



SOUTH EAST COAST MASTERPLAN

Prepared for Department for Social Development

Final Report

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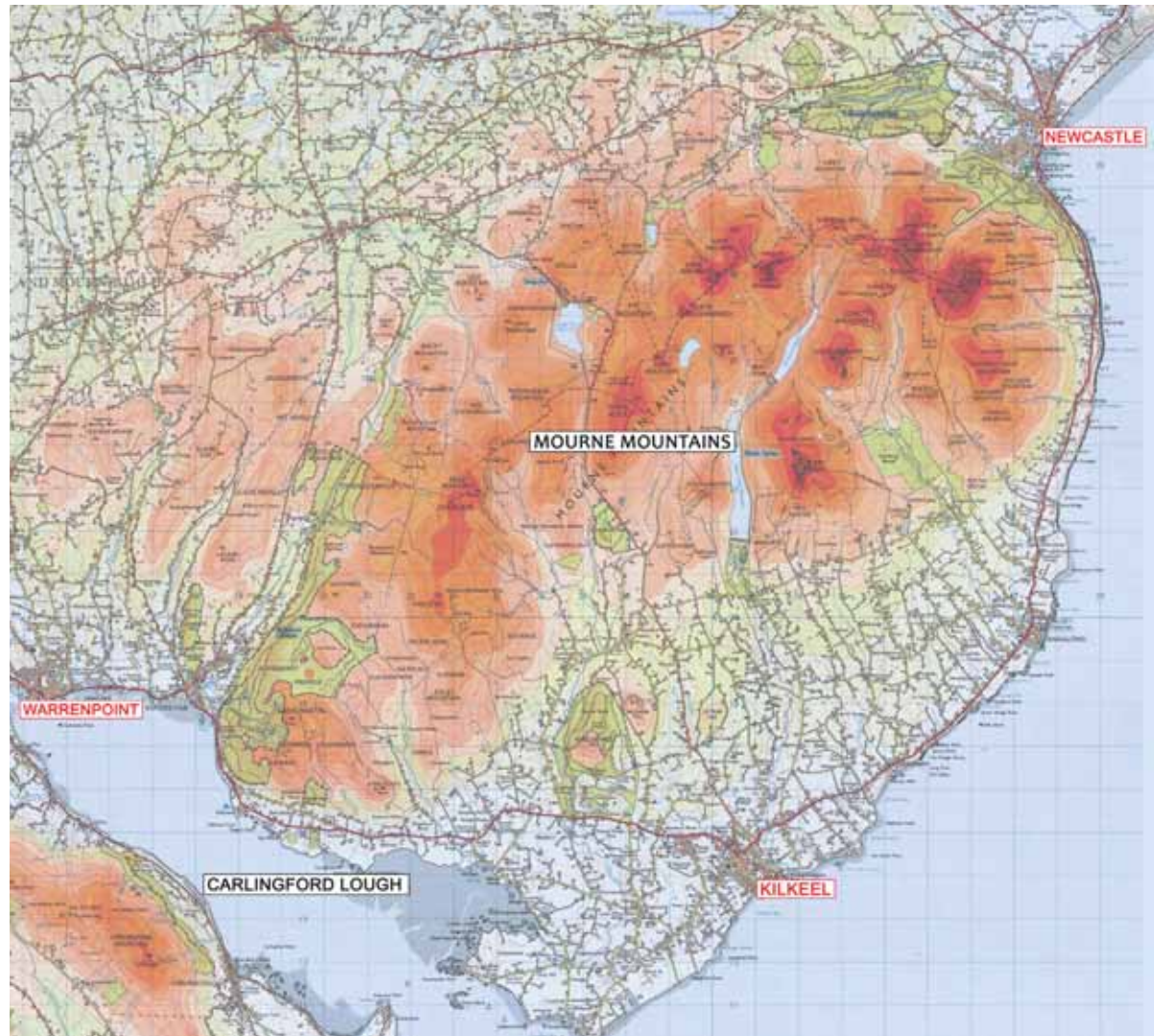
1 Introduction

The Department for Social Development, working with Down District Council and Newry & Mourne District Council, commissioned a team of specialists, led by URS, to produce a Regeneration Masterplan for the South East Coast.

1.1 The Brief

The Masterplan will provide guidance on the future strategic development of the South East Coast as well as specific guidance on the location and form of development in the Town Centres of Newcastle Kilkeel and Warrenpoint over the next 20 years. In particular, it will help to direct public and private investment to those areas that will most benefit local people, support local business and commerce and contribute to the long term viability and vitality of the Town Centre.

Having reviewed the available evidence, and analysed the issues affecting the wider area and key town centres, URS have worked with local organisations to formulate a set of proposals showing how and where development opportunities might be realised.



2 Context – South East Coast

2.1 Planning Context

2.1.1 Regional Development Strategy 2035 ‘Building a Better Future’

The RDS provides an overarching strategic planning framework to facilitate and guide the public and private sectors. It does not redefine the other departments’ strategies but compliments them with a spatial perspective.

The RDS 2035 revises the original strategy published in 2001 and amended in 2008. The RDS influences various government strategy including the Programme for Government (PfG) and the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland (ISNI). The Strategy takes account of key driving forces such as population growth and movement, demographic change, the increasing number of households, transportation needs, climate change and the spatial implications of divisions that still exist in our society. The RDS is not operational planning policy which is issued through Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) published by the Department of the Environment (DOE).

The RDS has a statutory basis under the Strategic Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1999, and the Order requires Departments to “have regard to the regional development strategy”.

The Strategy has four key elements:

- A Spatial Development Strategy which divides the region into 5 components based on functions and geography;
- Guidance at two levels;

1. Regional level that is to be applied to all parts of the region, and
2. Specific guidance for each element of the Spatial Framework

- A Regionally Significant Economic Infrastructure section which identifies the need to consider strategic infrastructure projects;

- Implementation.

The aims of the RDS:

1. Support strong, sustainable growth for the benefit of all parts of Northern Ireland;
2. Strengthen Belfast as the regional economic driver and Londonderry as the principal city of the North West;
3. Support our towns, villages and rural communities to maximise their potential;
4. Promote development which improves the health and wellbeing of communities;
5. Improve connectivity to enhance the movement of people, goods, energy and information between places;
6. Protect and enhance the environment for its own sake;
7. Take actions to reduce our carbon footprint and facilitate adaption to climate change; and
8. Strengthen links between north and south, east and west, with Europe and the rest of the world.

One of the key components of the spatial framework for Northern Ireland is the concept of Hubs and

Clusters. Within the framework Newcastle and Warrenpoint are both identified as local hubs, with Warrenpoint being part of a cluster alongside Newry which is a mina hub and gateway. Newcastle is clustered with the main hub of Downpatrick. The Spatial Framework also highlights the Mourne as a ‘Strategic Natural Resource’.

The key Spatial Framework Guidance for Hubs includes:

- SFG10: Identify and consolidate the roles and functions of settlements within the clusters
- SFG11: Promote Economic Development opportunities at Hubs
- SPG12: Grow the population in the Hubs and cluster of Hubs
- Newry and Warrenpoint form the South Eastern Gateway with a Harbour and strategic links to Sligo.
- SFG15: Strengthen the Gateways for Regional Competitiveness
- Provide high quality connections to and from the air and sea ports
- Enhance gateways and their environmental image

SERVICE CENTRE	SETTLEMENT BAND	SERVICE CLASS
Newry*		
Warrenpoint is included in the Newry Cluster as a local hub in line with its Port function	C	4
Newcastle	E	4
Kilkeel	E	3

2.1.2 Planning Policy Statements

A range of Planning Policy Statements (PPS's) have been considered during the preparation of the masterplan. They set out the policies of the Department of the Environment on particular aspects of land-use planning and apply to the whole of Northern Ireland. The contents of the PPS are primarily considered when preparing statutory development plans and determining individual planning applications. In the case of the Masterplan it was important to consider these documents when proposing specific developments, however the specific guidance and detail should be considered by the developer when taking forward

2.2 Development Plans

Development plans are prepared under the provisions of Part III of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 by the Planning NI, an Agency within the Department of the Environment (DOE).

The purpose of the Plan is to inform the general public, statutory authorities, developers, and other interested bodies of the policy framework and land use proposals that will be used to guide development decisions over the Plan period. The Plan will help to give effect to the Regional Development Strategy (RDS).

There are two development plans which are relevant to

the study area:

- Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 (Adopted March 2009)
- Banbridge, Newry & Mourne Area Plan 2015 (Draft Plan published August 2006) - The Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) has completed its report on the Banbridge Newry and Mourne Area Plan Public Inquiry and it was delivered to the Department on 26th March 2012 and was published by the Department on 7th June 2012. The comments of the PAC will now be considered, with any amendments being made and the plan will then be adopted.

2.2.1 Town Centre First '50 Solutions for Reinvented Retail In Tomorrows Town Centres' (Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association)

This document was produced Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association (NIRTA) which is the representative business organisation for independent retailers, wholesalers and suppliers to the sector.

This report identifies 50 solutions which aim to build modern and inclusive town and city centres which have the right mix of independent, niche and multiple retailers. The solutions address five key areas including, planning reform, governance, shopping experience, rates and accessibility. The solutions suggested by NIRTA affect the future development of Town Centres across Northern Ireland, mainly from a strategic stance. The solutions have been considered within this masterplan and indeed many of the solutions have been identified in previous Masterplans and remain relevant. The aim of this Masterplan is to adapt these solutions to the specific circumstances of Newcastle, Kilkeel and Warrenpoint.

This report has been reviewed in detail in the Baseline Report carried out as part of this Masterplan.

3 Tourism And Recreation

3.1 Introduction

The coastal towns of Newcastle, Killkeel and Warrenpoint on the South East Coast have several tourism functions. For instance:

Newcastle is a seaside resort in its own right, with services such as accommodation, catering, retail and an award-winning promenade servicing visitors focussed traditional bathing and beach-based activities. The Royal County Down Golf Course also provides an asset, attracting golf enthusiasts and competition events such as the Walker Cup (2007) and Ladies British Open Amateur Championship (2006).

Killkeel is a small fishing port that has a traditional character and picturesque setting. It is reputed to be the former capital of the Kingdom of Mourne and the ruinous 13th Century Church represents a central focus for the town. The town is developing a reputation for sea and game fishing, a continuation of its fishing heritage. It is also an important RNLI location.

Warrenpoint is a small town in a scenic setting on Carlingford Lough, with cruises along the Lough and Bay, Narrow Water Castle, and Ross Monument Rostrevor also available. A passenger ferry is also available from Warrenpoint to Omeath in County Louth, Republic of Ireland.

In addition to this, the location of these settlements along the edge of the Mourne Mountains Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) means that these towns have a further function, namely acting as gateways to the mountains for a range of outdoor activities.

This dual function of the settlements brings both opportunities and challenges in terms of their visitor economies. The different roles mean that each has the capacity to attract different visitor types – for the coast and for countryside pursuits - which in turn can increase visitor numbers overall and also extend the tourism season. In particular, the more adventurous pursuits possible in the Mourne Mountains (e.g. walking, hiking and rock climbing) tend to be less weather dependent and less seasonal than certain coastal pursuits, especially bathing.

Conversely, the coastal zone, especially beaches, generally has a stronger and broader market appeal, particularly in times of good weather and amongst families. In this respect, it is common to find on good weather days vast numbers of people flocking to the beaches of Newcastle, Murlough, and Cranfield.

However, the challenge is to ensure that the settlements can provide good service to each of the visitor types, meeting their needs and ensuring that this does not conflict with the needs of other types of visitors. Newcastle, Killkeel and Warrenpoint are not alone in providing this type of dual function in relation to tourism. The following provides some examples of different sized settlements across the UK that reside on the edge of areas of clearly defined natural heritage. The examples examine the focus that current development plans and proposals are placing on each in relation to tourism and how this is being designed to maximise their own inherent assets as well as providing gateways to wider areas of natural heritage and interest.

3.2 Tourism Audit – Existing Services and Providers

This audit identifies key coastal tourism assets within the South East Down area between Warrenpoint and Newcastle. Most assets identified are within a few miles of the coast. Other assets have been included where they service visits to the coast.

3.2.1 Accommodation

In Down District Council area as a whole there are 65 registered hotel, B&B and Guesthouse premises representing 7% of all such premises in Northern Ireland. These premises between them have 557 rooms (5% of NI room stock) and 1294 beds (5% of NI bed stock). In Newry and Mourne there are 47 registered premises of this type (5% of NI premises) with 370 rooms (3%) and 851 beds (3%)

Together Newry and Mourne and Down areas have 12% of NI's registered accommodation premises (Hotels, Guesthouses and B&Bs) and some 8% of room and bed stock.

There is a discrepancy in provision of accommodation in the north and south of this coastal region. In general terms premises in the Newry and Mourne part of the coastline have fewer rooms than the average for Down.

3.2.2 Hotels

The majority of hotel accommodation in the area is in Newcastle with one hotel in Killkeel and one larger and one small hotel in Warrenpoint. In total there are 8

hotels in the south east coast area representing over half of all hotels in the Down and Newry and Mourne Council areas.

In Down and Newry and Mourne Council areas there are 12 certified hotels overall (6 in each Council area) with a total of 540 rooms and 1263 beds.

In 2010 average hotel room occupancy for NI was 58%, and bed occupancy 43% with an average length of stay of 1.8 days. 65% of guests came from outside Northern Ireland. Best occupancy was achieved by the larger hotels and those with higher grading. Regional occupancy and length of stay figures are not available.

The total overall number of rooms in hotels for the South East coast region is 345.

3.2.3 Guesthouses

In Northern Ireland in 2010 average guesthouse and B&B occupancy (reported together in NISRA reports) was 27%, with an average length of stay of 1.7 nights. 64% of guests came from outside Northern Ireland.

Guesthouses are well distributed throughout the area.

3.2.4 Bed and Breakfast (Warrenpoint, Rostrevor, Kilkeel, Annalong and Newcastle only)

In Northern Ireland average guesthouse and B&B occupancy (which are reported together in NISRA reports) was 27% in 2010 with an average length of stay of 1.7 nights. 64% of guests came from outside Northern Ireland.

In the South East Coast area there is well distributed provision of B&B premises with 24 premises and a total of 65 rooms. Most providers have between 2 and 5 bedrooms.

3.2.5 Self Catering and Apartments

There are eight groups of self-catering cottages and apartments with coast or near-coast locations in the south east coast area. Individual cottages are also available.

The NI stock of self-catering premises in 2010 was 1231 units, and increase of 3% on 2009. There is no regional breakdown published.

