



STRANGFORD

Integrated Village Plan

The Strangford Integrated Village Plan has been produced on behalf of Strangford Community Association by The Paul Hogarth Company.

July 2013





KILDARE PARK
European Style
Prestige Homes
in Exclusive Areas
Superior Quality & Design
MICHAEL DUNN
Kildare Park Homes
100-102 KILDARE ST. DUBLIN 4

ARTS CRAFTS Antiques 44851854

STRAWBERRY FAIR

STRAWBERRY FAIR
Gallery

ST. ANNE'S
ST. ANNE'S

KILDARE STREET

Strawberry Fair, Downpatrick Road/Kildare Street

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1 INTRODUCTION

During early 2013, the Strangford Community Association (SCA) saw the opportunity to undertake an integrated village plan for Strangford. Having been successful in securing funding for the project, urban designers and landscape architects, The Paul Hogarth Company, was commissioned to take this plan forward. The project commenced in March 2013 and the final plan was produced in May 2013.

The Integrated Village Plan is a comprehensive document which identifies a range of deliverable initiatives to facilitate economic, environmental, physical and social improvements in Strangford over the next 15 years.

The commissioning of the Plan has been funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and Europe investing in rural areas. The Plan has been developed by The Paul Hogarth Company on behalf of SCA and has been led by local stakeholders and the community. From herein the Strangford Integrated Village Plan will be referred to as the 'Plan'.

1.1 WHY HAVE AN INTEGRATED VILLAGE PLAN?

The Strangford Integrated Village Plan **sets out a clear vision** and maps out how the village can sustainably move forward in the future. **Comprising a strategic framework**, the plan builds on the areas strengths and distinctive qualities, whilst addressing those elements which are considered to presently undermine it. **Through a wide range of improvement projects** the plan balances physical, economical and social regeneration, in response to local needs and aspirations.

The development of this Plan has been **shaped by a thorough analysis process** including a document and policy review, site analysis, photographic records, public consultation events and the gathering of information through the distribution of questionnaires.

The Plan enables **partnership and capacity building** within the community by consolidating existing partnerships and creating new working arrangements. Through the Plan, **responsibilities are also placed on identified groups** in taking particular projects forward.

The Plan also **opens up opportunities for funding** by providing a central point of reference for future investment within and around Strangford, whether public sector, private sector or the community and voluntary sectors.

While the Plan also includes an accompanying Action Plan, which assigns priorities and timescales to the list of improvement projects, this document **should not be treated as a finite blueprint for development.**

Instead **the Plan should be viewed as a series of principles and concepts** that, if followed, will bring about significant benefits for the area. Each project will require to be developed to a greater level of detail, including any preparatory technical studies, consultation with landowners, and where necessary, the securing of planning and other statutory approvals.

Nevertheless, while not a blueprint, the **phased delivery of the Plan must remain a priority** for the Village to ensure its long-term social, physical and economic sustainability.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

This Plan has been developed through a series of key stages, providing opportunities to consult and work with the local community in Strangford as well as statutory agencies to ensure that the final plan appropriately reflects the needs of the village. The process undertaken to produce this Plan is outlined below.

BASELINE AUDIT AND SITE APPRAISAL

From the outset of the project, it was essential that The Paul Hogarth Company was fully familiar with the strategic context of the area in order to gain an understanding of how the village functioned, its potential for change as well as its position in the wider area. To this end, a review of all available statistical information was undertaken alongside a series of site visits, desktop research and document review in order to establish a detailed profile of the area.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Both evening and day-time forums were held, which allowed the Project Team to meet with, and gain feedback from, a wide cross-section of people.

ANALYSIS CONCLUSIONS

This involved a review of all the information that was gathered from previous consultation, including notes from public open forums and questionnaire feedback. This information was analysed in order to establish a robust understanding of the existing strengths and factors that undermine the area, the wider strategic context and importantly how that ‘snap shot’ of today relates to trends over time.

DEVELOPING KEY AIMS

Based on the agreed analysis conclusions, a range of aims were established that comprehensively addressed the emerging issues.

DRAFT INTEGRATED VISION AND ACTION PLAN

Based on the findings of the earlier stages of the project, a Draft Integrated Village Plan was developed. The aim of this plan was to strike a balance between being sufficiently visionary to capture people’s enthusiasm, whilst being pragmatic and deliverable.

STATUTORY CONSULTATION

Initial consultation has been undertaken with Planning Service, Roads Service and Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), whereby copies of the draft plan were distributed to ensure that proposals complemented and took cognisance of existing plans, policies and initiatives.

DEVELOPMENT OF FINAL DOCUMENT

In the context of the feedback that was provided in relation to the draft Plan, the final Strangford Integrated Village Plan was then produced.

2 BASELINE AUDIT - AREA PROFILE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to establish relevant aims and associated projects for the Strangford Action Plan, it is important to understand how the village presently functions while identifying its qualities, needs and aspirations. Through the various methods of information gathering, including the public consultation process, a profile for Strangford has been established, which sets the context for the successful future development of the village.

The following sections provide a brief overview of the location and historic development of the village as well as a socio economic profile and review of planning policy.

2.2 LOCATION

Strangford is a village located at the mouth of Strangford Lough in County Down. The village lies eight miles east of Downpatrick, twenty-one miles north east of Newcastle and approximately twenty-nine miles south east of Belfast.

The Plan study area largely focuses within the settlement development limit of Strangford, as defined by the Department of the Environment (DOE) Planning Service. While the Plan is largely confined to this settlement development limit, a holistic approach has been taken whereby a number of identified projects listed within the Action Plan look beyond this limit to ensure that initiatives respond and relate to the wider hinterland.



Location Plan

'A small town pleasantly situated at the entrance of a beautiful lough of the same name with a good harbour for vessels of small burden. There are a number of good houses, an excellent inn and the ruins of an old castle.'

Pigot's Directory of 1824

2.3 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT OF STRANGFORD

Deriving from the Old Norse *Strangr-fjorðr* meaning 'strong fjord', Strangford was once the designated home of King Magnus 'Barefoot' Olafsson, King of Norway from 1093 until his death in 1103. Olafsson established his fort at Strangford, an ideal base for himself and his army given its location and quick access to an inland lough that lead directly onto the Irish Sea. From Strangford, Olafsson then attempted to siege lands from the Ulaid, the people of early Ireland, who gave their name to the modern province of Ulster. A large opposing Irish force ambushed Olafsson and his men by surprise near the present day site of Downpatrick.

