake remedial works to address immediate problem areas, which could cause a trip hazard.	TNI, NMDDC	S	TNI, NMDDC	Community had stated that no significant progress had been made, however were in support of the project.	H	S/M	Potential to encourage a community clean up event with the prospect of doing this on a more regular basis. Continuous engagement with the relevant statutory authority is important to raise awareness and encourage action.
2.6	Mend and repair the fence at the rear of the green area at Peter Morgan's Cottage.	NMDDC, adjacent Landowner, local Residents, Massford Project Association	S	NMDDC, Big Lottery, Awards for All, DfC, Live Here Love Here	Community had stated that the condition of the fence had not been deemed a major issue. Maintenance of ground carried out via NIHE to the dissatisfaction of community.	M	M	Project to remain in plan.

2.7	Establish if street lighting provision is sufficient to ensure pedestrian safety in all areas. Limited lights noted around junction of Rathfriland Road with Dree Hill. Implement change if a need is identified. Heritage fittings to be considered if performance meets demand	TNI, NMDDC	M	TNI	Community had stated that the condition of street lighting remained an issue, however the project is not deemed a high priority.	L	M	Project to remain in Plan.
2.8	Introduce climbing plants to screen the retaining walls to the church car park and introduce tree planting to the church grounds, such as rowans, to enhance the setting.	NMDDC, St Michael's Church	S	St Michael's Church, NMDDC, DfC	No progress as yet. Project not consider to be high priority.	L	L	Project to remain in plan.
2.9	Change draft local plan to introduce an Area of Townscape Character, to provide additional protection to the existing strong setting.	TNI, NMDDC	M	N/A	Community had voiced that project did not attain a high priority.	L	L	Project to remain in Plan.
2.10	Introduce screen planting, such as multi stem trees and shrubs, as a buffer between the green space at Peter Morgan's Cottage and the rear of the housing on Massford Close to soften the setting.	NMDDC, Massford Project Association	M	Live Here Love Here	Project area currently comprises fence maintained by NIHE.	L	L	Project to remain in plan, however adjust slightly to incorporate presence of fence with regard to landscape softening.
2.11	Reinforce weak boundaries to James King Pub with tree planting to strengthen edge, enhance the rural setting and screen the pub yard.	, Business Owner	M	RDP	Community noted that no significant progress made.	L	M	Project to remain in plan.
2.12	Renew surface of lane serving the school and church hall to improve accessibility	NMDDC, St Michael's Church, St Michael's Primary School, Landowner	M	St Michael's Church, NMDDC, SELB, Landowner	Project Complete	NA	NA	Project Complete

		and introduce street lighting to improve pedestrian safety.							
2.13		Improve the finish of the car park area at Peter Morgan's Cottage with a permeable block paving or similar to enhance the setting of the cottage.	Massford Project Association	M	Live Here Love Here, RDP	Community stated No significant progress made.	L	M	Project to remain within plan.
2.14		Change fence detail to the green space at Peter Morgan's Cottage to a metal rail and post estate fence, more in keeping with the high quality, rural character.	NMDDC, Massford Project Association	M	Live Here Love Here, Big Lottery	Community had voiced their concern regarding the proposal not being in keeping with the character of the village. The community preferred the option of a stone wall design.	M	M/L	Explore funding sources for these improvements. Any future project should include detailed consultation with the wider community to achieve agreement on the most appropriate design.
2.15		Initiate discussions between the local community and the Council over community wishes for floral displays to enhance the streetscape.	NMDDC, Massford Project Association, local Residents	M	NMDDC, RDP, Live Here Love Here, DfC	Community stated No significant progress made.	M	S/M	Community had stated that due to the environmental benefits of the project, they were in support of the project remaining.
2.16		Introduce a hedge boundary and trees to the green space between Massford Close and Dree Hill to enhance the rural setting.	NMDDC, Massford Project Association, local Residents	M	NMDDC, RDP, Live Here Love Here, DfC	Maintenance of grass verge deemed high priority at straight section rather than proposed hedged boundary.	H/M	S	Project to remain in plan to address grass verge rather than installation of hedge boundary.
2.17		Refurbish derelict building adjacent to Peter Morgan's Cottage and carry out environmental improvements to improve its setting. Suggested use as a café/bar/bistro/shop/self-catering accommodation/hostel for walkers and cyclists to accommodate tourists from the Souterrain and cyclists on route around the Mourne and Slieve Croob Route.	TNI, NMDDC, DfC, P, Massford Project Association, Sustrans, Building Owner / Landowner Co Down RCN	L	NMDDC, DfC, DFI	Building currently under private ownership and is the former unit for the Old School House. Community had stated that the project has not made any significant progress.	M	M	Liaise with landowner and explore feasibility for various uses for the site. Potential for a social project.