Self catering accommodation showed a 5% fall in performance overall in terms of sales between 2009 and 2010. Only 5 star premises showed an increase. Occupancy overall (unit occupancy) was 27% across the year with tourist season occupancy of 41%. Larger cottage groups experienced the highest occupancy rates.

The most important market for self-catering premises is NI residents at 50% of sales, with the Great Britain market also important at 29%. ROI residents are the third largest contingent of guests.

The average length of stay was 5.4 nights.

Self catering premises in the South East Coast area include a number of cottage groups with a combined total of 39 units and also 40 individual cottages or apartments scattered through the countryside and settlements. Newcastle has a particularly strong supply of individual premises. Self-catering accommodation is quite limited along the shores of Carlingford Lough. Principal provision around the coastal area is as follows:

3.2.6 Hostels

Hostels in the South East Coast area mainly have their origins in catering for organised groups. In recent years a number of purpose-built hostels, catering for individual

travellers and holiday makers have been built with examples including Cnocknafeola Centre and Cornmill Quay Family Hostel. In all there are some 383 beds in hostels close to the South East Coast with the majority being at a modern standard with en-suite rooms. There are no occupancy reports for the hostels with some also serving as accommodation for outdoor centre activities and charitable purpose activity.

3.2.7 Caravan Parks and Camp Sites

Caravan parks and camp sites are very popular along the south east coast of Northern Ireland with holiday sites in Newcastle, Annalong, Kilkeel (Cranfield) and at Rostrevor. There are 12 sites within the study area with the majority consisting of a mix of static and touring caravans and a minority (e.g. Kilbroney Park) specialising in touring caravans and motorhomes. Based on NITB information there are over 170 touring caravan spaces in the area and specific provision within sites for motorhomes.

There are only some 45 advertised tent spaces in the area excluding the Forest Park sites which are away from the coast. Campsites are mainly associated with caravan sites and mainly associated with the family beach holiday market. There is little provision for hillwalkers and coastal walkers with the exception being Bloody Bridge Backpackers which has a dedicated walkers campsite at the end of one of the main access points to the Mourne Mountains and is planning 24 spaces in bunk barn accommodation.

The main attraction for caravanning is the wealth of beaches and coastal access in the area, with beachfront sites in most cases. The majority of sites are accessed directly from the coast road (A2).

Many of the static caravan owners are resident in Northern Ireland and use the caravans for their own regular holidays, but a limited number of sites have

static caravans for hire.

Northern Ireland Forest Service has a 'Touring in the Trees' site at Rostrevor Forest.

3.2.8 Tourism Activity Providers

There are some 24 organisations providing activities to appeal to visitors and holidaymakers in the South East Coast area.

It must also be noted that a wider range of providers based elsewhere provide elements of their programmes within the Mourne and may provide holidays in the mountains or on the coastline e.g. providing guiding or outfitting for the South East Canoe Trail.

There is no data available on performance or throughput though the NITB Tourism Barometer surveys in the sector. In the second wave survey in September 2011, 83% of activity providers in Northern Ireland reported that business was down on the same period in 2009.

3.2.9 Attractions

The Northern Ireland Visitor Attractions Survey records the performance of participating attractions on an annual basis. In 2010 there were some 9.7 million visits recorded. The majority of visitor attractions in Northern Ireland are provided and run by the public sector (59%) with the National Trust providing a further 7% of attractions.

In County Down there are some 36 visitor attractions included in annual surveys. In the South East coast area there are currently two visitor attractions recorded in the NISRA Visitor Attractions Survey 2010

- Greencastle Royal Castle (3,689 visits)
- Narrowwater Castle (778 visits)

The Silent Valley Mountain Park (48, 759 visits 2010) has not been included in the survey report for 2009 and 2010

Previously other attractions in the South East Coast area or nearby have had published visitor records including

- Tollymore Forest Park 160,483 (2009)
- Castlewellan Forest Park 141,661 (2009)

Other attractions in the area for which counts are not available include:

- Mourne Country Park (members only)
- Kilbroney Park
- Rostrevor Forest
- Mourne Seafood School
- Mourne Maritime Visitor Centre

Just outside the area is Murlough NNR which received 15,700 visits in 2009

3.2.10 Health and Leisure Attractions

The south east coast area has an increasing wealth of health and leisure attractions supporting tourism visits. These include:

- Spa at the Slieve Donard Resort
- Spa at the Burrendale Hotel
- Soak Seaweed Baths and Treatment Rooms
- Annesley Health Suite in the Newcastle Centre
- Tropicana Warm Sea Pools (mainly for children)
- Kilkeel Leisure Centre Swimming Pool, Gym and Health Suite

3.2.11 Golf Courses

The South East Coast Masterplan study area has three

of the top Golf courses in Northern Ireland. These are:

- Kilkeel Golf Club (Parkland)
- Warrenpoint Golf Club (Parkland)
- Royal County Down Golf Club (Links)

3.3 Tourism – Looking Forward

3.3.1 Mourne Signature Project ‘Achieving new heights in Tourism’ – Action Plan

“The Mourne Signature Project Action Plan, which was agreed by the key partners, identifies broad target market segments based on the nature of the resource, current markets, growth trends and relevance to overall objectives.”

Action Plan:

Tourism Infrastructure	To extend the range of accommodation attractions and activities in the area
Responsible Access and Place Management	To improve the appeal and accessibility of the countryside, coast, towns and villages to assist visitor management
Natural and Cultural Heritage	To increase awareness, understanding and conservation of the areas natural and cultural heritage
Capacity Building & Quality Assurance	To encourage engagement of tourism related businesses and to strengthen their performance and quality
Mourne Marketing	To increase awareness of the Mournes as a visitor destination based on its high quality environment, and improve information on all it has to offer
Sustainable Tourism Management	To co-ordinate sustainable tourism development

Mourne Coastal Route – A 42 mile coastal route through the Mourne AONB incorporating 16 world class amenity sites and 4 driving loops passing through areas

on interest such as Silent Valley, through the use of public art and interpretation, visitors will learn about the history and folklore of each site.

Public Art Programme – A public art trail consisting of 12 pieces will be located at gateways and significant sites across the Mourne Area. Building on the “Interpreting the Mournes” project, the trail is set to be a significant attraction which will allow visitors to self navigate and appreciate the natural environment at their own pace.

Upland Path Network – the Mourne path network will be upgraded to provide a robust, safe and sustainable facility for tourists. It will focus on repairing eroded sections of the path and conducting pre-emptive works. Outdoor activity providers, tour operators, themed tourism including heritage, biodiversity, geology and recreation will all benefit.

Silent Valley Visitor Enhancement – A tourism Masterplan is being developed for Silent Valley which would see the site become a “hub” for the High Mournes. Plans include: refurbishment of buildings, public art and new pedestrian links and access trails. Interpretation of key historical locations will include Binnian Tunnel and Watertown.

Mountain Biking Trails and Forest Service – A 40km network of sustainable cross country and downhill mountain bike trails within Castletwellan and Rostrevor Forest Parks is due to open in April 2013. This venture will position the Mournes as a world class short break destination for mountain biking.

Go-ape Tree Top Adventure – Forest Service were recently in discussions to appoint GO-APE as an operating partner. The outdoor activity company would install a tree top adventure facility in Tollymore Forest Park, perfect for families and team building events. A commercialisation strategy is also in place to provide

more caravanning, camping and holiday accommodation like forest chalets and log cabins within Forest Parks in the Area.

Enhanced Ranger Services and Visitor Management

– it is hoped that by the end of 2009 three full time rangers will be employed in the Mournes, covering areas such as upland and coastal access and maintaining key visitor management including biodiversity and guiding at certain locations will also be in place.

3.3.2 Mourne – The National Park Debate (Source: NITB/DOE)

A number of surveys have been carried out on how National Park designation could benefit the Mournes. The findings of these reports indicate that there could be a growth of up to £221 million contributing to the local economies of Down, Banbridge, and Newry and Mourne by 2020 if National Park designation was realised.

In June 2012 Environment Minister Alex Attwood shortlisted three areas for selection as Northern Ireland's first National Park, including The Mournes, Causeway Coast and Antrim Glens and Fermanagh Lakelands.

3.3.3 Mourne Signature Project Progress (Source: NITB)

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board continues to build relationships with Council Representatives and the Mourne Heritage Trust in developing and progressing the Mourne Signature Project regardless of National Park designation as the area has still to realise its full tourism potential.

The process of building the tourism infrastructure in the Mournes has already started. This has included:-

1. Down District Council completed an extensive redevelopment of the promenade in Newcastle, and a £2 million Streetscape Scheme.
2. Hasting Hotel Group has upgraded and extended the Slieve Donard Hotel, including a luxury Spa Resort.
3. The Natural Resource Rural Tourism Initiative has seen approximately £2.5 million invested in a range of tourism projects involving the private, public and community/voluntary sectors.
4. The Mournes AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) was awarded the Europarc Charter, the first destination to be awarded this in the UK and Ireland. Newry and Mourne Council also have opened a gateway Tourist Information Centre at Bagenals Castle. Tourist Information centres are located in Newcastle, Kilkeel and Warrenpoint.

In partnership with local Councils and Loughs Agency NITB funded the development of a 10 year Tourism Action Plan for the Mournes. This has been completed and projects identified which have been pulled together under a Mournes Signature Project Action Plan 2008-10.

A capital allocation of £6 million through the Comprehensive Spending Review has been allocated to the Mournes. Four million of this will be administered through NITB's Programme for Government (PfG) Tourism Development Scheme (TDS). Projects identified in the Mournes Signature Action Plan 2008-10 will form the basis for applications for TDS (PfG) monies in January 2009.

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board continues to liaise and consult with Council Representatives and other stakeholders located within the Mournes in relation to discussing brand issues.

3.3.4 Mourne Coastal Route Project (Source: NITB)

The Mourne Heritage Trust commissioned Scott Wilson Consultants to undertake a feasibility study on the proposal to develop a Mourne Coastal Route. The final report sets out an overall masterplan for Mourne Driving and Walking Routes, sketch proposals for individual sites, indicative materials and cost estimates.

Since then URS were commissioned to carry out the detailed design and implementation of the project. The first phase of the Mourne Coastal Route has now been completed with work underway on an additional phase from Clough to Bangor.

3.3 Conclusion

The three town centres of Newcastle, Kilkeel and Warrenpoint can be developed both as destinations in their own right and to provide better gateways into the natural environment. In the case of being a destination in their own right, it is important that the key assets of each centre are well presented to encourage overnight stays by their respective markets. For the town centres and South East Coast overall this means not only ensuring that the quality of the beaches and coastal areas are of high quality, but also that the visitors drawn by these assets are encouraged to maximise the value of their stay through measures that increase their dwell time and encourage economic exchange.

In the case of supporting areas of high natural landscape, the role of each centre is to act as a hub that supports exploration of the wider character of the area. In this respect, the function of each settlement is to provide a place to congregate, refresh and recuperate; to become more informed about the landscape setting; and to access the landscape setting, ideally through more sustainable means such as walking, cycling and public transport.

The ability to generate additional interest through other

experiences, such as through indulgence, pampering, Golf and coastal activities such as watersports should also be considered.

4 Transportation

4.1 Introduction

The A2 circumnavigates the Mourne Mountains travelling in dual carriageway from Newry to Warrenpoint, then in single carriageway to Kilkeel and Newcastle. From Newcastle it continues northeast beyond the

Mourne Mountains along the coast.

Three main routes provide access by road to Newcastle. These are the A2 Kilkeel Road from the south, the A2 Dundrum Road from the northeast and the A50 Castlewellan Road from the northwest.

Kilkeel's main access roads are from the A2 Newry Road to the west and the A2 Newcastle Road to the east. It can also be accessed from the north via the

B27 Moyad Road.

Two main routes provide access to Warrenpoint. These are the A2 Newry Road from the northwest (from Newry) and the A2 Rostrevor Road from the east. It can also be accessed via the Upper Dromore Road.

The position of Warrenpoint, Kilkeel and Newcastle on the strategic road and rail networks is illustrated in the map below.

4.2 Key Opportunities/ Issues

Below are the key opportunities and issues which impact on the three town centres as well as the A2 Road connecting them.

Newcastle

- Real time parking information displays would reduce the volume of circulating traffic
- Targeted car park charging discourages all day parkers from the town centre
- Improved security in car parks can reduce demand for on-street parking
- Footway improvements on the town centre's side roads would complement recent improvements along the town's main streets
- Potential for other off-road cycle tracks through the town
- A blueprint for cycle provision already exists in the



S RTP

- The increase in cycling facilities can lead to more local trips being undertaken by cyclists
- The resort nature of the town lends itself well to the provision of improved cycle facilities and signs
- Provision of secure cycle parking is relatively low cost and easily implemented
- Potential for the high number of visiting tourists to justify better public transport services and facilities e.g. real time displays highlighting town services and inter-urban routes.
- Improved transport services to tourist destinations could increase visitor numbers
- There are various options to reduce through traffic on Main Street and Central Promenade. The most straightforward option in traffic terms would be as follows:
 - Remove traffic between Railway Street and Bryansford Ave (full or part pedestrianisation)
 - Send more traffic down Donard Street
 - Two-way traffic on Shimna Road
 - Reconfiguration of Railway Street and an environmental improvement scheme in front of Lidl would complement other recent improvements in the town
 - Improved signage to various tourist attractions could assist in promoting the local economy

Kilkeel

- Introduction of car park charging discourages all day parkers from the town centre
- Opportunity sites may be developed to provide additional public car parking
- Additional crossing points and pedestrian signage help to promote walking
- The S RTP already has a framework for cycle provision
- The increase in cycling facilities can lead to more local trips being undertaken by cyclists
- Provision of secure cycle parking is relatively low cost and easily implemented
- Provision of taxi parking throughout the town would reduce illegal parking acts by taxis
- Improved bus stop facilities, greater frequency of the town service and a marketing campaign would promote the use of public transport
- Knockchree Avenue could promote the main access to the sea front given the existing infrastructure
- Should congestion and delay increase alternative routes could run directly from Greencastle Street to Newry Road and from A2 (near Moor Road) to Newry Road to reduce the pressure on The Square

Warrenpoint

- Better management of existing spare capacity in car parks, could address parking imbalance
- Improved security in car parks can help reduce demand for on-street parking

- Public realm schemes throughout the town would complement measures introduced on Queen Street
- Provision of additional crossing facilities would improve access to off-street car parks. This, and the provision of pedestrian signage helps to promote walking
- Sustrans have highlighted potential for cycle routes through the town and a blueprint for cycle provision already exists in the S RTP .The town's sea front and wide streets lends itself well to the provision of cycle facilities
- Increased cycling facilities can lead to more local trips being undertaken by cyclists
- Secure cycle parking is relatively low cost and easy to implement
- The Square car park taxi rank could be vastly improved by providing shelters, pedestrian signage, wider footways and a formalised pedestrian queuing
- The disused Newry to Warrenpoint rail track bed could be used for transport or recreational purposes
- Town bus service would promote public transport use
- A one-way system in whole or part may benefit the town and could provide new cycling opportunities
- The proposed Newry Southern Bypass would significantly improve access from Warrenpoint Harbour to the A1 Eastern Seaboard Key Transport Corridor
- Improved signage to various tourist attractions could assist in promoting the local economy
- The traffic implications and opportunities created by the Narrow Water bridge project.