King Magnus' time in Ulster is celebrated by The Magnus Viking Association which culminates in the yearly Magnus Barelegs Festival at Delamont Country Park. The reputed grave of the King is located adjacent to the Downpatrick & County Down Railway's South Line, with a halt built there.



Viking Longboat

Strangford's medieval significance is emphasised by its inclusion as only one of five 'Ports of Ulster' in the Crown Customs Accounts of 1281. Many of Strangford's buildings relate directly to the prosperous cross-channel trade with North Wales and further afield and the benefits this brought to custom officials and landlords, the Earls of Kildare and their successors the Lords deRos.

With its thriving county town markets, Strangford became increasingly important as the outpost for Downpatrick, given the difficult and narrow passage to Quoile Quay. By 1800 Strangford ranked eighth in all Irish ports in tonnage of ship registered and remained the chief port of Lecale in the first half of the 19th century. Much of Strangford's Georgian charm inherited during its age of prosperity remains. Today the most regular user of the harbour is the ferry which links the village to Portaferry, with pleasure vessels frequenting the adjacent quay.



Stella Maris Street

2.4 STRANGFORD TODAY

Today Strangford is a small service centre and residential village that is also a popular tourist destination, largely due to its outstanding natural setting and the quality of its built environment. The village is located within the Strangford Lough Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and has been a designated Conservation Area since 1985. There are a number of buildings of individual merit within the Conservation Area, which contribute significantly to the overall appearance of the village. A public square, known locally as the 'Upper Green', marks its centre and the village also has a small harbour overlooked by rows of 19th-century cottages and a fine Georgian terrace. The village hosts a range of facilities including a primary school, Church, Health Centre, Post Office, shop and offices. Strangford also has a regular public bus service to and from Downpatrick in addition to a half hourly ferry service to Portaferry.

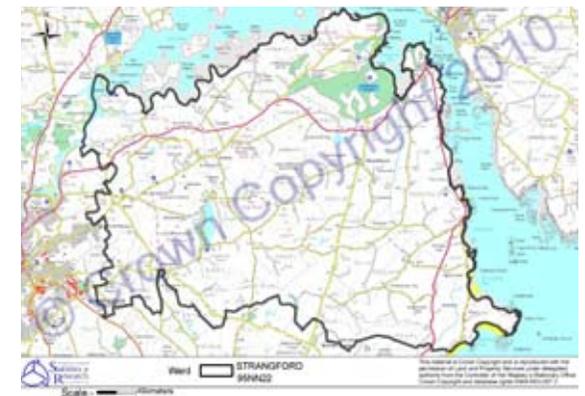
2.5 SOCIO ECONOMIC PROFILE

The Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service (NINIS) contains Census 2011 Population Statistics for Strangford Ward. The extent of Strangford Ward, which includes the neighbouring villages of Saul, Churchtown and Kilclief and surrounding hinterland, is shown below. On Census Day (27 March 2011) the usually resident population of Strangford Ward was 2,686 which accounted for 0.15% of the NI total. Additional information obtained for Strangford Ward includes;

- A total of 2,685 people (99.96% of the usually resident population) living in 1,003 households;
- The average household size was 2.68 persons;
- 20.14% of pop were aged under 16 years old;
- 15.86% were aged 65 and over;
- 39 years was the average median age;
- 81.83% belong to or brought up as Catholic;
- 13.92% belong to or brought up as Protestant;

- 79.66% of households were owner occupied;
- 7.88% did not have access to a car or van;
- 31.19% had a degree or higher qualification.

While the Strangford Ward ranks as one of the least deprived in relation to income, employment, health and education, it has been classified as highly deprived in terms of its proximity to services (ranked 87 out of 582). This is therefore a key consideration in the formulation of overarching aims and projects within the Plan.



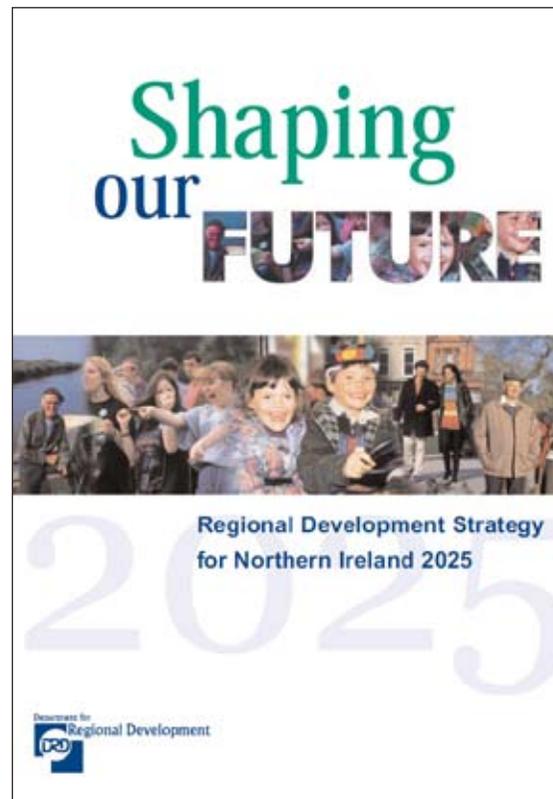
Strangford Ward

2.6 POLICY REVIEW

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2025

‘Shaping Our Future’ is a Strategy to guide the future development of NI to 2025 and help meet the needs of a fast growing Region. The RDS recognises the important contribution that villages make to the long-term development of NI. Not only in their uniqueness as a location for residents and as tourist destinations, but their potential to attract smaller scale direct investment.

It is therefore crucial that proposals contained within the Plan do their utmost to make Strangford a better place in which to live, visit and conduct business, while promoting opportunities to create and sustain new diverse indigenous enterprises.