2.18	Environment improvements around the Village Bridge	NMDDC, Massford Project Association, TNI	M	NMDDC, RDP, DfC	N/A	M	M	Explore potential for aesthetic improvements around the bridge. This could include floral displays or additional planting. Explore funding sources and convene community meeting to explore options.
2.19	Revitalise the Parochial Hall	NMDDC, Massford Project Association, Private Landowner, Co Down RCN	M/L	RDP, Big Lottery, Live Here Love Here	N/A	M	M	Engage with landowner to explore interest in this project and agree option for delivery.
3. Leisure & Recreation								
3.1	Develop a community led initiative for an annual gala / festival at Peter Morgan's Cottage as a way of developing community spirit and attracting visitors.	NMDDC, Massford Project Association, local Residents Co Down RCN	M	NMDDC, DfC, Big Lottery	Project remains extremely important to integrated community working.	H/M	M	Key stakeholder to convene a meeting to explore the delivery of this project. Engage with NMDDC regarding potential funding to support annual event.
3.2	Develop new play provision in line with consultations, in agreed location.	NMDDC, affected Landowners, local Residents, Massford Project Association, St Michael's Primary School	S	NMDDC, Big Lottery, Live Here Love Here	Current provision located adjacent Mossvale Terrace, however the play area is not open to all as residents feel that it will attract users from beyond the community.	M	S/M	Continue to consult with community and relevant stakeholders regarding location and implementation for new community delivered play facility.
3.3	Promote cycling in the area and provide survives within Finnis which encourage cyclists to pass through, coffee shop / seating etc.	Sport NI, HSCNI, NMDDC, PSNI	M	RDP, Sport NI, Big Lottery	N/A	M	S	Explore potential to promote cycling throughout the village and wider community.
4. Infrastructure and Services								
4.1	Introduce a 30mph speed limit within the village, which is in keeping with the width and rural nature of the road, along with physical measures to enforce the speed limit, such as hazard signs, road markings, traffic	TNI, Translink, NMDDC, Massford Project Association, DfI	M	TNI, DfC	30mph limit signage installed.	H	S	Continue to liaise with TNI regarding speeding and safety issues. Encourage a survey to be undertaken if not already done so.

		ramps etc. to enhance the safety of pedestrian movement. (Traffic Regulation Order Process required.),							
4.2		Introduce signage to improve linkages to both St Michael's Church Hall and the School with additional safety signage at school.	TNI, NMDDC, St Michael's Church, St Michael's Primary School	S	TNI, DfC	Community had stated that no significant progress had been made, although support for such a scheme remains strong.	H	S	Project to remain in Plan.
4.3		Introduce hazard marking on the Rathfriland Road to highlight the entrance to the school and school hazard sign on the approaches to the junction to highlight to drivers the presence of children.	TNI, NMDDC, St Michael's Church, St Michael's Primary School	S	TNI	Project to remain in plan. Community voiced support for the installation of safety signage at Heart's Shop. Additionally, safety signage needed to warn drivers of the dip in road at Gransha.	H	S/M	Continue engagement with TNI.
4.4		installation of a footpath opposite the bridge is urgently needed.	TNI, NMDDC	S	TNI	N/A	H	S	Engage with TNI to raise awareness of the issue. Lobby for an assessment to be carried out by TNI.
4.5		Installation of improved bus shelters within the village.	TNI, NMDDC, Co Down RNC	S	TNI	N/A	H	S	Liaise with TNI in relation to potential installation of renewed shelters.
4.6		Improved quality and provision of signage	NMDDC, TNI, Massford Project Association	S/M	TNI	N/A	H	S	Explore potential to implement signage surrounding the hazards of flooding and road safety within the village particularly at the primary school. Additionally, signage surrounding local townlands and points of local interest.
4.7		Polytunnel / Community Allotments at Peter Morgan's Cottage.	NMDDC, Massford Project Association, Landowner Co Down RCN	M	Big Lottery, Live Here Love Here	N/A	M	M	Explore the potential to implement allotment / polytunnel units on grounds of Peter Morgan's cottage.

	4.8	Clean up and revitalise river area adjacent Peter Morgan's Cottage.	NMDDC, Massford Project Association, Private landowner, NI Water Rivers Agency	M/L	RDP, Rivers Agency, Live Here-Love Her, Big Lottery	N/A	H	M	<p>Explore potential to dredge, clean-up and revitalise the river area for community, leisure and recreational use.</p> <p>Engage in feasibility studies and explore overall project potential.</p>
Stakeholders and Potential Funders									
<p>AONB Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty NMDDC Newry, Mourne & Down District Council Dfi Department for Infrastructure DfC Department for Communities DRD Department for Regional Development EI Scheme Environmental Improvement/Public Realm Scheme HSCNI Health and Social Care Northern Ireland RDP Rural Development Programme</p> <p>NIEA Northern Ireland Environment Agency NIHE Northern Ireland Housing Executive PERS Pedestrian Environment Review Survey PSNI Police Service Northern Ireland SELB Southern Education and Library Board</p> <p>Co Down RCN: Co Down Rural Community Network</p> <p>PS - Private sector PLO - Private land owner RA - Rivers Agency TNI - Transport NI TL - Translink</p>									

3. Review of 2012 Action Plan