- A private company is interested in providing a Greenore to Greencastle ferry service

•A2 Road

- Improved road traffic signage can improve driving
- Improvements to public transport provision have potential to reduce vehicular trips
- Increased traffic may require the road to be improved in places. Possibly the introduction of vehicle passing points.

5 Strategic Proposals and Initiatives for the South East Coast

5.1 Northern Ireland Signature Destinations – delivering on the promise in the South East Coast area.

The success of the Causeway Coastal Route as a mechanism for delivery of touring visitors to a wider range of places in Northern Ireland led to the development of the Mourne Coastal Route, to lead from Newry to Belfast via the South and east coasts. At the time of developing this Masterplan the route was partially signed.

This coastal route is part of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and DETINI's strategic approach to developing the Mourne as a signature destination and is part of the overall action plan aimed at delivering an estimated additional 4700 tourism jobs in the area by 2020.

The route is intended both to contribute to attracting more visitors, reassured by a quality scenic driving route and to spread the positive economic impact of visitors to Northern Ireland into areas that are frequently by-passed. Actions associated with developing the route include signage from the A1 at Newry through to Belfast and the development of a number of stopping points outside the settlements and these are largely in place.

It is important that when this route delivers people to key settlements in the South East Area, such as Warrenpoint, Kilkeel and Newcastle, that the visitor sees reasons to stop and potentially to stay, facilities for parking and a range of opportunities for walking, authentic activities, experiences and shopping.

The development of the visitor experience in the

towns is the next layer of the trail and approaches to promoting the landscape as a protected scenic area (whether or not a national park designation is achieved) Such an approach is key to increasing visitor expenditure in the area and part of this is to increase the demand for overnight stays and the capacity to be able to host these. The towns therefore need to be able to interest people for at least a day and preferably offer sufficient to the visitor, both within themselves and in their surrounding areas, to stimulate longer stays. Key to this will be presenting their special and distinct interest, cultural heritage and activities.

The towns are already a service point for walking visitors to the Mourne and to an extent for watersports and nature based visitors. The Masterplan identifies both elements that the towns have in common and which will provide a theme for a touring visit, and distinctive offers by each town that complement each other and the area as a whole. The Masterplan focusses on the development of these complementary themes and unique and distinctive elements:

5.2 Village Plans

This project was part funded under the Axis 3 of the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2007 - 2013 by the European Union and the Department of Agriculture & Rural Development. The Rural Development Programme was launched to build capacity within the local communities and provide community economic development in the most disadvantaged rural areas. The objective is to enable and encourage residents of villages and surrounding

areas to create a vision and an integrated action plan to ensure the full potential of their area is achieved and also support integrated village initiatives.

The South East Coast Masterplan and its strategies for the development of the three town centres will have a major impact on the economic development of the Villages. Increasing visitor numbers to the area should make a positive contribution to the village economies, not only those situated along the coast, but within the Mourne area. It is important that the villages develop strategies to capture some of the economic benefits of tourism and that the Village plans develop with this in mind.

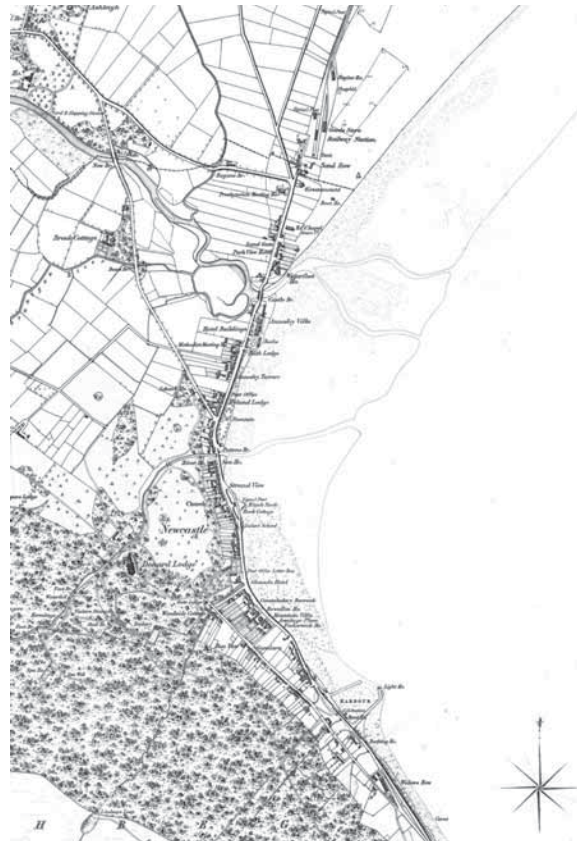
6 Newcastle

6.1 History

The historical progression of Newcastle is shown in the historic maps. The settlement originated at a bridging point at the mouth of the Shimna River, once the site of the Magennis Castle, which was demolished in

1831. The 1862 map illustrates the early growth of the town was centred on the Harbour and foreshore at the southern end of the town, and was based on the expansion of the granite and fishing industries. Newcastle's development as a seaside resort was as a result of the arrival of the railway to the town in

1869. The railway and promotion of tourism was the catalyst for the construction of the Slieve Donard Hotel in 1897. As shown in the map for 1906, a new railway station twice the size was opened which saw further expansion at the north end of the town. The railway eventually closed in circa 1948, despite this the town



Historical Map of Newcastle (1862)



Historical Map of Newcastle (1904)



Historical Map of Newcastle (1930)

expansion continued and presently, Newcastle is a service centre for the surrounding rural hinterland, a commuter settlement and a holiday and retirement resort.

6.1.1 Townscape and Setting

The urban structure within the town centre is based on a connected network of streets and spaces. The main streets are oriented from north-east to south-west, creating a one way system along slender development blocks, framing the main street and through route of Newcastle. As evident in the morphology the origin of this through route can be traced to the earliest period of the town's development.

Within the Town Centre the urban structure is dominated by long solid building blocks. Outside the Town Centre the urban structure loosens into smaller housing blocks with surrounding open space. In the wider context of the town the urban structure is less clearly articulated, with fewer side streets resulting in large housing development blocks and large areas of green open space.

The town and its setting contain a number of listed buildings, archaeological monuments and sites of nature conservation interest. It retains many examples of late 19th Century architecture, associated with its development as a resort, particularly in Main Street and on South Promenade and King Street. The Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment describes the town's dramatic mountain setting and the strong contrasts between the mountains, the flat dune landscape at the shore and the series of river valleys which radiate inland from the town. It refers to areas of locally distinctive landscape within the town, including the Shimna valley, Tipperary Wood and Donard Park and the river corridors associated with the Glen, the Tullybrannigan and the Burren rivers.



Mountains: The Mourne Mountains and Donard Forest provides a dramatic backdrop for the town.



Coast: Newcastle's coastal location adds to the spectacular setting.



River & Park: The Shimna River, Boating Lake and Castle Park provide an attractive recreational area within the Town.



Architecture: Newcastle has many architectural features which adds to it's character. Several such as the Annesley Building above are protected by their 'listed' status.



Main Street: This is the central artery through the town. It provides an attractive setting with a range of distinctive buildings of various forms and uses.



Public Realm: The Newcastle Public Realm scheme was implemented in 2008 and has completely rejuvenated the town centre and promenade. Footfall has subsequently increased dramatically.

7 Kilkeel

7.1 History

Kilkeel was named after the 13th century church in the town. However, references to Kilkeel date back as far as the 11th century. The historical progression of Kilkeel is demonstrated in the maps below. The settlement was initially concentrated around the square and the Newry and Greencastle Street junction. In later years the creation of the pier and dock at the harbour resulted in the expansion of the town along arterial routes to the coast. This historic progression and the increase in density of the development can clearly be seen in the figures. Further expansion occurred in Kilkeel after 1950. The agricultural land between the harbour and town centre, stretching from Manse Road to Rooney Road, was developed for housing and a large recreational area was created along the seafront.



Historical Map of Kilkeel (1904)



Historical Map of Kilkeel (1862)



Historical Map of Kilkeel (1930)

7.1.1 Townscape and Setting

The town has a coastal setting based around an established harbour, with a backdrop to the north provided by the Mourne Mountains. Kilkeel itself sits in open, flat and stonewalled countryside. Vegetation consists of large areas of mature trees associated with historic parks or gardens, and smaller clumps of mature trees surrounding established farm groups or older houses. Two rivers flow through the town leading to the harbour, namely the Aughrim River/Little Kilkeel River and Kilkeel River.

The ruined "narrows" church, dating back to the 14th century stands in the centre of Kilkeel within the site of an early Christian ring fort. The modern settlement began to take shape in the late 18th/early 19th century when Viscount Kilmorey laid out the Square and established a church, a Presbyterian meeting house, a market house and hotel. The settlement slowly began to grow out from the Square along Bridge Street, Greencastle Street and Newry Street. Only with the establishment of the new harbour in the second half of the 19th century did Kilkeel expand to become an important fishing port and centre for the export of agricultural produce and granite.

The urban structure within the Town centre is based on one Main Street (Newcastle Street/Bridge Street/The Square/Greencastle Street) and perpendicular side streets. The main street is orientated from North-east to South-west; creating the main through route for cars from Newcastle south west along the coast to Rostrevor and Warrenpoint.

Within the town centre the urban structure is dominated by solid building blocks along either side of the street. Outside the town centre the urban structure loosens with the increased provision of open space. Importantly, Kilkeel town centre is not located directly adjacent to the coast as is the case with Newcastle

and Warrenpoint. Situated between the town centre and the harbour and esplanade there is an extensive area of private housing. The historic core of the town is apparent, comprising the built development along the main street. The buildings are arranged in a series of terraces with individual plots developed to varying levels of intensity. Some tend to have a relatively short frontage but deep in plan while others have a rather square footprint as shown.



There is a consistent approach to the design, detailing and signage of pedestrian spaces within Kilkeel Town Centre



There are five key Monuments in Kilkeel Town centre



The Town Centre of Kilkeel consists predominantly of terraces with mainly two and three storey buildings



There are a number of key landmarks in Kilkeel town centre. These landmarks significantly contribute to the character of the town



There is a lack of public open space within Kilkeel Town Centre. At present the lower square is the only available space for hosting outdoor events

8 Warrenpoint

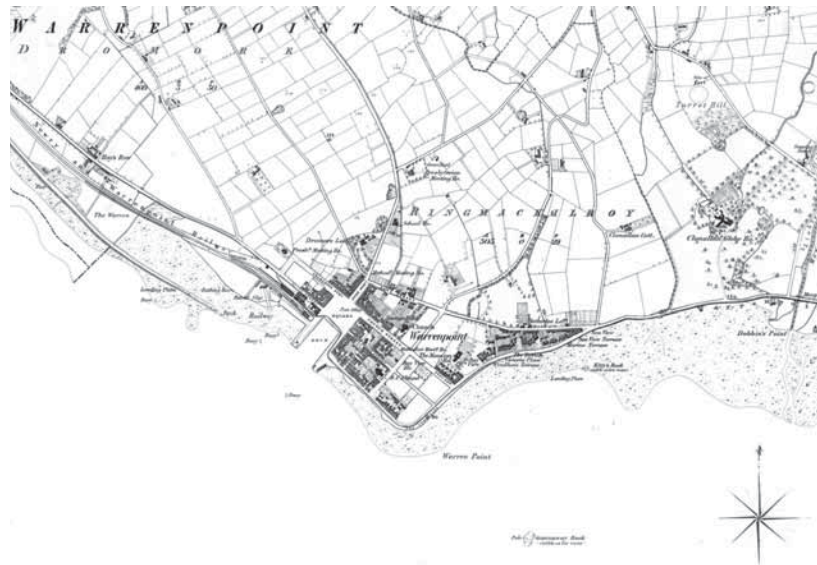
8.1 History

Warrenpoint was built on a grid system with the square as a central feature. By the mid 1800's the Victorians passion for coastal holidays made Warrenpoint a desirable seaside resort. In 1908 a bandstand was built in the town park and along with a swimming pool and baths at the coast.

A railway connection opened in 1949 which increased Warrenpoint's popularity as a holiday destination and Warrenpoint became a resort town. The Warrenpoint railway station closed in 1965. The town's commercial port also expanded in the 1900's. The port continues to thrive to the present day. Since 1930 the town's residential development has also significantly expanded.



Historical Map of Warrenpoint (1904)



Historical Map of Warrenpoint (1861)



Historical Map of Warrenpoint (1930)

8.1.1 Townscape and Setting

The urban structure within Warrenpoint Town centre is based on a grid system.

The town is located directly adjacent to the coast with the promenade and port forming the interface between the town centre and Carlingford Lough. The historic core of the town is apparent with the town square forming the centre of the town.

Charlotte Street, Church Street and Queen Street form the main spine through the town centre, with their associated perpendicular side streets. Great Georges Street (North and South), Seaview, along with Duke Street and Dock Street provide direct links between the residential areas to the north of the town and the waterfront. The grid system has facilitated the creation

of extensive residential areas to the north of the town.

Importantly, within the town centre there is the provision of public open space. This provision is through the town square, Town Park and promenade.



The majority of buildings within the Town centre are two and three storeys in height



The Seaview Terraced Houses along Seaview are a mixture of two and three storey houses, some with dormer windows and slate roofs. These individual buildings have architectural merit but their combined effect is a sense of quality and grandeur



There is good provision of public space in Warrenpoint. This provision is through the Town Square, Town Park and promenade



The topography of Warrenpoint and the presence of the promenade facilitate distant views of the Mourne Mountains, Cooley Mountains and views over Carlingford Lough



There are a number of key landmarks in Warrenpoint Town Centre. These landmarks significantly contribute to the character of the town.

9 Consultation

The draft proposals for the South East Coast Masterplan were developed over a ten month period, during which time a full baseline study was prepared and survey work undertaken to inform a Commercial Leisure and Retail Capacity Study and Town Centre Health Checks. Taking the available information into account, alongside information from a series of Visioning Workshops which took place in December 2011, the draft Masterplan proposals were developed.

conjunction with the project steering group and advisory group, made up of council officers and councillors from Down District Council, Newry and Mourne District Council, local traders, statutory agency representatives and the Department for Social Development.