ARDS AND DOWN AREA PLAN 2015

Strangford has been a designated Conservation Area since 1985 and is located within the Strangford Lough Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There are several buildings of individual merit in the Conservation Area which contribute significantly to the overall appearance of the village. A settlement limit has been designated to protect the natural setting of the village while providing for its limited housing role in the local area. Two Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPA) exist within Strangford, identified as follows:

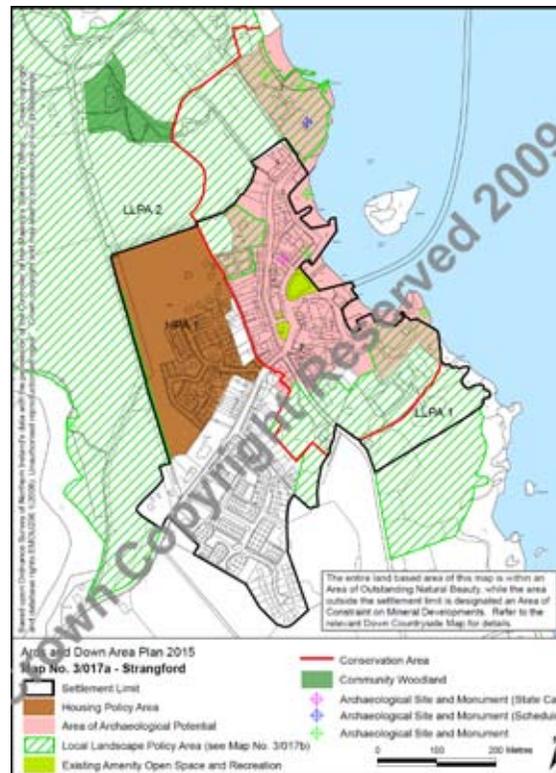
LLPA 1 Church, Rectory, The Lodge and associated grounds

- Listed Stella Maris RC Church and surroundings;
- Locally important dwelling “The Lodge”;
- Considerable amount of woodland within the original grounds of The Lodge; and
- Important mature trees within attractive walled grounds surrounding rectory.

2.6 POLICY REVIEW

LLPA 2 Old Court, Strangford House and headland

- landform, tree cover, views and heritage features;
- 18th century listed Strangford House;
- ruins of stone tower;
- planned parkland landscape of Old Court estate;
- visually prominent localised hill (Compass Hill);
- significant areas of woodland on Compass Hill and to the north west near Sarah's well;
- public access on Compass Hill as community woodland;
- series of listed structures – Boatman's House, Katherine Quay, Chapel of Ease and boundary walling, boating house, pool and Sarah's well;
- planned intervisibility/views between Castleward demesne and Audley's Castle; and
- nature conservation interest - shores and adjoining Castleward Bay and Strangford Lough.



SFD 02 Housing Policy Area

A Housing Policy Area has been designated along the western edge of the village.

HPA 1 Lands north of Downpatrick Road

Development of the housing policy area will be subject to the following Key Design Considerations:

- Housing development to be a minimum gross site density of 20 dwellings per hectare;
- Existing trees along the boundaries of the site to be retained and supplemented by native tree planting;
- Existing vegetation to be retained along boundaries and supplemented by native tree planting; and
- The design, finishes and materials of the proposed dwellings shall be appropriate to the site's location adjacent to a designated Conservation Area.

SFD 04 Area of Archaeological Potential

The area identified reflects the area of the post medieval settlement around a long used natural harbour where it is likely that archaeological remains will be encountered in the course of development.

SFD 05 Existing Amenity Open Space

The following areas of existing amenity open space and recreation use are designated in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 8 (PPS 8): Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation:

- The Square (Recreation Area)
- The Green/Quay Road (Recreation Area).



3 CONSULTATION PROCESS

3.1 INITIAL PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

Public open forums were arranged on the afternoon and evening of Thursday 21st March 2013. These were held at Inverbrena Hall, Strangford and were facilitated by the Consultant Team with assistance from the Community Association. Approximately 30-40 members of the local community attended each event. These workshops encouraged the community to give their views on the village and generated considerable feedback regarding the village's strengths, weaknesses and future opportunities.



3.2 QUESTIONNAIRE FEEDBACK

In advance of the public open forum a questionnaire was distributed to identify how the local community would describe Strangford and to gauge what they liked and disliked most about it. These questionnaires were also distributed during the public open forum event. A total of 39 completed questionnaires were returned.

The following outlines a summary of the feedback received. The preceding figure refers to the number of times that particular comment was raised.

WHAT THREE WORDS / PHRASES WOULD YOU USE TO DESCRIBE YOUR VILLAGE?

- 11 Friendly
- 11 Pretty / Attractive / Beautiful
- 9 Quiet / Peaceful
- 3 Welcoming
- 3 Historic
- 3 Full of potential

The top six issues combined account for 50% of all comments received.



WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT YOUR VILLAGE?

- 8 People
- 8 Community Spirit / Feeling
- 6 Location / Setting
- 5 Architecture / Historic Buildings
- 4 Living beside the water
- 4 Beauty / Look of the Village

The top six issues combined account for 50% of all comments received.

WHAT THINGS DO YOU THINK NEED TO BE ADDRESSED?

- 16 Derelict buildings
- 8 Protection of lower green
- 8 Improvements to Inverbrena Hall
- 7 Parking related issues
- 5 Traffic speeds / Need for traffic calming
- 5 Traffic congestion at Ferry

The top six issues combined account for 48% of all comments received.

ANY FURTHER COMMENTS?

- 8 Extend existing / promote new walks
- 6 Prevent parking on the Green
- 3 Need for more small businesses
- 3 Any development should respect character
- 2 Address Ferry car parking / Traffic speeds
- 2 Parking Issues

The top six issues combined account for 41% of all comments received.



3.3 SECONDARY PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

A secondary public open forum was held on the evening of Tuesday 28th May 2013 at the Inverbrena Hall, Strangford.

The purpose of this event was to present the draft plan, key project aims and associated initiatives. This event was well attended by the local community and played an invaluable role in shaping the final plan and project list.



4 ANALYSIS CONCLUSIONS AND AIMS

4.1 ANALYSIS CONCLUSIONS

Following the baseline audit and consultation stage, a series of analysis conclusions then emerged.