The draft proposals consultation boards were displayed in the Annesley Building, Newcastle, The Nautilus Centre, Kilkeel and Warrenpoint Town Hall for a twelve week period commencing on the 8th of March 2012. Interested parties were invited to provide their feedback on the plans through an online questionnaire. The plans were available to download on the DSD, Newry and Mourne and Down District Council's websites.

Alongside the formal consultation, a further three workshops were organised in Newcastle, Kilkeel and Warrenpoint from the 15th to the 17th of May 2012 where stakeholders had an additional opportunity to speak to the consultants and make their views known.

Feedback and amendments were made to the proposals following the consultation period in

10 South East Coast Masterplan – Overall Vision and Key Priorities

In order to present a framework for future development of the South East Coast, we believe that it is first necessary to set the parameters for success through a clear and coherent vision. This vision needs to respond to the challenges identified through the investigation and consultation process, and should seek to provide an understanding of where the area will be in twenty years time.

10.1 Vision

In establishing a vision for the South East Coast, it is imperative to recognise the intrinsic character that makes the area special for residents, for workers and for visitors; namely that the South East Coast affords a coastal setting comprising some of the best beaches in Northern Ireland and with a stunning backdrop of the Mourne Mountains. This landscape setting in turn has the potential to be coupled with a unique sense of cultural vibrancy, heritage learning, a range of outdoor activities, and some unique and high end products. These assets and resources in turn need to be positioned and developed in a manner that can drive year-round visitor interest in order to underpin a sustainable economy consisting of other sectors such retail, leisure, agriculture, fishing and manufacturing.

Given this context, the following vision statement should be adopted:

By 2025, the South East Coast is to become an area with a strong national and international reputation for being a high quality coastal landscape of great scenic, natural, historic and leisure value; and an area that provides an enjoyable place to live, to work, to explore, and to play in.

This is to be achieved by enabling the key towns of Newcastle, Kilkeel and Warrenpoint to collectively and individually embrace and prosper from their association with both their coastal setting and the wider character of the Mourne Mountains as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The delivery of this overall vision will require the co-operation and co-ordination of key stakeholders across the area, particularly those within the three towns of Newcastle, Kilkeel and Warrenpoint. It is evident that each town has a unique character and potential offering to appeal to both day and overnight tourism visits individually. However, as is evidenced through the Mourne Coastal Route, when the towns are view collectively they present a much stronger proposition, with the strengths of each town able to presented and packaged to attract a range of visitors throughout the year.

To underpin the vision, each town needs to develop an individual identity but within a co-ordinated and complementary framework for the South East Coast. The following describes how this can be achieved.

10.2 Newcastle

Newcastle will continue to develop and further its reputation as a seaside resort for the 21st Century.

Building upon the success of the new promenade, the town will continue to develop new means for animating the popular coastal zone to attract new audiences. This will include expanding the range of beachside activities available, showcasing local arts and crafts talents, introducing new play areas (both temporary and permanent), and establishing a programme



of annual events; all of which will be designed to encourage overnight stays and to extend the tourism season, especially amongst family groups and general sightseers.

As the recognised eastern 'Gateway to the Mournes', attention will be given to supporting the range of activities available on the Mourne Mountains, particularly walking and cycling through a dedicated programme for welcoming these interest groups to be undertaken by accommodation providers, catering establishments, and retail units. Moreover, effort will also be made to draw attention to existing and potential coastal activities and attractions, from the mainstream and well-established activities such as golf and 'easy to do' watersports; through to the more niche heath and wellness sector. The proposed Donard Gondola, as a premier visitor attraction for both the Mournes and the South East Coast, will allow all visitors to be able to experience and enjoy the Mourne Mountains from Newcastle.

Ultimately, the combination of the dual gateway role of Newcastle (to the coast and to the Mourne Mountains) will generate increased demand for new and existing services in the town. New and existing businesses will be supported, particularly in terms of retail, activity centres, catering enterprises and ideally accommodation. In this respect, hotel accommodation in particular has been identified as a development opportunity to both support and indeed to drive visitors to the town. This will mean that Newcastle can be extensively packaged promoted to a variety of different audience groups seeking to experience and enjoy both a coastal and/or mountainous experience in a vibrant and welcoming setting.

10.3 Kilkeel

As a working harbour with one of the largest fishing fleets in Ireland, Kilkeel is to develop a series of specialist and niche interests that celebrate and champion its fishing industry heritage. It is also conceivable that, as an emerging industry for the area, Kilkeel will also be able to become a showcase for the sustainable integration of renewable energies within a setting of high environmental value.

The ambitious re-development of the Nautilus Centre comprising a new seafood cookery school, a maritime visitor attraction, and tourist offices has taken place in Kilkeel. This will be complemented by co-ordinated effort to raise the profile of Kilkeel's seafood cuisine to standard of quality that will be recognised internationally. Organised trips to the local fish auction will be augmented with a dedicated harbour walk; interpretation material that traces the history of the fishing industry through the real life stories of industry workers through the ages, sea angling, sea diving and wildlife watching trips; and off-shore angling competitions and events.

A slower pace will epitomise the visitor experience at Kilkeel, partly reflecting its more peripheral location and partly its proximity to Silent Valley in the Mourne Mountains, an area that affords stunning views of the coast below that is renowned for the peace and solitude it provides. As a result, those spending time between the Mourne Mountains and Kilkeel will be offered ample opportunity to relax, unwind, and recuperate – as well as a little self pampering either through visiting one of its good quality restaurants; through purchasing antiques and local arts, crafts and produce; or through spa treatments. As a result, those seeking to escape from hustle and bustle will find Kilkeel to be a welcome hide-away.

There will be a wealth of amenities to satisfy those

with children or those who still want a sense of adventure. The proposed new play-park will be state-of-the-art, whilst walks and cycle rides into the Mourne Mountains will follow in the footsteps of past Irish chieftains who would have surveyed their Kingdom of the Mournes.

Kilkeel will also represent a key destination for wildlife watching. The Kilkeel River is destined to become a key wildlife discovery trail after the efforts of the Mourne Heritage Trust and Northern Ireland Water to



improve biodiversity in the valley, with a new nature trail highlighting many habitats found along its banks. Seals are also a key attraction of the harbour, with their playful nature often a real treat for all, whilst marine mammals are occasionally sighted.

Because of its location as the most peripheral of the coastal towns, Kilkeel is likely to benefit the most from the Mourne Coastal Trail. However, the initiatives as proposed through the masterplan and the town Management Plan are designed to ensure there are a critical mass of assets, attractions and amenities to not just support users of the trail, but also to act as drivers of visitors in their own right. In that respect Kilkeel is the most important of the towns if a successful trail is to be created. It is vital that Kilkeel has a tourist draw capable of drawing tourists who visit Newcastle or Warrenpoint further down the coast. In the same way Warrenpoint must also provide a tourist draw to complete the South East Coast visitor trail.

10.4 Warrenpoint

The traditional Victorian character that defines Warrenpoint will be retained, and the independent retail brought to the fore. Pedestrian friendly spaces and an improved Town Square providing the focal point for people to gather, and for key events including the weekly market and music, arts and crafts events to take place. Cafés, bars and restaurants will help further animate this space both during the day and in the evening. The addition of a marina and extended promenade will link the Town Square and retail hub to the waters-edge, with the ease of people flow through the town to be aided by a new one-way traffic system.

The marina will also provide direct access to Carlingford Lough supporting boat trips and visiting cruisers. It will also provide a beacon for the growing reputation of Warrenpoint as a centre for watersports, with a multitude of activities from kayaking to power boat



trips available. It will also support unique events such as Tall Ship visits; water sports challenge events, and possibly an alternative triathlon (e.g. kayak, mountain bike and hill running). The intention for additional cruise ships stopping at Warrenpoint should be welcomed and encouraged as this will benefit not only Warrenpoint but the South East Coast overall.

In this respect, Warrenpoint will also act as the western gateway to the Mourne Mountains and, as with Newcastle, attention will be given to supporting the

range of activities available on the Mourne Mountains, particularly walking and cycling. For Mountain Biking in particular, Warrenpoint acts as the gateway to Rostrevor Forest Park, with its growing reputation for downhill mountain bike challenges driving new and energetic visitors to the town. This in itself is breeding a new sense of vitality, with adventure enthusiasts also tending to bring their own unique culture and identity.

10.5 The South East Coast - Individually Distinctive; Collectively Strong

The focus of this masterplan has been to emphasise and promote the distinctiveness of each town, but in a manner that seeks to position each within a wider South East Coast context. This is to ensure that, through initiatives such as the Mourne Coastal Trail and through marketing and promotional initiatives, the collective strengths of the towns along with whole of the South East coastline can be presented as a destination.

It will be through the presentation of the South East Coast and the Mourne Mountains that the overall potential of the South East Coast as a destination will be realised. Within this context, each town will have a role to play. There will always be overlap in the types of services and amenities that each town will present, be it maritime heritage, beaches, and promenades. However, with the advent of the Mourne Coastal Trail, which is part of the NITB's and the DETINI's strategic approach to developing the Mournes as a signature destination, it is important that each centre is given a distinctive proposition to entice visitors; namely that the things to see and do which entertain, engage and enlighten are sufficiently different between the towns that visitors will want to travel to each as part of a multi-stop and multi-faceted experience. Through this approach, visitors will be given the opportunity to spend time to explore the area and to enjoy the special features of interest, learn about its heritage,



Key words which relate to the South East Coast as a whole.

or simply play along the coast or in the mountains.

The interrelationship between the coast and the Mourne Mountains, which is itself a distinctive destination, also needs to be maximised for the benefit of all. The mountains themselves are sparsely populated and have limited amenities and resources. Those interested in exploring the Mountains will therefore rely on the towns to service their needs. This is already evident in parts, however the aim of the masterplan is to further develop the role of the towns, but with each reflecting a slightly different position to attract slightly different audiences. For instance:

- Newcastle has greater potential to be the gateway for all, particularly capitalising on the gondola experience, allowing family groups and groups with mobility impairments to rise to the top of the mountains and to witness the stunning vistas that the Mournes provide.
- Kilkeel presents a slower pace where those visiting the Mournes can do so in away from hustle and bustle, and instead the can immerse themselves in the peace, the tranquillity and the solitude that the Mournes can provide.

- Warrenpoint is the adventure capital of the Mournes, providing the access to extreme mountain biking, challenging hiking, and other sporting challenges.

10.6 Tailoring the Offer for Key Audiences

10.6.1 Family Groups

The South East Coast has always had a strong resonance as being popular with families and day visitors, particularly in times of good weather. Whilst this is still an important element of the offer, this tends to mean that the success of coastal destinations are often at the whims of the weather and certain times of year; a position that is not conducive to delivering an effective and sustainable visitor economy.

Coastal destinations across the UK are recognising that, in the 21st Century, traditional offerings need to be diversified into other forms of outdoor activity and entertainment to broaden their appeal to the family market. The public realm schemes completed to date have been highly successful in improving the look and feel of the three town centres and have increased footfall considerably, however this is only the first step and that success must be built upon. Through the masterplan, the towns of Newcastle, Kilkeel and Warrenpoint individually and collectively have the potential to redefine their offer to domestic and overseas holiday-makers travelling with children. The masterplan envisages that the South East Coast will provide a playground for young and old. New state-of-the-art play areas located in Newcastle and Kilkeel, and watersports and activities in Warrenpoint will be presented in a way for all the family to participate. Select beaches (especially those closely associated with Newcastle, Kilkeel and Warrenpoint) will be animated through new on-beach and off-shore activities; whilst others will be left relatively untouched to allow those seeking to spend time to relax, rest and

be at one with nature have the chance to do so.

The Donard Gondola from Newcastle will represent a premier tourist attraction, and one that will allow family groups to explore and understand the Mourne Mountains. The presence of this signature visitor attraction will help to raise the profile of the mountains as a useable resource for this market, something that has been highlighted as a barrier until now. Use of the associations between the Mourne Mountains and the land of Narnia, with the landscape inspiring these CS Lewis classic stories, will also be utilised to help create innovative ways to engage children to explore this intriguing landscape.

The active festivals programme across the towns already attracts people to the area, with the Festival of Flight, Festival of Fish and Maiden of the Mournes being important events for Newcastle, Kilkeel and Warrenpoint respectively. However, these and other events can be enhanced to offer a more family-friendly focus and better co-ordinated towards times that are likely to have the greatest appeal to family groups.

Altogether, the combination of stunning coastal and mountain views, beaches, activities, attractions and events coupled good stock of self-catering, serviced accommodation and caravan and camping parks, will ensure that the South East Coast will represent an enticing proposition for family groups on day visits and for those seeking overnight stays, be it for 1-night, 7-nights or more.

10.6.2 Overseas Groups

The Mourne Mountains, as an AONB, arguably has a much stronger resonance with overseas visitors than the South East Coast. Yet, as mentioned previously the towns have a strong role to play in supporting visitors to the Mournes, and as such this will include overseas visitors seeking to explore the mountains, particularly

by foot and by bike.

Again, the Donard Gondola in Newcastle will have an important role as providing a premier tourist amenity, pulling overseas visitors into the area and supporting their further exploration of the area - in a similar way to the Giant's Causeway Visitor Experience does for the Giant's Causeway. However, with the Mourne Mountains offering extensive walking and cycling opportunities, the emphasis here will be to ensure they stay for longer stays wherever possible. As a 'must do' attraction, it will also act as a signpost for further exploration of the Mournes and the South East Coast, either on this visit or a visit in the future.

Kilkeel, through its growing reputation for seafood cuisine of distinction, will resonate with gastronomic enthusiasts. In this respect, Kilkeel will follow in the footsteps of places such as Padstow in Cornwall, Bray in Berkshire, Emsworth in Hampshire, and Great Milton in Oxfordshire to name but a few, which have risen from relative tourism obscurity to attract significant volumes of visitors seeking high-end gastronomic experiences. For Kilkeel, this will include providing seafood cookery courses and sea fishing and fish market experiences, which can be easily packaged for overnight stays.

Warrenpoint will become renowned for watersports and adventure activities, both of which have a strong international appeal. Raising awareness of the availability of the activities will be essential within an increasingly competitive market, with festivals and events vital to this aim. Supporting sailing and cruisers travelling along the Irish and Northern Irish coastline will be an important role for Warrenpoint also.