These analysis conclusions can be categorised into the following six overarching themes;

1. HARBOUR FRONT

- Poor marshalling of Ferry carpark
- Ferry terminal is an eyesore
- Operational issues associated with Ferry
- Ferry is an important asset to the Village
- Lack of Ferry Car Park signage
- Traffic congestion associated with Ferry
- Long term opportunity to reexamine Harbour role
- Access for all at the jetty (i.e. Carrickfergus)
- Lack of communication between key stakeholders within Harbour area
- Localised flooding along Quay Road
- First Winds Project - potential for Strangford

2. COMMUNITY/TOURIST FACILITIES

- Strong sense of community
- Need for improvements to Inverbrena Hall
- Doctors surgery only open once a week
- Existing surgery could be better utilised for Additional community facilities
- Lack of formalised visitor facilities (tourists and

sailing community)

- Existing shops within Village are essential
- Aging population within Village
- Lack of facilities for older teenagers (14-17)
- Men's Health Initiative - Table Tennis Club
- New Hall at Ballyhornan now used by residents

3. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

- Very prominent vacant buildings
- Issues with car parking on the Green
- Improvement works at Lower Green
- Motorhomes on Lower Green
- Picnic area at Upper Green
- Feature lighting improvements
- Bus shelter being used as goal posts

4. TRAFFIC CONGESTION/SPEEDS

- General traffic congestion throughout village
- Traffic calming at Primary School
- Enforcement of 30mph zone at St Joseph's Primary School
- Advance warning signage along Castleward Road - address queuing traffic

5. WALKING ROUTES

- Need to upgrade Coastal Path (Strangford-Kilclief - Ardglass)

- Circular looped walk along the Loanan
- Strangford Village Walk upgrade
- Develop Heritage Trails
- Link Strangford to Ballyhornan Coastal Path
- Encourage more cycling
- Rubble at entrance to My Ladies Walk
- RSPB developed Strangford Bay Pathway
- Confusion over names of village walks
- Bays along estuary clogged with fishing effort

6. HERITAGE

- Tower House underutilised
- Interpretation at Tower House
- Need for utility improvements at Tower House
- Uplighting of Tower House
- Tower House used for community events
- Historical links to boatbuilding (punts)
- Need for more interpretative signage
- Need to respect industrial and natural heritage of area
- Tourist Information Centre at Portaferry none in Strangford
- Appetite for additional events/festivals
- Community events held to rear of Old Court
- Gig Racing on Strangford Lough - Strangford Lough Gig Club
- Strangford Lough and Lecale Partnership Strategy

The analysis conclusions and emerging themes have informed key overarching aims which guide specific projects and ensure that Strangford develops in accordance with a strategic vision. These aims are listed below as follows:

The Plan and associated breakdown of projects, each of which is cross referenced, on the following page outlines the suite of initiatives that are relevant to the sustainable development of Strangford.

KEY AIMS

1. REORGANISED HARBOUR FRONT
2. IMPROVED COMMUNITY FACILITIES
3. PROGRAMME OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT WORKS
4. TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND CALMING
5. FORMALISED NETWORK OF WALKING ROUTES
6. REDISCOVERED HERITAGE ASSET BASE & VISITOR PROVISION



1 REORGANISED HARBOUR FRONT

- 1.1 Harbour Stakeholder Forum
- 1.2 Reorganised Ferry Terminal Operations
 - 1.2.1 Option 1 - Modernised ticketing and permanent queuing system
 - 1.2.2 Option 2 - Relocated slipway
 - 1.2.3 Option 3 - New car park holding area
 - 1.2.4 Option 4 - Relocated car ferry terminal
 - 1.2.5 Option 5 - New vehicular bridge/tunnel
- 1.3 Development of a publicly accessible floating pontoon at New Quay
- 1.4 Enhanced Public Realm along Harbour
- 1.5 First Flight Wind Project - Accommodation of service vessels

2 IMPROVED COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- 2.1 Strengthened representation on Strangford Community Association
- 2.2 Upgraded Inverbrena Community Hall
 - 2.2.1 Internal renovations
 - 2.2.2 Improved exterior lighting and planting
 - 2.2.3 Installation of lift access
 - 2.2.4 Extension and reconfigured entrance
 - 2.2.5 High quality public realm
 - 2.2.6 Pedestrian connection to Shore Road
- 2.3 Expanded health service provision
- 2.4 Creation of new Business Incubator Units
- 2.5 Mixed use development opportunities
- 2.6 Mixed tenure residential opportunities
- 2.7 Supported Primary School provision
- 2.8 Enhanced sports facility at The Links area
- 2.9 Strangford Presbyterian Church Renovation

3 PROGRAMME OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT WORKS

- 3.1 Vacant and Derelict Building Assessment
- 3.2 Village Centre Public Realm Works
 - 3.2.1 Lower Green
 - 3.2.2 Old bus shelter area (Upper Green)
 - 3.2.3 Street furniture
 - 3.2.4 Flood alleviation measures
- 3.3 Strangford Public Art Collection
- 3.4 Strangford Village Gateway Signage

4 TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND CALMING

- 4.1 Twenty's Plenty (St Joseph's Primary School)

5 FORMALISED NETWORK OF WALKING ROUTES

- 5.1 Coastal walking and cycling path to Kilclief
- 5.2 Strangford Village Walking Network
 - 5.2.1 Strangford Heritage Trail
 - 5.2.2 Castleward Bay Trail
 - 5.2.3 Black Causeway Trail
 - 5.2.4 Spur to The Links play and sports area
- 5.3 Formalised entrance at My Ladies Walk

6 REDISCOVERED HERITAGE ASSET BASE & VISITOR PROVISION

- 6.1 Establish a Strangford Building Preservation Trust
- 6.2 Tower House Project
 - 6.2.1 Internal improvements
 - 6.2.2 Increased community use
 - 6.2.3 External uplighting
 - 6.2.4 Tower House pedestrian link
- 6.3 Strangford Tourist Information Centre including toilet and shower facilities
- 6.4 Community and Visitor Events Programme
 - 6.4.1 Collaborative working with National Trust, Portaferry Community Collective, Down District Council, Strangford Lough & Lecale Partnership and Strangford Sailing Club
 - 6.4.2 Lower green event space
- 6.5 Cloghy Rocks visitor stopover site



6 VILLAGE PROJECTS

The following chapter sets out the range of village projects which collectively form the strategic vision for Strangford. It must be noted that **this is a working document** and as such, is subject to change over its lifetime. The Plan should therefore be updated on a regular basis in order to reflect changes that may have taken place within the village while also addressing changing needs.

It must also be stressed that the aims and projects **should not be viewed as a finite 'blueprint plan'** but together contribute to the future vision for the village and contain a degree of flexibility in order to respond to any change in circumstances.

6.1 REORGANISED HARBOUR FRONT

HARBOUR STAKEHOLDER FORUM (1.1)

The consultation sessions held within Strangford have highlighted a wide range of issues that residents felt needed to be addressed as part of the village plan process. However one area that has increasingly been raised relates to the untapped potential of the harbour front area and the important role that this area can play in boosting tourism as a key economic driver in the village.