10.6.3 Activity Interests

The Mournes area is the most significant outdoor activity hub in Northern Ireland and attracts visitors for

this purpose all year round. The year round nature of this activity in the area is very important to the tourism economy and allows accommodation to retain levels of occupancy through the year based primarily on hill walking visits.

Newcastle has been a natural service point for many of these visits and is currently the focal point for activity centres and activity guides. However, each of the towns, along with smaller villages such as Rostrevor and Annalong, can support activity interests. In this respect, each town should seek to develop at least: guided walks and trails into the mountains, basic sea-kayaking and sailing sessions, boat trips, and beach activities, albeit those which are appropriate to their context.

As highlighted previously, Newcastle will present the primary gateway, with the Donard Gondola enabling visitors to access to trails deeper in to the Mournes more quickly than before.

There is also opportunity for Kilkeel and Warrenpoint to re-orientate themselves to provide a base and service for activity enthusiasts. Again, continuing with the theme highlighted above, Kilkeel will be able to utilise its proximity to the Silent Valley to offer serious hillwalkers the opportunity to escape from the crowds of elsewhere, which is likely to be an important differentiator. Similarly, Warrenpoint will have greater orientation toward adventure and watersports activities. As a result, each town will develop as an activity hub but within a coordinated approach to this in terms of provision and marketing.

10.6.4 Nature and Wildlife Tourism

The nature tourism market is underdeveloped in Northern Ireland overall. One area that certainly has potential to grow this market, however, is the South East Coast. Here, visitors can already discover seal colonies and

there is considerable winter bird interest close to all of the towns. There have also been marine mammal sightings on occasion.

Wildlife watching has the advantage of being a year-round interest, and one that is most popular during spring and autumn, particularly for wintering birds. Both nationally and internationally, wildlife watching is most successful where there are good prospects of sighting rare, endangered or iconic species. For the South East Coast, this would extend to the species highlighted above.

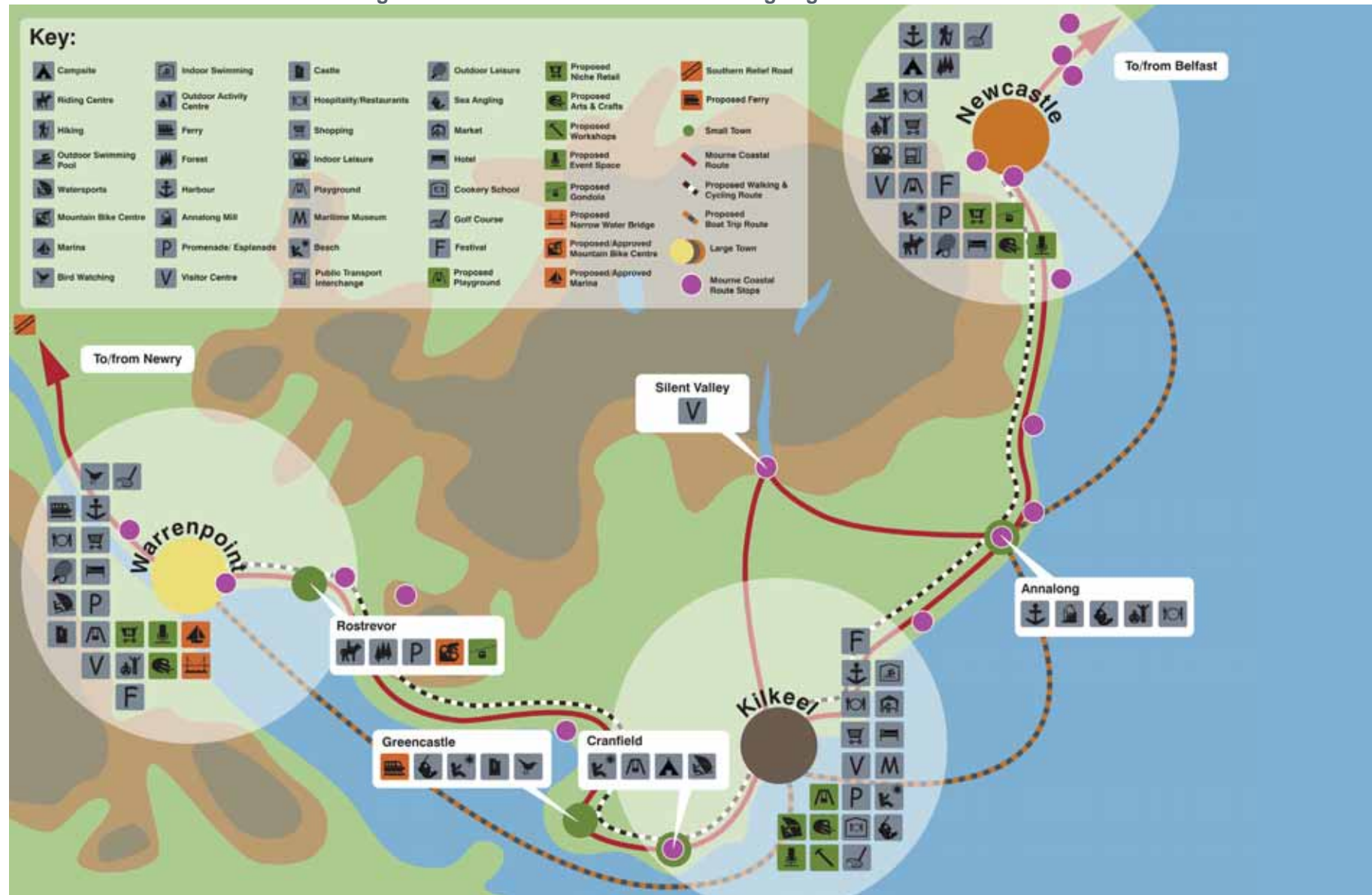
It is also an advantage if the visitor viewing is confined within a reserve environment that is also supported by ancillary services such as an interpretation/learning facility, café and retail facility. This is not currently available, however the character of the South East Coast would suggest that, should a suitable location be found, this would certainly assist in developing this market.

10.6.5 The Full Offering

The illustration highlights the existing offering within each town; the proposals identified within the Masterplan and also projects which are already in the pipeline but which the Masterplan endorses and promotes.

South East Coast Masterplan

The Three Centres Are Distinct Yet Together Provide The Full Tourism Offering Together



11 Responding to Context

– Masterplan Aims and Objectives

The South East Coast Masterplan seeks to maximise the opportunities provided by the Mourne Mountains AONB, Coastal zone and the assets within the Town centres.

The plan identifies the assets of the towns and seeks to develop them from a tourism perspective through development and regeneration and through improved marketing and promotion.

The key aims and objectives of the masterplan are set out below. These objectives inform each of the proposals within the masterplan.

- Promote and strengthen each of the town centres as a destination on the Coastal trail.
- Maximise the tourism potential of the South East Coast, making the most of its significant assets and promoting it in a holistic and joined up manner.
- Develop the leisure and cultural offering within each of the three town centres.
- Increase the number of domestic and international tourists visiting the Town Centres and SE Coast area.
- Improve connections between the centres by road, sea and pathway.
- Increase the tourist season, ensuring activities and events are on offer all year round.
- Ensure the Town centres are family friendly and pedestrian friendly places with high quality public spaces where people want to spend time.

12 Newcastle - The Masterplan

The Masterplan proposals for Newcastle are intended to build on its strengths as a tourist destination. The plan seeks to further the town's reputation as a high quality 21st century seaside resort which acts as the gateway to the Mournes and is known for the range of activities it has to offer. The plan also seeks to develop Newcastle's tourism potential with a view of complimenting the towns of Kilkeel and Warrenpoint.

A retail and commercial leisure capacity study and town centre health check were carried out as part of the Masterplanning exercise. The key findings from the reports feeds directly into the Masterplan proposal, ensuring the plan is realistic and deliverable within the twenty year timeframe.

12.1 Masterplan Concept

The Masterplan proposals for Newcastle are intended to build on its strengths as a tourist destination. The plan seeks to further the town's reputation as a high quality 21st century seaside resort which acts as the gateway to the Mournes and is known for the range of activities it has to offer. The plan also seeks to develop Newcastle's tourism potential with a view of complimenting the towns of Kilkeel and Warrenpoint.

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town centre health check were carried out as part of the Masterplanning exercise. The key findings from the reports feeds directly into the Masterplan proposal, ensuring the plan is realistic and deliverable within the twenty year timeframe.

Retail and Commercial Leisure Capacity and Town Centre Health Check

A Retail and Leisure Capacity Study and Town Centre Health Check was undertaken to inform the Masterplan.

As part of the Study, a Town Centre Health Check was undertaken. The Health Check confirmed that Newcastle is a vibrant retail centre with a low vacancy rate and attractive environment. However the Health Check did highlight several weaknesses including limited leisure facilities, poor evening economy / nightlife and traffic congestion.

In terms of estimated retail need, the study suggests that spare convenience capacity is limited and that Newcastle would support small shop developments or extension to the existing supermarkets.

Newcastle convenience capacity

- 2016: £0.1m to £6m (0-500 sq m net)
- 2021: £0.6m to £6.8m (100-600 sq m net)

In terms of Comparison shopping, while there is a fair range of comparison shops in the town centre, the level of expenditure leakage is high, as residents seek the greater choice available in larger centres. The forecast of spare comparison capacity would support

additional small shop developments. Quality will be

important to achieve these development opportunities and realise the capacity forecasts.

Newcastle comparison capacity

- 2016: £1.8m to £4m (700-1,600 sq m net)
- 2021: £4.4m to £7.1m (1,700-2,800 sq m net)

21st Century Seaside Resort... Gateway to the Mournes... Activities... Arts & Crafts



12.2 Major Opportunity Sites

12.2.1 Leisure Centre – Donard Park

There is an opportunity to provide a modern new indoor swimming pool and multi activity centre within Donard Park. The illustration shows how this could be located in the park with minimal visual impact. The new swimming pool would replace the existing Tropicana facility which is only open for a limited time per year in the summer months. The new indoor facility would help to extend the tourist season in Newcastle as well as acting as a new focal point for leisure at the 'Gateway to the Mournes'.

12.2.2 Railway Street redevelopment

Located within the retail core of Newcastle, Railway Street is not operating to its maximum potential. The single storey buildings are out of keeping with Newcastle's townscape character and would benefit from major and coordinated redevelopment. By redeveloping Railway Street there is the potential to provide modern, fit for purpose retail units on the ground floor, with office or residential accommodation above. This would create a genuine mixed use and vibrant gateway into Newcastle.

This area is currently dominated by traffic and is currently not an inviting environment for pedestrians to enter. This will impact on its performance as a retail destination within the town. The space in front of Lidl presents an opportunity to create a more pedestrian friendly space through an Environmental Improvement scheme. A new public Square in this location would be a major benefit to the shops fronting it as well as creating a new attractive and vibrant space at this important gateway location into Newcastle town centre which would integrate much more effectively with the Main Street.



Heavily traffic dominated space



Poor quality units at the entry point to the retail core of Newcastle



Artist Impression of the proposed Leisure Centre at Donard Park. This building respects the character of the area and views towards the Mourne Mountains.

12.2.3 Former Regional College site

A gateway site into Newcastle town centre, this vacant site requires redevelopment. Potential uses include a residential development or a new Health Village. A well designed, high quality development in keeping with the character of Newcastle is important as the site is highly visual on approaching Newcastle on the A2.

12.2.4 Gap Sites

It is vital that gap site development within the town is of a high quality and is in keeping with the townscape quality of Newcastle. They present an opportunity to remove blight from the town and to create purpose built, modern ground floor retail units with office or residential accommodation above.

12.2.5 Newcastle Centre/ Tropicana

The Newcastle Centre and Tropicana provide an opportunity for a significant development within the town centre. Proposed is a high quality retail and craft village and new hotel based in the listed Annesley building surrounding land. This would showcase the best local crafts and produce aimed at the tourist market. The site is the ideal location for a new hotel in the heart of Newcastle. The proposals identified for Newcastle within this masterplan are designed to increase visitor increased bed space within the town will be necessary.

The rear of the development provides an opportunity for an outdoor performance space overlooking the sea.

Existing view of the Tropicana and Annesley Building



Artist Impression of a new contemporary hotel development on the Tropicana site. This would be complementary to the redevelopment of the Annesley Building.



12.2.6 Islands Park

The Pitch and Putt within Island's Park could be redeveloped into a new outdoor leisure development with the potential to attract more families and tourists into the heart of the town. There may also be potential for indoor leisure space within the Park area which would help to increase visitor numbers in the winter months or during poor weather. The proposals for the park include a number of different zones, catering for different age groups and interests. A Family Zone, Adventure Zone, and an Eco Zone are possible ideas. An Adventure Play Dome could act as the centre piece of the new park situated in the heart of the town centre. A redeveloped Castle Islands Park coupled with the redevelopment of the Annesley building would transform this area of Newcastle attracting large numbers into the centre of the town.



Potential activities within each Zone

Adventure Zone



Eco Zone



Family Zone



12.2.7 Corner of Central Promenade/Bryansford Road

There are a number of vacant properties on this prominent corner site. The masterplan highlights the potential for a new mixed use development on this site. The corner unit has remained vacant for a number of years and its position at the entrance to Donard Car Park makes it an important site within the town. The acquisition of a number of adjacent vacant properties would facilitate a new mixed use development which could include modern retail units on the ground floor with accommodation above.

12.2.8 Donard Park

Proposed is a new overflow car park and new Gateway feature into the Mourne Mountains. The additional car parking would cater for additional cars during the peak tourist season and for any events and festivals which take place in the town as well as the need for additional spaces created by the new Leisure facility.



Current derelict properties



Entrance Feature / Signage



The entrance to Donard Park should be iconic and presented as the 'Gateway to the Mournes'

12.2.9 Gondola

Running from Donard Park to Drinnahilly, Millstone Quarry or Thomas Mountain Quarry, this new attraction would be capable of bringing more tourists to the area. This would build on Newcastle's status as 'The Gateway to the Mournes' and create an attraction unique in Northern Ireland.



The proposed Gondola will provide an excellent attraction which would cement Newcastle's position as the 'Gateway to the Mournes'. Newcastle's setting at the foot of Slieve Donard is an exceptional asset which attracts thousands of outdoors enthusiasts each year. To fully enjoy the Mournes the visitor must be reasonably fit, be prepared and have sufficient time to complete a trek. The Gondola would provide a facility which would enable everyone, including families with young children and disabled users to access the Mourne Mountains and experience the views of Newcastle and beyond towards Belfast.

At the destination point the visitor will be able to enjoy lunch or coffee at a mountain side café, and enjoy the views. Other activities will also be considered to enhance the experience. At the top, the visitor will have the choice of taking the scenic walk back through Donard Wood or return via the Gondola.