Before exploring the various options that can be explored, particularly in relation to future ferry operations in the village, the Plan proposes that a Harbour Stakeholder Forum is established. This Forum would include stakeholders such as the Department for Regional Development as Harbour Authority for Strangford and Portaferry harbours, the Harbour Master, the Ferry Manager, operators of the jetty at the old pier, Down District Council and the Strangford Community Association.

This Forum will provide a formal venue within which stakeholders with a vested interest can meet on a regular basis in order to discuss matters affecting the harbour area. More importantly this Forum will enable its members to reach agreement on a shared vision for the harbour area. However such a vision should not just serve the collective needs and aspirations of Forum members, but equally those that live and work within Strangford.

6.1 REORGANISED HARBOUR FRONT

REORGANISED FERRY TERMINAL OPERATIONS (1.2)

The Strangford Lough Ferry Service, a subsidised public service, provides an important transport link to the Ards Peninsula. While an important transport link between Strangford and Portaferry, the impact that the day-to-day operations of the ferry has on village life was undoubtedly the most common issue raised by residents. Concerns raised related primarily to the speed of vehicles along the Downpatrick Road at ferry departure times and idling traffic within the heart of the village, which often brought Strangford to a standstill particularly on key bank holidays. While a dedicated surface car park was in place next to the ferry terminal building, residents had commented that improved marshalling of this car park would help to alleviate congestion during busier periods.

OPTION 1 - MODERNISED TICKETING AND PERMANENT QUEUING SYSTEM (1.2.1)

Modernised Ticketing System

At the time of writing, works by the Department for Regional Development were ongoing to modernise the existing ferry ticketing system. These works included the replacement of old ticketing machines, the introduction of smart travel cards and the provision of onboard credit card payment facilities. In addition, opportunities to facilitate a pre-booking system should also be explored.

Automated Information System

The ferry service currently avails of several methods to inform the public of possible congestion, including an informational text messaging service, traffic and travel media updates and variable messaging signs at six strategic locations along key approach routes to the village. Building upon the existing variable messaging signs, scope exists to

establish additional signs at appropriate locations as well as relaying live, real-time information on next available sailing times and number of spaces remaining.

Permanent Filter System

Under existing queuing arrangements, The Slip can accommodate approximately ten cars with any additional vehicles contributing to congestion on Quay Road and the Upper Green. The Plan proposes the reconfiguration of the public car park area to facilitate a permanent filter system for queuing vehicles. This filter system would accommodate approximately 35-40 queuing cars and would substantially address congestion on the central village streets. Access into and out of the filter system would be via The Slip given the narrow dimensions of Stella Maris Street.

6.1 REORGANISED HARBOUR FRONT

Peak Time Ferry Operations

In order to address the substantial congestion generated by the ferry on key bank holiday dates, it is proposed that a feasibility assessment is undertaken to identify the feasibility of running both ferries on these key dates.

External improvements to ferry terminal building

External improvements to this prominent building forms an integral part of Option 1 and would help to modernise the aesthetic appearance of the building in line with general environmental improvements along the harbour front.

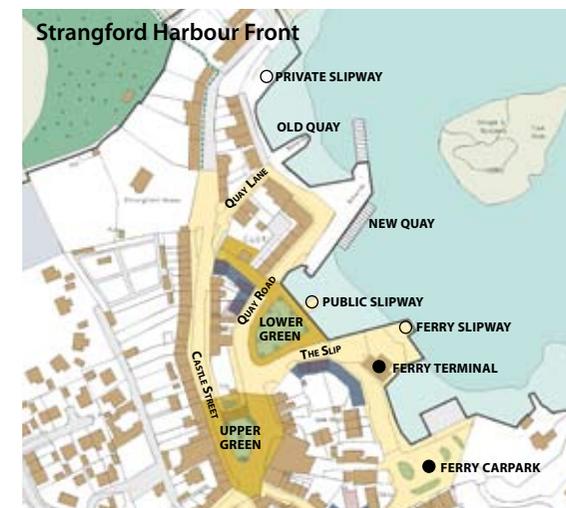
New Jetty

Finally the construction of a new jetty adjacent to the existing slipway would enable the ferry operator to moor both ferries (MV Portaferry II and the backup MV Strangford) next to the terminal to create a more efficient service and free up space on the Old Quay for public use.

OPTION 2 - RELOCATED SLIPWAY (1.2.2)

There are a total of three slipways in Strangford harbour. These include the main ferry slipway used by the ferry service, a small public slipway adjacent to Lower Green between the ferry slipway and New Quay and a slipway on private land due north of Old Quay. The location of the ferry slipway, within the central section of the harbour, is not considered ideal given the close proximity to the Village Centre.

Relocating the ferry slipway further south, adjacent to the ferry carpark, would help to relieve congestion within the centre of the village. This new location would make better use of the existing carpark and by freeing up the central stretch of the harbour area, would allow for unhindered public access along a greater extent of the harbour front.



6.1 REORGANISED HARBOUR FRONT

OPTION 3 - NEW CAR PARK HOLDING AREA (1.2.3)

While options 1 and 2 will help to alleviate vehicular congestion in the village during the majority of days, the Plan proposes the establishment of a vehicular 'holding area' on the outskirts of the village to accommodate the large number of vehicles which avail of the ferry service on key bank holiday dates throughout the year. On these key dates the vehicular holding area, situated along the Downpatrick Road, would release vehicles in conjunction with available spaces on the ferry, thereby ensuring the central village streets are kept free from queuing vehicles.

Those passengers wishing to explore Strangford prior to their departure could do so by leaving their vehicle at the carpark and walking into the village via My Ladies Walk.

OPTION 4 - RELOCATED CAR FERRY TERMINAL (1.2.4)

One longer term aspiration, which has been muted and discussed informally within the community for a number of years, is the relocation of the ferry terminal to the outskirts of Strangford. A potential site that has been identified within the Plan relates to the lands immediately south of the existing pumping station.

One of the key benefits of this site is its ability to tie in with a potential link road connecting Downpatrick Road to Shore Road, a project which has also been previously discussed within the village. In this scenario, a car park facility integrated into the layout of the new ferry terminal, would remove the need to establish a carpark holding area as outlined under Option 3.



The relocation of the ferry terminal to a purpose built facility with improved access links would not only provide an improved service from the operators point of view, but would relieve pressure on the centre of the village. A smaller foot passenger ferry service could however remain within the village, thereby maintaining an important connection between Strangford and Portaferry.

6.1 REORGANISED HARBOUR FRONT

OPTION 5 - NEW VEHICULAR BRIDGE/TUNNEL (1.2.5)

A long term aspiration of the Plan is the construction of a bridge/tunnel linking Strangford to the Ards peninsula and Portaferry. This piece of infrastructure would significantly cut journey times by reducing a 50 mile journey to a 0.75 mile bridge or tunnel link.

This option would also have the potential of further developing transport corridors across the east coast of Ireland while opening up service delivery in the lower Ards and Strangford areas.

DEVELOPMENT OF A PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE FLOATING PONTOON AT NEW QUAY (1.3)

Strangford Community Association Developments Ltd presently operate a floating pontoon within Strangford Harbour at the northern end of New Quay. This pontoon provides berthing for up to eight small to medium sized yachts and is well utilised particularly during peak season. Arrangements are currently in place for visitors to avail of shower/changing facilities at the Cuan restaurant, located at the Upper Green.

The Plan proposes that a second publicly accessible floating pontoon is developed along the southern edge of New Quay. This new facility will more than double the number of available berths within the village, add to the overall tourism offer and increase levels of visitor footfall.

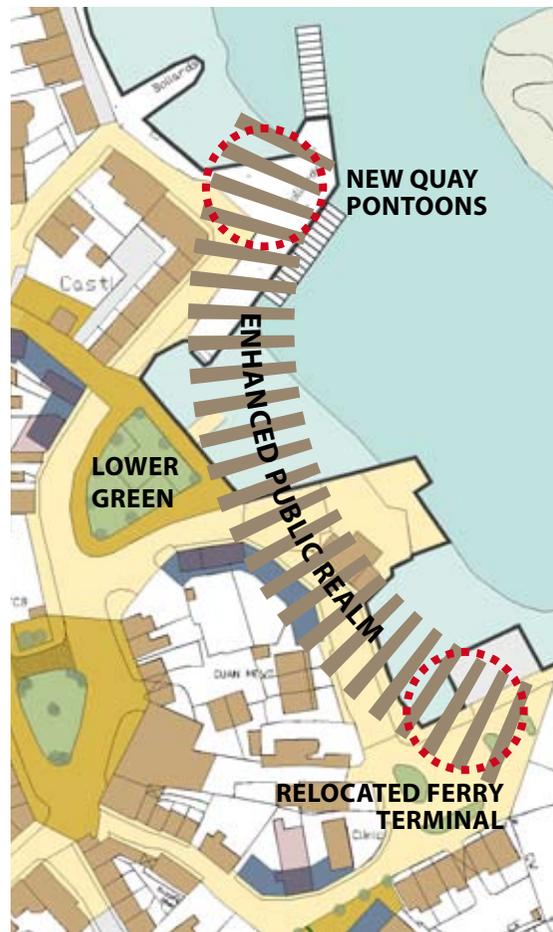


6.1 REORGANISED HARBOUR FRONT

ENHANCED PUBLIC REALM ALONG HARBOUR (1.4)

One of the added advantages of implementing options 2 to 5 (section 1.2), is the opportunity to rediscover Strangford's relationship with the Lough. The relocation of the ferry terminal from the centre of the harbour to its southern end, would free up the harbour front and pave the way for enhanced public realm along its full extent, with New Quay and Ferry terminal acting as anchor points at either end.

Here the harbour front can then be considered as one continuous publicly accessible thoroughfare along which high quality materials, street furniture and lighting would be implemented thereby greatly improving the setting of Strangford's 'front door'.



FIRST FLIGHT WIND PROJECT - ACCOMMODATION OF SERVICE VESSELS (1.5)

The First Flight Wing Project is a renewable energy project which aims to harness offshore wind energy off the south east coast of Co. Down. This project has the potential to produce around 600MW of offshore wind energy capacity and could provide economic stimulus and create opportunities for local companies during the development, construction and operation phases.

One such opportunity for Strangford relates to the accommodation of service vessels during the construction phase, which is envisaged to commence around mid 2017. By designating an accommodation area for service vessels, at the southern end of the harbour adjacent to the relocated ferry terminal, Strangford would secure a vital funding stream which could then finance projects around the village.

6.2 IMPROVED COMMUNITY FACILITIES

STRENGTHENED REPRESENTATION ON STRANGFORD COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION (2.1)

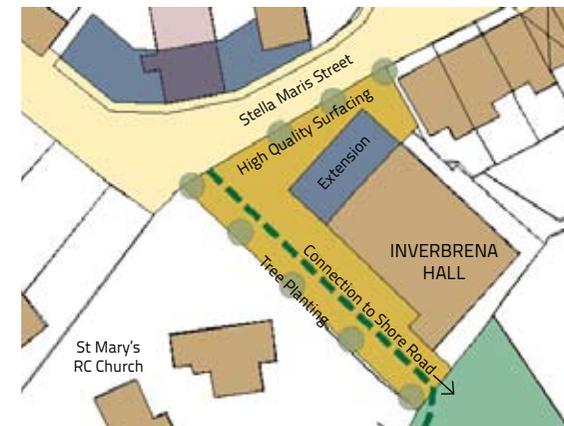
Strangford Community Association, which comprises a number of residents and business owners within the community, has been instrumental in realising a range of projects throughout the village. This has more recently been witnessed in their concerted effort to rejuvenate both the Lower Green and Old bus stop areas as outlined in sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2.

However feedback received during both public consultation drop-in sessions, highlighted the need for the Association to encompass a wider representation from across the community. The Plan therefore advocates that the Association embarks on a recruitment drive in order to increase their numbers, particularly in relation to council officers and elected representatives.

UPGRADED INVERBRENA COMMUNITY HALL (2.2)

Inverbrena Hall, located within the east of the village is a modest two storey structure, the gable end of which fronts onto Stella Maris Street. The Hall is one of the key focal points within the village, being the venue for a host of community events and sports activities.

A limited number of parking spaces are provided in the area to the front of the hall.



6.2 IMPROVED COMMUNITY FACILITIES

INTERNAL RENOVATIONS (2.2.1)

Feedback received during the public consultation drop-in sessions emphasised the high priority placed on the need to carry out internal renovations to the Hall. These works primarily relate to the installation of new kitchen and toilet facilities, together with a more energy efficient heating system.

Additional works under this category would include repairs to the existing roof within the Main Hall alongside an updated lighting system. Where the opportunity arises, increased storage space would also be sought when carrying out internal renovations.