12.2.10 Newcastle Harbour

Down District Council are currently reviewing options for the conservation and development of the Harbour. In addition to extending the use of the harbour by locals, one of the aims of the plan is to facilitate the development of the harbour as a 'destination' in the short term with the ultimate aim of encouraging the continuation of the successful Promenade refurbishment, from just north of The Rock, up to the Harbour. It is this inclusion of the Harbour as part of the town that will ultimately secure its future. Options range from a cosmetic 'tidy-up' to a more extensive restoration of the north quay, additional amenities and an extension to the car parking area be considered. The branding of the harbour area as part of the old town will also give the area a positive identity and a link with the town centre should increase visitor numbers.



View from Millstone Quarry over Newcastle and the South East Coastline



Newcastle Harbour

13 Kilkeel

The masterplan proposals for Kilkeel are intended to build on the town's assets of the Harbour and beach.

13.1 Masterplan Concept

Both the Harbour and beach are currently underused assets from a tourism perspective. The plan proposes to promote the working harbour as an attraction for tourists to visit and experience the fish market for themselves. The beach also has further potential which could be realised with a new improved access point as well as an improved cleaning and management programme which could lead to a Seaside Award. Kilkeel should seek to promote and develop its reputation for seafood and gain a reputation as a town where people can come, to both learn how to cook and experience fine seafood for themselves. Some of the proposals may have the potential to happen in the short term whereas others are likely to be long term aspirations. When considering the masterplan proposals it may be helpful to imagine the town in 20 years and decide if the proposals are in line with what you would like to see.

A retail and commercial leisure capacity study and town centre health check were carried out as part of the Masterplanning exercise. The key findings from the reports feeds directly into the Masterplan proposal, ensuring the plan is realistic and deliverable within the twenty year timeframe.

13.2 Retail and Commercial Leisure Capacity Study and Town Centre Health Check

As part of the Study, a Town Centre Health Check was undertaken. The Health Check was generally positive for Kilkeel in terms of convenience shopping and the generally fairly positive outlook among the traders, within the current economic circumstances. Among the weaknesses, the research indicates that the retail offer needs to be improved and there is limited positive approval of features of the town centre among the users.

All the opportunities identified in the table are suggested improvements which could be realised with appropriate actions. What emerges is that full engagement by both the public and private sectors will be required to achieve the necessary gains within the framework of the Masterplan. Co-ordinated moves to promote tourism and invest in facilities/ shopping for visitors will be of key importance.

The main threats facing the town centre can be broadly divided into those which can be overcome by actions to improve the centre, and those which simply impact on it; meaning the trends in the national economy. Taking no action would probably result in the worst scenario of steady decline in the face of competition elsewhere. It will be important to stimulate more public engagement towards securing improvements in Kilkeel town centre.

In terms of estimated retail need, the study suggests that spare convenience capacity is limited and that Kilkeel would support a small supermarket or development of small unit shops.

Kilkeel convenience capacity

- 2016: £9.2m to £13.9m (800 - 1,200 sq m net)
- 2021 £11.1m to £16.1m (1,000-1,400sq m net)

While there is a fair range of comparison shops in the town centre, the level of expenditure leakage is very high. The forecast of spare comparison capacity would support additional small shop developments. Quality will be important to achieve these development opportunities and realise the capacity forecasts. The forecast spare capacity is similar to that for Newcastle and Warrenpoint.

Kilkeel comparison capacity

- 2016: £1.5m to £3.6m (600 - 1,400 sq m net)
- 2021 £3.6m to £6.2m (1,500-2,500sq m net)

While there is a fair range of comparison shops in the town centre, the level of expenditure leakage is very high. The forecast of spare comparison capacity would support additional small shop developments. Quality will be important to achieve these development opportunities and realise the capacity forecasts. The forecast spare capacity is similar to that for Newcastle and Warrenpoint.

Kilkeel comparison capacity

- 2016: £1.5m to £3.6m (600 - 1,400 sq m net)
- 2021 £3.6m to £6.2m (1,500-2,500sq m net)

Fishing Harbour Town... Seafood Experience... Industry... Beaches....



13.3 Sustainable Kilkeel 2020

The kilkeel Sustainable 2020 plan looks at various development options around the harbour area. It has identified new opportunities for the fishing and engineering sectors in terms of transferring and developing skills for the newly emerging off-shore energy sector; potential new marketing opportunities for the fish processing sector; various renewable energy opportunities associated with fish and other organic waste streams; potential opportunities in the aquaculture and seaweed and opportunities for increasing tourism.

This development will need to consider not only the functional requirements of the harbour but also its impact on tourism and the environment. Developments in the fishing, renewable energy and aquaculture sectors should also take account of Kilkeel as a centre for tourism and help to develop the region as a centre for eco-tourism.

The Sustainable 2020 plan compliments the aspirations of the South East masterplan with regards to the importance of the harbour and tourism in the future. A key outcome of the scoping study is the recognition that Kilkeel's opportunities for economic development would receive a major boost by improving the harbour infrastructure and capacity to accommodate larger fishing vessels, and vessels used from servicing the off-shore energy sector.

The proposed development of Kilkeel harbour will contribute to a significant increase in job opportunities in the coming years, resulting in a higher demand for qualified labour and will make Kilkeel more sustainable in terms of future energy needs and consumption by focusing on opportunities from the new renewable technologies as well. This has an indirect impact on the respective hinterlands of the coastal areas in and around Kilkeel.

13.4 Major Development Sites

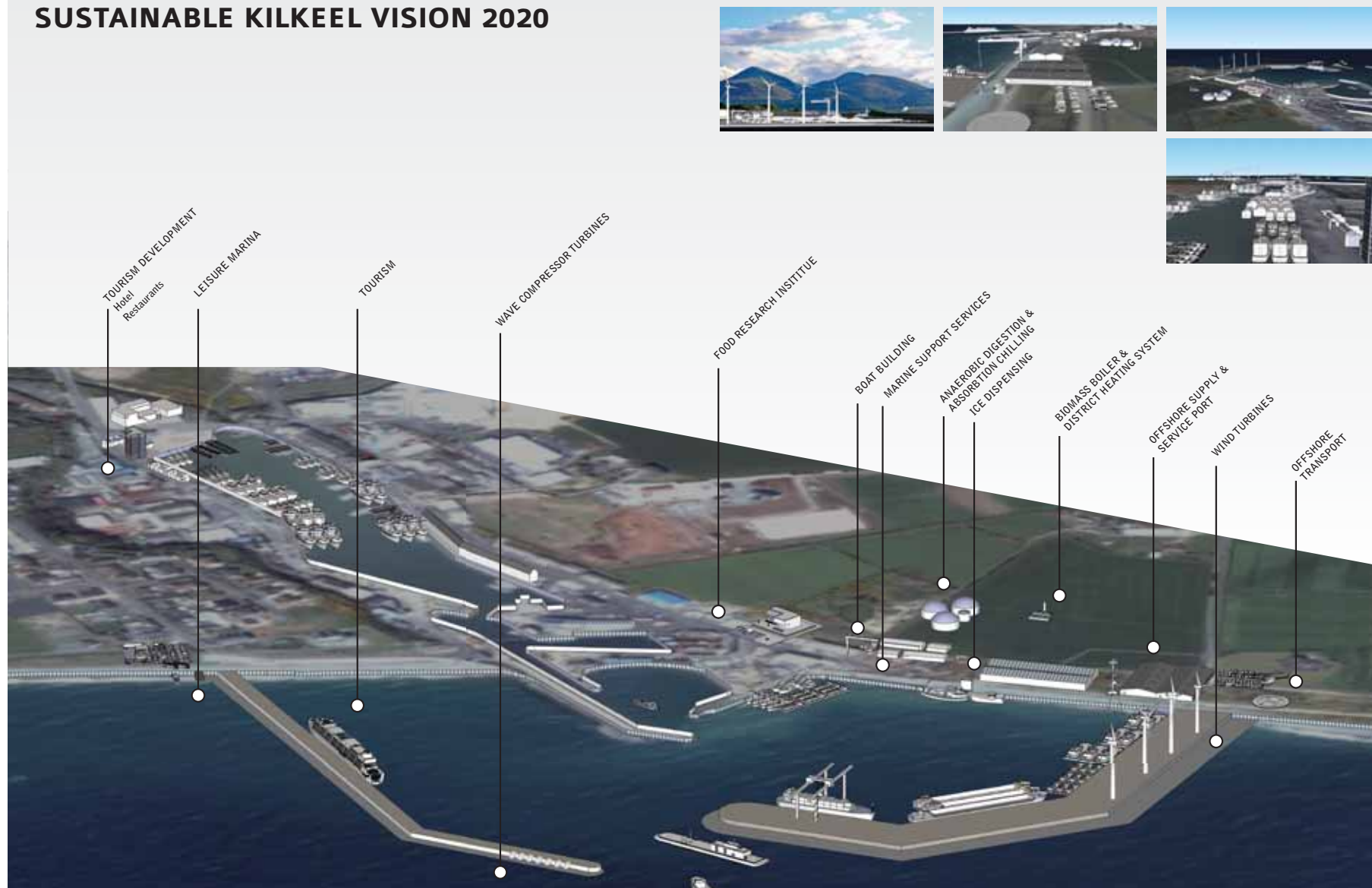
13.4.1 Riverside Development Site

The vacant unit on Bridge Street which abuts the river provides an opportunity for a new building with frontage onto the river and square. The current owner of the site has achieved planning approval for a mixed use scheme. This is a good opportunity to attract a new restaurant or café into the centre of town. A clean up of the river and relocation of the public toilets as part of an Environmental Improvement scheme would create a very attractive area for a café or restaurant to locate and where people would be happy to sit and spend time within the town.

13.4.2 Knockchree Avenue public art

Public realm improvements are proposed for Knockchree Avenue to create an attractive street which draws people from the Town centre down to the Esplanade. A new piece of interactive public art is proposed at the Esplanade end of the Avenue to act as a visual draw down to this newly developed leisure space. Play facilities and picnic seating areas would be located around the proposed platform, creating activity and life into the Esplanade area which currently offers little for tourists or families.

SUSTAINABLE KILKEEL VISION 2020



Sustainable Kilkeel Vision 2020



Proposed South East Coast viewing platform and access to Kilkeel Beach



New riverside restaurant and Environmental Improvement scheme.



Current view of the River and vacant building

13.4.3 Mourne Esplanade, Beach & Riverside Park



13.4.3.1 Riverside Park

A Riverside Park and walkway stretching from the Town Square to the Harbour would provide a high quality park and pedestrian link from the Town centre to the Harbour.

This large area of green space presents an opportunity to create a new iconic play area which will attract families and tourists to Kilkeel. Go Karting, a Train, A Splash Pad and high quality play area are all possible activities which could be introduced. This area also has the potential to facilitate a new indoor leisure development which would again act as a major draw to Kilkeel and are vital to increase the tourist season, offering activities during poor weather.



Proposed Riverside Park

13.4.3.2 Esplanade

The Esplanade area is currently a significantly underutilised space. A new well lit coastal walkway is proposed which would make a significant visual improvement to the area.

The Esplanade could be developed for both indoor and outdoor activities in conjunction with the existing indoor pool being developed with water based activities such as flumes. A new piece of interactive public art alongside seating areas and activities such as a granite themed Crazy Golf would transform this area into a hub of activity and a destination for families and day trippers.



Existing Coastal path



Proposed improvements to coastal path

13.4.3.3 Beach Improvements

A new access point, coupled with a cleaning and management plan could transform Kilkeel beach into a major tourist asset for the town. The Seaside Award would benefit the marketing of the beaches not only as a tourist draw for Kilkeel but for the South East Coastal zone.

13.4.4 Gateway signage

The gateway points into Kilkeel are currently poor adverts for the town. A new public art strategy based around the town's industrial and fishing heritage could create a strong identity for Kilkeel at key entry points. Improved signage for visitor attractions is also proposed.



13.4.5 Kilkeel Harbour

The harbour area has the potential to become a tourist attraction in Kilkeel. The fish market could be opened up for the public to view the auction taking place as well as safe areas for tourists to walk around the harbour area itself. A number of fishing towns and villages across the UK have had to redefine themselves in the wake of changing market conditions within the fishing industry. Attractions such as tall ships, seafood restaurants, and enhanced tourist facilities reflective of the history and maritime heritage have all been used to regenerate harbour towns. The harbour at Kilkeel in conjunction with the facilities already in place such as the Nautilus Centre has the potential to attract greater numbers of visitors to the town in the future.



Kilkeel Harbour has significant potential as a tourist attraction

14 Warrenpoint

The masterplan proposals for Warrenpoint are focused on promoting this traditional town centre which has retained much of its Victorian character and strong independent retail offer. The plan also seeks to promote and develop the town's reputation as a hub for watersports and activities, utilising its location on Carlingford Lough. The plan also seeks to revitalise the public spaces within the town centre, creating event space and making it more attractive, people friendly and less car dominated.

14.1 Masterplan Concept

The proposals focus on the Town Square, Havelock Place and the Promenade as the key areas within the town where development and public realm improvements can take place which would have a positive impact on the town as a whole. The plan also proposes that the viability of a one way system in the town could be investigated. This may have positive impacts in reducing congestion around the Square area.

Some of the proposals may have the potential to happen in the short term whereas others are likely to be long term aspirations. When considering the masterplan

proposals it may be helpful to imagine the town in 20 years and decide if the proposals are in line with what you would like to see.

A retail and commercial leisure capacity study and town centre health check were carried out as part of the Masterplanning exercise. The key findings from the reports feeds directly into the Masterplan proposal, ensuring the plan is realistic and deliverable within the twenty year timeframe.

14.1.1 Retail Capacity

Convenience capacity: the range convenience in Warrenpoint is more limited compared to the other study towns, especially as there is no mainstream supermarket operator. Leakage of expenditure is very high. The forecast spare capacity could support a small supermarket, a discount food store or development of additional small shop units.

Warrenpoint convenience capacity

- 2016: £1.6m to £14.8m (100 - 1,300 sq m net)
- 2021: £2m to £16.1m (200- 1,400 sq m net)

Comparison capacity: there is a lower level of comparison floorspace in the town centre, compared to the other study towns, combined with high comparison expenditure leakage, mostly to nearby Newry. The forecast spare capacity is similar to Kilkeel, but it may be more difficult to realise the upper end of the range in Warrenpoint, because of its proximity to Newry.

Quality will be important to achieve these development opportunities and realise the capacity forecasts.