IMPROVED EXTERIOR LIGHTING AND PLANTING

(2.2.2)

The main entrance to Inverbrena Hall is positioned towards the rear of the building and accessed along its western edge via a surfaced laneway. The laneway is located between the hall and the adjoining raised planters at St. Mary's RC Church, which have been positioned in front of the original listed wall. As a result, the laneway is relatively narrow and due to the absence of openings and windows at ground floor level, is dimly lit during the evenings. It is proposed that the lower raised planter areas are removed to widen the laneway and reveal the churches original listed wall. The installation of low level exterior lighting along the western facade of the Hall would improve levels of pedestrian safety, while formal tree planting and hanging baskets will help to demarcate the threshold of this widely used community facility.

INSTALLATION OF LIFT ACCESS (2.2.3)

It is proposed that a lift is installed adjacent to the existing staircase at the building's side entrance. The installation of this lift will ensure that the Inverbrena Hall is fully Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant by providing wheelchair access to the offices and halls located at first floor level.



Low level lighting

6.2 IMPROVED COMMUNITY FACILITIES

EXTENSION AND RECONFIGURED ENTRANCE (2.2.4)

One of the most ambitious projects relating to the Inverbrena Hall, is the construction of a new full width extension to the front of the building. This extension will allow for a more rationalised building configuration that establishes a new 'front door' along Stella Maris Street. Coupled with a new formalised entrance, this extension could include a reception/'meet and greet' area which enables improved internal access to both the major and minor halls.

It is acknowledged that any forward extension to the Hall would result in the loss of the buildings forecourt area which is used for parking purposes. However it is noted that this area can only accommodate a small number of parking spaces, which could be catered for within the larger public car park at the lower end of Stella Maris Street.

HIGH QUALITY PUBLIC REALM (2.2.5)

In the longer term, it is proposed that the quality of the public realm in and around the hall is improved in order to enhance the setting of the building. These works would involve the incorporation of high quality stone surfacing to the front and side of the building (along the northern and western elevations), in order to greatly enhance the attractiveness and aesthetic appeal of the hall.



PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION TO SHORE ROAD (2.2.6)

It is noted that an existing stairway to the rear of the hall (south west corner) once provided pedestrian access up to the adjoining St. Mary's RC Church site. While overgrown, the opportunity exists to examine the potential of reestablishing this connection which could then be extended through the church site and beyond to the Shore Road.

Due to the notable changes in height between the hall and church, obtaining level DDA compliant access between both sites could prove challenging. However a ramped access, which spans the full width of the Inverbrena Hall site, may be one possible solution.

6.2 IMPROVED COMMUNITY FACILITIES

EXPANDED HEALTH SERVICE PROVISION (2.3)

Feedback received during the public consultation sessions placed emphasis on the need to expand existing health service provision within Strangford. It identified that while residents appreciated and utilised the GP service on offer at the clinic on Stella Maris Street, it was deemed that one morning session per week (Wednesdays from 9am to 12noon) was insufficient. Furthermore, concern was raised regarding the lack of basic health provision throughout the village and surrounding area, with particular focus on the absence of dental services.

The Plan seeks to increase the range of health services on offer throughout the village as and when the opportunity arises. This could include the establishment of a second GP morning session at the clinic as well as the introduction of additional healthcare provision within the village such as dental, physiotherapy, optometry and podiatry services.

The plan also proposes that the underutilised clinic building is used as a drop-in centre for Macmillan nurses and as a one-stop shop for social security/benefits/housing issues to cater for the elderly population within the village.



CREATION OF NEW BUSINESS INCUBATOR UNITS (2.4)

The eastern side of Castle Street comprises a terrace of predominantly two storey residential properties set within plots that back onto Quay Road. A few of these properties include sheds and outbuildings at the lower end of their gardens, several of which are in a poor state of repair, which detracts from the appearance of this stretch of Quay Road.

An opportunity exists to establish a new frontage to provide new business incubator space which fronts directly onto Quay Road. The design and massing of these units would need to be carefully considered so as to respect the character of the Conservation Area in this part of the village. These units could also be extended to front a portion of the adjacent laneway north of No. 14 Castle Street, thereby strengthening the connection between the Castle and village core.

6.2 IMPROVED COMMUNITY FACILITIES

MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES (2.5)

Strangford's harbour front is predominantly residential in nature. While the colourful terrace of two storey cottages of Quay Road (Nos. 15-23) front onto the northern side of the harbour, the southern side along The Slip and Stella Maris Street includes a more eclectic mix of properties, some of which are in a poor state of repair and detract from the historic significance of this location.

In addition to those works outlined within section 3.1 (Vacant and Derelict Building Assessment), the Plan includes a longer term aspiration of establishing a new frontage along The Slip/Stella Maris Street in order to reanimate the southern side of the harbour. The promotion of mixed use development at this location, comprising retail and/or office units at ground floor and residential units at upper floors, will address key vacant buildings and gap sites and help to reinvigorate this historic harbour front.



The Slip / Stella Maris Street

MIXED TENURE RESIDENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES (2.6)

In order to ensure the sustained growth of the village, lands north of Downpatrick Road have been identified within the Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 for future housing development. The designation of these lands will allow the village to evolve within the defined settlement development limits and build on the success of recent housing developments along Kildare Street and St. John's Place.

Here the Area Plan stipulates a minimum gross site density of 20 dwellings per hectare and the retention of existing trees along the western and northern boundaries of the site and supplemented by a belt of native trees to provide an element of screening and integrate future development into the surrounding countryside.

6.2 IMPROVED COMMUNITY FACILITIES

SUPPORTED PRIMARY SCHOOL PROVISION (2.7)

One of the key findings of the analysis and public consultation work was the strong desire to safeguard the future of St. Joseph's Primary School. In the longer term, the view was to examine the potential of amalgamating local primary school provision to ensure that any primary school facility that catered for the wider catchment area remained within Strangford.



St. Joseph's Primary School

ENHANCED SPORTS FACILITY AT THE LINKS AREA (2.8)

Strangford's main recreation and amenity space is located adjacent to The Links within an existing housing estate to the south of the village. This area, which is owned and maintained by Down District Council, comprises a full size shared soccer/gaelic grass pitch together with stand alone changing rooms/toilet block. A children's playground has also recently been installed on a small plot due north of the playing field.

In order to meet the growing demand for sports facilities within the village, the Plan proposes that a second 3G/MUGA pitch is constructed on the lands between the existing grass pitch and playground. Additional works would also include the installation of floodlights to the existing grass pitch so that its hours of use could be extended.