Warrenpoint comparison capacity

- 2016: £1.4m to £3.7m (600 - 1,500 sq m net)
- 2021: £3.4m to £6.2m (1,300- 2,500 sq m net)

14.2 Town Square Improvements

The masterplan proposes to redesign the Town Square. A public realm scheme could take place with a view to creating a shared space. The space could still be used for car parking but could then be closed for events and a weekly market. A dual purpose Square would be the end goal.

The Square has the potential to be a high quality, pedestrian friendly space, acting as a hub of activity in the town. Pubs and Restaurants located in the Square could use the space for outdoor dining space, creating a space which would be a hive of activity at weekends and in the evening time. The Square is currently dominated by the car and what should be a stunning and vibrant space is currently a large car park. The improved use and design of this space could have a major impact on Warrenpoint, becoming space where people gather, encouraging more restaurants and cafes to open. Properly designed, this space could have major economic benefits to the town. Its location beside the main shopping street and harbour also make it an ideal location for a pedestrian friendly square which draws people in who are happy to spend time there.

The illustration shows how the square could look, however any changes to The Square are dependant

[illegible]

on altering the traffic flow around it. The proposal for a one way system has the potential to reduce traffic around the Square, allowing a redesign of the space to the benefit of the pedestrian.

14.2.1 PSNI Station

The closure of Warrenpoint Police Station has been mooted in the recent past. Should the station close or be relocated in the town in a scaled down form the existing site presents an opportunity for redevelopment and to provide a link through to the Park behind. Potential uses include a new community centre, residential or commercial development.

14.2.2 One Way System

The viability of a one way system around the town should be investigated. The benefits of this system could be to reduce congestion around the Square and may also allow Dock Street to be pedestrianised or realigned to create an improved pedestrian area to the front of the bars and eateries.

There are a number of potential options for a one way system in Warrenpoint which would require a significant modelling exercise to be undertaken to ensure the traffic flow is improved within the town. The potential benefits of reducing traffic around the square area mean this is a worthwhile exercise.

This modelling exercise will dictate the future design of the town Square. Traffic has such a significant impact on this space that it would not be possible to redesign it without knowing how traffic will flow around it.



Proposed redesign of Warrenpoint Square

14.2.3 Promenade & Beach

An extension of the Promenade is proposed along the Rostrevor Road at least as far as the junction with Springfield Road. This would provide an extension of this public space towards Rostrevor. This proposal is in keeping with the theme of developing leisure and recreation within the three town centres. The stunning views across Carlingford Lough ensure this is a popular walk and the extension of the Promenade towards Rostrevor will improve the Aesthetics of the town while also attracting more people to walk the route.

The existing beach at Warrenpoint has also been identified as having greater potential. The existing outdoor pursuits run from this point already create some activity on the beach. By importing sand and keeping the beach clean it has further potential as an attraction in the summer months.

14.2.4 Osborne Hotel

The new Marina planned for Warrenpoint will revitalise this area of the town. The former hotel site is an



Osborne Hotel

obvious opportunity site and a current blight on Warrenpoint's character. The increased activity and investment which will come from the Marina should ensure the site becomes an attractive proposition for developers. A new hotel or apartment development in this location would be a welcome addition to the town, not only removing blight but also creating more life and vibrancy in Warrenpoint. The development of this site should follow on relatively quickly from the development of the new Marina.

14.2.5 Clonallon Park

The regeneration of the park could act as a major attractor for families and tourists. A new outdoor multi activity area could be provided with the potential for an indoor facility alongside it. Again this would add to Warrenpoint's reputation as a centre for activities and watersports and build on the South East Coast masterplan strategy to develop leisure and recreation across the towns.

14.2.6 Exploiting the benefits of the Marina

Warrenpoint Marina was granted planning permission in September 2012. This is a key step in developing this exciting new development for Warrenpoint. Once developed this will be a major attractor to the town and indeed the South East Coast. The aim now is to fully consider the benefits it will bring and ensure that the ancillary services and facilities are progressed.

First Impressions: Havelock Place and Osborne Promenade will form the first impression for visitors arriving by boat. This area has huge potential now that the Marina has been granted and investor confidence is high. There are several key buildings including the Osborne Hotel which have the potential to be redeveloped and brought back to their former glory. The Promenade area should become a mixed use hub where people live, visit and enjoy the local

entertainment.

Services and Facilities: A hub for top class food and entertainment, exploiting local produce, talent and the tradition of the Mournes.

14.2.7 Outdoor Pool development site

Newry and Mourne District Council has attempted to bring in investment from the private sector in the recent past. Unfortunately these attempts have been unsuccessful due to the constraints of the site and economic conditions. These efforts will continue.

Outdoor activities are currently run from the pool and the masterplan advocates the future promotion of this use for the site. The listed structure at the entrance to the pool is also important as it forms part of the charm and history of Warrenpoint. The site should continue be promoted as a leisure destination. Some relaxation of conservation policies may be necessary in the future to ensure this structure is not lost altogether.

14.2.8 Exploiting the benefits of the Narrow Water Bridge

This strategic project was submitted to the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) by Louth County Council with project partners Newry and Mourne District Council and the East Border Region. It was also approved in recent weeks by the planning authorities in Northern Ireland and by An Bord Pleanála in the Republic of Ireland.

The decision has now been taken by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) to approve funding of approximately €17.4 m from the INTERREG IVA programme for the bridge across the Newry River at Narrow Water between Omeath, Co Louth and Warrenpoint, Co Down.



The bridge will open up the cross-border Cooley Mournes/Gullion region to more visitors and make it much easier for residents, businesses and tourists to traverse the area.

This bridge has the potential to open up the entire South Down and Louth area for tourism and business, having a significant benefit on the South East Coast as a driving route with direct access to the South of Ireland. It is hoped the bridge will act as a catalyst for economic regeneration for the whole area.

Plans have also been announced for a new cross-border car ferry running from Greencastle in Co Down to Greenore in Co Louth. Again it is hoped that this project will have a major impact on the cross border tourism potential of the area.



Existing beach and possible improvements



Existing outdoor pool

Proposed Marina, Warrenpoint

15 Town Centre Initiatives

Although the South East Coast Masterplan focusses on improving the local economy through tourism, retail remains the foundation of any town centre. A number of initiatives could be followed for all three towns which help them to improve their retail offering for local residents as well as putting them in a stronger position to capture spend from tourists visiting the area. Some of the initiatives could include;

Shop Front Improvement Schemes

The delivery of a Shop Front Improvement Scheme has the potential to benefit many properties within the town centres, with private sector investment from the shop owners and grant aid from the public sector bodies such as DSD and Council being made available.

Retail Performance Programmes

Retail Performance Programmes aim to analyse the performance of existing businesses in terms of sales and management, and provide recommendations for improvements. Programmes can consist of workshops for business owners and managers.

Programmes can be tailored to individual needs such as to address different forms of Retailing; from comparison retailing to services or commercial leisure businesses.

Development of Vacant or Derelict Sites

The development of derelict and vacant sites can have a major impact on town centres. Their development removes what are often major eyesores, it provides

modern retail space suited to current needs and also acts to instil confidence in retailers and landowners that investment is taking place within the town.

Introduction of Town Centre Markets

In recent years traditional markets have developed very successfully across Northern Ireland, most notably the Continental Christmas Market in Belfast and St Georges Indoor Market. These are based on speciality products including foods, arts and crafts. The local produce within the South East Coast area ranging from Granite to Fish provides an excellent opportunity to develop market events within the town centres.

ReStore

ReStore projects direct government funding to distinct commercial districts and small retailers and traders. The initiative seeks to provide technical and funding assistance to design and improve streetscapes and building frontages. Several pilot schemes have now been carried out in Northern Ireland by DSD.

Town Centre Revitalisation Projects

ReStore type schemes are not suited to every town. Where ReStore is not the most appropriate mechanism for regeneration, the Department for Social Development can work with local Councils on a variety of other 'Town Centre Revitalisation Projects' individually tailored to meet each town's needs. These can include projects such as painting and signage schemes; shop front improvements and "virtual window" schemes.

Urban Development Grants (UDGs)

UDGs are discretionary grants used for promoting job creation, inward investment and environmental improvement, by developing vacant, derelict or underused land or buildings in priority areas.

Grants are available to any individual or company who owns a property in an eligible location with the exception of, banks and building societies, public sector organisations and political parties.

Vacant Unit Animation Schemes

As a short term measure, the appearance of vacant or boarded up buildings can be improved by introducing a vacant unit animation scheme. This involves the cosmetic improvement to frontages, and pictorial enhancement of boarded up doors/windows and hoardings

The techniques employed have already been very successful in England. They are low cost temporary solutions, which can encourage greater footfall and eventual re-development or re-occupation of units.

Purple Flag Programme

This programme is highly relevant to all three town centres as it is the new 'gold standard' that recognises great entertainment and hospitality areas at night. Places that achieve the standard will be those that offer a positive experience to night time visitors and users.

To secure the Purple Flag, an area has to achieve set

standards in respect of five key elements. These are applicable regardless of the size and location.

The benefits of Purple Flag Status include:

- A raised profile and an improved public image
- Wider patronage
- Increased expenditure
- Lower crime and anti-social behaviour
- A more successful mixed use economy

Town Centres that meet the standards can fly the flag, and be recognised as safe and inviting environments.

Meeting the standards of the Purple Flag will provide on-going improvement for the Town Centre, setting bench marks and allowing progress to be monitored.

Maximising the Promotion and Marketing of the Town

The promotion and marketing of town centre events must be comprehensive to ensure their success. The Festival of Flight event in Newcastle was an excellent example of successful promotion and marketing, by attracting the Radio Station 'Cool FM' to support the event it was promoted across Northern Ireland, with the reward being in excess of 80,000 people descending on the Town Centre.

Regular small scale events should be encouraged with several flagship events throughout the year. Events should include arts, music, sport and family fun.

Car Parking Strategy

During the peak holiday season (particularly in Newcastle) there is a lack of car parking within the

town centre. Efforts should be made to highlight any spare capacity as there is a perception that some car parking is hidden. This would be achieved through increased or improved signage and publicity. Variable Message Signs (VMS) are effective in areas with limited reserve capacity but more expensive than conventional signing.

16 Action Plan and Implementation

16.1 Delivering the Masterplan

Given the many public sector powers and resources that lie outside the control of Council (even after RPA), the creation of a new regeneration body is recommended. A public partnership structure is likely to be the most effective way to achieve a collaborative, co-ordinated and strategic approach to achieving the regeneration objectives within the masterplan. The two councils coming together, alongside public sector agencies working together will be vital to delivering projects within the three town centres and the South East Coast as a whole.

As well as bringing the two councils closer together, with the continued regeneration remit of DSD, there will be an important role for other public sector agencies such as Roads Service, Planning service and Translink. Without the full buy in support of all the agencies, the partnership will be much less effective in achieving regeneration. Each agency must sign up to the aims of the masterplan and work together to see it delivered.

It is key that the partnership includes high level representation from each of the agencies who have the ability and remit to make robust decisions. It is also vital that both councils are structured internally to benefit and advise the partnership of any council led investment project which will benefit or impact on the South East Coast.

16.2 Marketing and Promotion

Through the masterplan, coupled with initiatives such as the Mourne Coastal Trail, the South East Coast will

be developed as a tourist destination in its own right within the context of and complementary to existing brands and initiatives such as the Mournes Signature Project and Mournes Cooley Gullion Geotourism. In order to attract these visitors, marketing must be used to engage, inform and excite. A key issue for the coastal zone, and indeed the individual settlements, is how best to undertake a marketing campaign that will resonate with visitors, particularly national and international tourists in order to encourage them to visit and ideally spend a series of nights in local accommodation and spend money on local services and goods.

Developing the South East Coast Brand

The first step in the process of developing greater awareness is to establish a destination brand to which visitors can readily identify as being representative of the area. Destination branding is a process used to establish greater cognisance of the destination through identity, image, positioning, and differentiation techniques. Ultimately, the purpose of destination branding is to establish a positive image that, through consistent use and supported by positive visitor experiences, will ultimately come to symbolise the destination as a place and promote future visits. A successful, consistent approach across the identified area will require better communication and closer working between Down District Council, Newry and Mourne District Council and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board. Both councils in particular must sign up to the use of consistent marketing and promotional material.

A key challenge for the branding of tourism

destinations is one of overcoming spatial and geographical distinctions and/or synergies. Destination boundaries, particularly those within a rural and/or coastal setting, are often relatively fluid and loose from a visitor's perspective. However, these destinations often cross political and administrative boundaries that, if used in promotional material, would have little resonance with visitors. The key challenge here is always how to define the geographical extent of the destination and whether there is a need to go beyond official boundaries in order to present a destination that has greater meaning and resonance from a visitor perspective.

Although it is beyond the scope of this report to provide a detailed branding strategy, we recommend that the South East Coast takes an approach whereby the designated boundary of an existing and known destination, in this respect the Mourne Mountains AONB, is expanded to cover the coastal zone also. In other words, the destination branding would become something akin to 'Mourne Mountains and Coast'.

This type of branding strategy would benefit both landscape areas by reflecting the fact that the visitor can benefit from two distinctive environments within close proximity, and they would be able to utilise the resources equally in order to maximise their stay – for example, play in mountains on one day and play along the coast another. This will help in terms of packaging and promoting overnight stays in particular.

Moreover, there is a high level of cross-over between the types of activity that can be undertaken – coastal walks, mountain walks; coastal cycling, mountain biking; lake/reservoir watersports, sea-based

watersports; and so on. The predominant imagery also combines the two landscapes, with one of the benefits of hiking up the Mourne Mountains likely to be the stunning and extensive vistas of the coast below; whilst conversely part of the enjoyment of bathing and watersports along the coastal zone is the stunning backdrop of the Mourne Mountains beyond.

By no means least, this branding would also reflect the position of the principal towns of the South East Coast, especially Newcastle and Warrenpoint, which currently contain the vast majority of the facilities and amenities that any visitor to the Mourne Mountains would seek. As a result, these settlements already represent important gateways to the Mountains, a position that the masterplan is seeking to enhance further through initiatives as The Gondola, and the Warrenpoint Marina. Likewise, with Kilkeel to be positioned as a place of exceptional seafood cuisine, the ability to reward ones-self after a day of coastal or mountain-based activity could be a significant motivator behind this type of culinary indulgence experience that would attract, almost by necessity, overnight visits. Annalong, Rostrevor and Cranfield also have important roles to play with the assets and attractions they possess which are also capable of attracting tourists to the South East Coast area.

It should be noted that this overall branding strategy for the 'destination' would not preclude the individual towns and village themselves in devising their own sub-brands to reflect their individual character. Indeed, each settlement, especially the towns, will need their own sub-brand to help differentiate between their attractions, their interests and their supporting amenities. However, this should ideally be co-ordinated through the Mourne Mountains and Coast branding to ensure that they are complementary, co-ordinated and share key headline messages.

Marketing, Promotion and Information

Once the preferred branding has been determined, the next step will be to establish a coherent and co-ordinated marketing, promotion and information strategy. This strategy needs to encapsulate all of the key assets, attractions and activity themes within the Mourne Mountains and Coast; and to develop messages and packages that can be targeted toward appropriate audience groups.

There are two main types of information gathering; information gathered pre-travel, much of which is considered within the realms of marketing and promotion; and at-destination information that is gathered during the trip from Tourist Information Centres, accommodation establishments, and potentially retail outlets. Importantly, this information should be presented as consistently as possible. Similarly, post-visit information should be used to remind visitors of the different assets that the area has to promote repeat visits.

Pre-visit Information

One of the most vital components of any modern-day destination marketing strategy is its website and Internet presence. It is certainly noticeable that, as Internet technology advances through wider broadband bandwidth, destination-based websites are becoming much more sophisticated and go significantly beyond providing factual information supported some imagery and possibly a map or two.

Destination websites are now essential in terms of presenting engaging imagery of the destination, from full screen visuals and slideshows, through to several minute online videos about the destination, its attractions and the activities that can be pursued. In this respect, websites are rapidly surpassing printed material as being the source that potential visitors utilise to obtain initial information on the destination. From a marketers perspective, websites

are more flexible and can be continuously updated, whereas printed media can often out-of-date within a relatively short period of time. Indeed, many sites now offer interactive mapping that provides up-to-date information on attractions, catering establishments and retailers, some of which include offers for that specific date.

It is important that the website is designed to be clear and easily accessible, and has clear 'links' to and from the other official websites promoting tourism in Northern Ireland, principally discovernorthernireland.com and discoverireland.com. Here, there will be a need to allow for fluid transition from any 'market grabbing' headline information on these international websites to 'deal sealing' detailed information regarding the Mourne Mountains and Coast. This is perhaps where the current website covering just the AONB, mournemountains.com or mournelive.com, are currently faltering in the face of competition, particularly the likes of golakes.co.uk, visitthepeakdistrict.com, dorsetaonb.org.uk, or eastdevonaonb.org.uk. The former two are distinctly tourism promotion website, and whilst the latter three examples are combined informational and promotional sites, the imagery and usability of these sites are still enticing should they be accessed to discover information on these areas. By contrast, the two websites for Mourne are much more functional and informationally orientated.

Mobile technologies and social media sites are becoming equally important as a means of keeping those interested in visiting up-to-date on the latest packages and promotions, and raising awareness of up-coming events. These will also need to be developed as part of the information package, triggered by the website and with suitable links back for those interested.

Having focussed on the website, it is important to

remember that printed material still has a role to play and will need to be developed alongside the website and mobile technologies. Magazines, press publications, leaflets and guides should also be developed into the marketing strategy. Securing coverage in international guidebooks such as Lonely Planet, Fodders, Footprints, Rough Guide, and will also be important.

At-destination Information Provision

Visitors will continue to seek information once at the destination. As such, up-to-date information is still required on what there is to see and do, the activities available plus local specialists, and any events that are on imminently. All of this must be readily available at a range of different outlets.

In this respect, information provision locally represents an important means of providing positive reinforcement messages, and will allow visitors to understand and distinguish between different areas, be it the natural environment or the towns and villages along the coast – i.e. why they should spend exploring rather than spending all their time in one place. It is also at this level that tourists are more likely to want information on the services to support their needs such as details of the key trails, public transportation, catering, retail outlets and mapping and so on.

Tourist Information Centres (TIC) and accommodation providers have a crucial part to play in this regard. The TICs at Newcastle and Kilkeel, as the principal TICs for the South East Coast, each need to showcase the key images of the town's as well as supporting the overall imagery of the destination. It is recommended that new visuals and large-scale mapping be presented in the TICs. TICs need to share their information with accommodation providers and ensure that this is up-to-date.

The development of downloadable information and even 'Apps' using a GIS base would also be a useful addition to the information provision locally, especially with mobile technologies becoming more commonplace. It should be noted that these technologies will only be useful if mobile/3G coverage is good across the whole area and has few weak spots. As such, it is recommended that this be examined in more detail to understand how technologies can be improved to aid the visitor experience. If this can be achieved, the experience of the South East Coast and Mourne Mountains could be much more interactive with the technologies being used to:

- promote walking trails, cycling trails, and other activities highlighting key access points, providers and the local transport services to support enthusiasts, all at the touch of a button;
- guide walkers and cyclists through the mountains to ensure that they do not get lost, and as a means of waymarking the Mourne Coastal Trail providing additional interpretive information on the natural and built heritage along the way;
- facilitate the ability for visitors to create their own personal travel 'blog' in which they can upload and share images, stories, cautions, and highlights with friends, families and indeed other would-be visitors; and
- aid visitor management by inviting feedback on visitor experiences, including a simple survey and ability to upload images of any likes and dislikes about their stay.

Post-visit Information

Any new visitor has the potential to become a repeat visitor; and any repeat visitor can be encouraged to visit more often through the use of post-visit information. Email and social media should be utilised

as a means of keeping in touch with recent and past visitors. Ideally, any correspondence should be tailored to their specific interests and perhaps linked with offers on accommodation, up and coming events, and any key changes/updates to the overall offer.

17 Action Plan

Ref	Project	Lead Delivery Agency/Partners	Priority	Timeframe	Indicative Cost	Other Deliver Agencies/Partners	Related Projects	Public Sector Actions
1	Mourne Gondola	DSD, NITB, DDC	Medium	5-10 years	Further design development required	Priv, NIEA, PS	2	Carry out further consultation and feasibility work into Gondola proposal
2	Donard Leisure Centre	DDC	Medium	3- 5 years	£5- £10m	DCAL, NIEA, PS	1	Submit existing plans for the new facility for Planning approval
3	Harbour development	DDC	Medium/ Low	3- 5 years	£500k - £3m	Priv, PS		Down District Council will continue to progress development proposals
4	South Promenade corner site development	DSD, Priv	High	3- 5 years	Further design development required	DDC, NIEA, PS		Implementation team to work with landowners to encourage developemnt of the site. Vesting is a potential option.
5	Annesley Building/ Tropicanna redevelopment	DDC, DSD, Priv	High/ Medium	3- 5 years	Further design development required	NIEA, PS		Down District Council to issue development brief on the site.
6	Castle Park, Island Park leisure development	DDC, DSD	Medium	3- 5 years	£2m- £3m	NIEA	7	Appoint consultants to prepare masterplan for the Park
7	Shimna Road 2 way proposal	RS, DDC	Medium/ Low	5- 10 years	Further design development required		6	Two way road proposal to be tested and modelled.
8	Former Regional College development site	DSD, DDC, Priv	High/ Medium	3- 8 years	Further design development required.	SERC	9	Implementation team to work with landowners to encourage developemnt of the site. Vesting is a potential option.
9	Railway Street redevelopment	DSD, DDC, Priv	High/ Medium	3- 5 years	Further information required	PS	8,10	Potential to encourage redevelopment through Urban Development Grants.

Ref	Project	Lead Delivery Agency/Partners	Priority	Timeframe	Indicative Cost	Other Deliver Agencies/Partners	Related Projects	Public Sector Actions
10	Railway Street public realm scheme	DSD, DDC	Medium	4- 8 years	£250k - £500k	PS, RS	9	Appoint consultants to prepare initial Environmental Improvement scheme.
11	Sustainable Kilkeel 2020 project	DSD, NMDC, KDA, Priv	Medium/ Low	5- 15 years	Further design development required	PS, NIFHA, INI	12	Implementation team to work with the Kilkeel Development Association to encourage investment
12	Harbour public realm improvements	DSD, NMDC	Medium/ Low	5- 10 years	£2m - £3m	PS, NIFHA	11	Appoint consultants to prepare initial Environmental Improvement scheme.
13	Indoor activity centre, Harbour Road	NMDC, Priv	Medium	5- 10 years	Further design development required	PS		Implementation team to work with landowners to encourage development of the site.
14	Promenade outdoor leisure development	DSD, NMDC, Priv	Medium	3- 8 years	Further design development required	PS	15	Appoint consultants to prepare detailed masterplan of the area for leisure development.
15	Promenade walkway	DSD, NMDC	Medium	3- 5 years	£1m	PS	14,16	Appoint consultants to prepare initial Environmental Improvement scheme.
16	Beach improvements	NMDC	High	1- 3 years	£10k		15	Introduce clean up program and introduction of basis improvements
17	Interactive public art, Knockcree Avenue	DSD, NMDC	Medium/ Low	3- 8 years	£500k	PS	18	Appoint Artist to prepare design proposals for consultation
18	Knockcree Avenue public realm improvements	DSD, NMDC	Medium/ Low	3- 8 years	£500k - £1m	RS, PS	17	Appoint consultants to prepare initial Environmental Improvement scheme.
19	Knockcree Avenue development site	DSD, NMDC, Priv	Medium/ Low	5-8 years	Further design development required	PS	18	Implementation team to work with landowners to encourage development of the site.
20	Gateway public art	DSD NMDC	Medium	3-5 years	£250k	PS		Appoint Artist to prepare design proposals for consultation

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Ref	Project	Lead Delivery Agency/Partners	Priority	Timeframe	Indicative Cost	Other Deliver Agencies/Partners	Related Projects	Public Sector Actions
21	Kilkeel river park leisure development	DSD, NMDC	High/ Medium	2-5 years	£3m - £5m	NIEA, PS, DCAL	22	Appoint consultants to prepare detailed masterplan of the area for leisure development.
22	River clean up project	RA, NMDC	High	1-3 years	£50k	NIEA	21	Develop cleaning and managemet programme
23	Square development site	DSD, NMDC, Priv	Medium	3- 8 years	Further design development required	PS		Implemetation team to work with landowners to encourage developemnt of the site.
24	Harbour road mixed use development opportunity	DSD, NMDC, Priv	Medium/ Low	5- 10 years	Further design development required	PS		Implemetation team to work with landowners to encourage developemnt of the site.
25	Police Station redevelopment	DSD, PSNI, NMDC	Medium/ Low	5- 10 years	Further design development required	PS, Priv		Monitor needs of PSNI within Warrenpoint as to when site becomes surplus.
26	Square public realm scheme	DSD, NMDC	High	1- 3 years	£1m	RS, PS	27	Appoint consultants to prepare design
27	Queen Street public realm scheme	DSD, NMDC	High	1- 3 years	£1m		26	Appoint consultants to prepare design
28	Marina Service centre	HA	Medium/ Low	5- 10 years	Further design development required	NIFHA	29	Development dependant on Marina development
29	New Marina	NMDC	Medium/ Low	5- 10 years	£9m	NIFHA	28	Continue to seek funding to implement project
30	Former Osborne hotel redevelopment	DSD, NMDC, Priv	High	2- 6 years	Further design development required	PS, NIEA	29	Actively promote the site as a potential hotel site to the private sector. Vesting is a potential option for the site
31	Development of outdoor pool	NMDC, Priv	Medium/ Low	3- 8 years	Further design development required	PS, NIEA		Implementation team to continue to market the site for leisure uses.

Ref	Project	Lead Delivery Agency/Partners	Priority	Timeframe	Indicative Cost	Other Deliver Agencies/Partners	Related Projects	Public Sector Actions
32	Promenade extension	DSD, NMDC	Medium	3- 8 years	£2m	PS, RS	33	Appoint consultants to prepare initial Environmental Improvement scheme.
33	Gateway Public Art scheme	DSD, NMDC	Medium/ Low	5 - 10 years	£250k	PS	32	Appoint Artist to prepare design proposals for consultation
34	Indoor leisure facility - Clonallon Park	NMDC	Low	5- 10 years	Further design development required	PS, DCAL		Carry out initial feasibility into leisure facility
35	One way System proposal	RS, NMDC	Medium/ Low	2-5 years	Further design development required		26	Work with Roads Service to test and model one way options and their impact on traffic circulation
36	Marketing of cruise ships into Warrenpoint	NMDC	High	1 year	£5k - £10k	NITB	37	Prepare marketing material to encourage cruise ship visits to the town
37	Overall marketing campaign for the South East Coast	NMDC, NITB	High	1 year	£20k - £50k	DSD	36,38	Develop a South East Coast Brand and marketing materials
38	Overall events schedule for the South East Coast	NMDC	High	1 year	£5k - £10k	NITB	37	Develop and advertise an events schedule for the South East Coast area.
39	Southern Relief Road	RS	Medium	5- 10 years	£100m - £200m (dependant on route)	NMDC	All	Implementation team to provide any lobbying assistance necessary
40	Town centre car parking strategy	NMDC, DDC	High/ Medium	1-4 years	£20k- £30k	RS	All	Appoint consultant to prepare car parking strategy across the three towns

Action Plan Key:

NMDC	Newry & Mourne District Council	Priv	Private sector	NIFHA	Northern Ireland Fishery and Harbour Authority
DDC	Down District Council	HA	Harbour Authority	PS	Planning Service
DSD	Department for Social Development	PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland	INI	Invest Northern Ireland
RS	Roads Service	RA	Rivers Agency	SERC	South Eastern Regional College
NITB	Northern Ireland Tourist Board	KDA	Kilkeel Development Association	DCAL	Department of Culture Arts & Leisure

18 Conclusion

It has been highlighted throughout the Masterplan that the South East Coast has a huge number of assets from the Coast, to the Mourne Mountains, to the Towns and Villages themselves. The South East Coast is already an established tourist destination within Northern Ireland.

attract investment.

The Masterplan seeks to not only add to the tourist offering by improving the Town centres but to also put the structures in place which will maximise the opportunities for regeneration. Although the natural assets are in place, it is vital that the South East Coast positions itself to continue to develop and attract tourists and investment for the next generation.

It is clear that there is further scope for each of the Town centres to develop, not only as tourist destinations, but also as places to shop, live and to work. Current economic conditions and pressure on public spending will make regeneration a difficult process, however the rewards are significant. The success of Newcastle's Environmental Improvement Scheme is evidence of this.

It is vital that the Masterplan implementation team form close links with the private sector, working with them to ensure that when money does become available it is directed in the most effective areas to benefit the Towns, Villages and wider area.

The Masterplan is designed as a strategy for the next twenty years and identifies short, medium and long-term projects. That said, the success of the Masterplan will only become evident in 10, 20, 50 and 100 years from now when sustainable development has been achieved and the Town centres thrive and continue to