STRANGFORD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH RENOVATION (2.9)

Dating back to 1845, this former Trinitarian Meeting House functioned as a Presbyterian Church until declining congregations forced its closure in 2003. The property now lies in a poor state of repair and given its prominence on the Downpatrick Road, along the key approach route to the village, requires urgent attention in both the short and long terms. While this project would involve significant renovation work, this listed building does retain much of its original charm and would be suitable for a variety of community uses. Subject to planning and listed building consent, scope exists to adapt the building internally in order to provide a new public facility that would secure the future of this key historic site for the benefit of the people of Strangford.

6.3 PROGRAMME OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT WORKS

VACANT AND DERELICT BUILDING ASSESSMENT (3.1)

A number of prominent vacant sites and buildings have been identified within Strangford. Such sites can have major implications on the environmental quality of the village centre, as evidence suggests that dereliction and vacancy can deter investment and footfall levels by both locals and tourists.

The presence of vacant and/or derelict sites and buildings can also have a negative impact on the viability of peoples livelihoods including shops, cafes and other outlets that often rely on passing footfall. A vacant and derelict building assessment would initially involve making contact with respective site owners to encourage their participation in the process. Depending on the scale of the problem, 'quick win' solutions could include site clearance, painting schemes, soft landscaping and tree planting.



VILLAGE CENTRE PUBLIC REALM WORKS (3.2)

'Public Realm' is defined as any publicly owned streets, pathways, right of ways, parks, publicly accessible open spaces and any public and civic building and facilities. It is within these public areas that communities tend to meet and interact with each other as well as representing important connections along which users can access vital services.

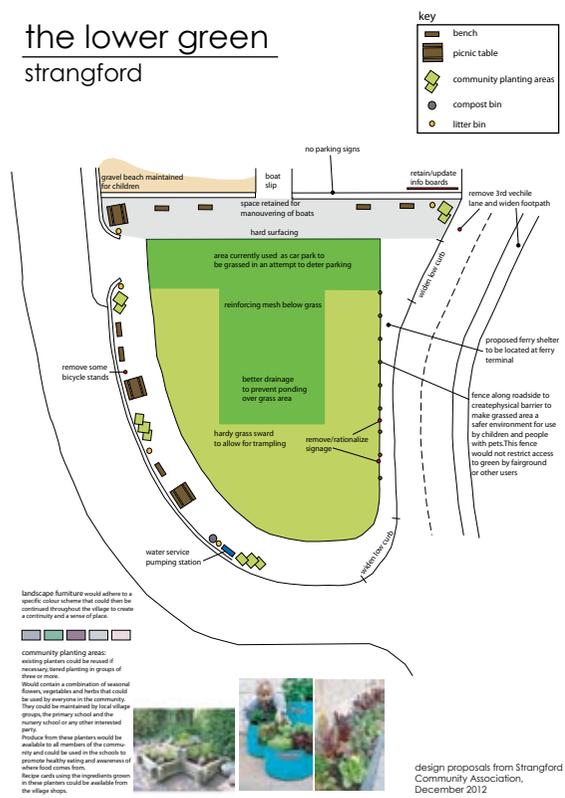
In this regard public realm works are proposed within the centre of the village, largely around two specific areas; namely the Lower Green and the old bus stop area (Upper Green). Here bespoke lighting and street furniture, in addition to high quality surface materials, would be utilised to enhance the setting of both areas while complementing the proposed enhancement works along the harbour front area (see section 1.4). Detailed proposals for both areas are outlined in the following sections.

6.3 PROGRAMME OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT WORKS

LOWER GREEN (3.2.1)

Lower Green, one of the village's key civic amenity spaces, was formed in the 1940s when a section of Strangford harbour was reclaimed. The Green, which measures approximately 0.5 acres and is owned by the Baron de Ros, has been leased to Down District Council since 1996. While much loved, there are growing concerns by residents that Lower Green is increasingly being used as an informal car park by ferry users. While the northern eastern grassed section is frequently used for car parking, cars have more recently been spilling out onto the hardstanding area. The number of cars using this area has increased to such a degree that access to the boat slip is regularly impeded.

The Plan fully supports the Community Association's design proposals to reclaim the Lower Green for the benefit of the village.



Design proposals for the Lower Green

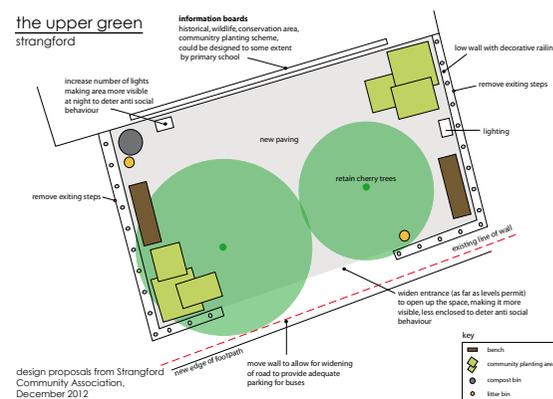
The key aim of the Association's vision for the Lower Green is the removal of carparking in its entirety and the reintroduction of planting and soft landscaping through the use of seasonal flowers, vegetables and herbs that could be used by the community. The proposals also advocate the use of the hardsurfaced area exclusively for the maneuvering of boats in association with the existing boat slip and the rationalisation of perimeter signage. New benches and picnic tables also form an integral part of the proposed layout. Longer term aspirations include the widening of adjoining footpaths and the maintenance of a gravel beach for children.

6.3 PROGRAMME OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT WORKS

OLD BUS SHELTER AREA (UPPER GREEN) (3.2.2)

The old bus shelter area, which is located immediately north of the Upper Green on Quay Road, comprises a small rectangular paved area enclosed by pebble dashed walls. Raised concrete planters filled with concrete and stone are positioned around the perimeter of the space, the paving slabs of which have become worn and cracked. Two mature cherry trees are located within the space itself, while unkempt planting is along the rear wall.

The Strangford Community Association's design proposals include the installation of new paving, the removal of existing steps and the widening of the main southern entrance, in order to visually open up the space. The proposals also include the establishment of new community planting areas and the installation of benches and an information board.



Design proposals for old bus stop area

STREET FURNITURE (3.2.3)

As a key component of the suite of environmental improvement works, it is proposed that a review of existing street furniture is undertaken throughout the village. This would include a condition report as well as an assessment of individual pieces in relation to its location and appropriateness. The longer term aspiration as a community would be to reach agreement on the design of bespoke furniture that respects the character of the village and reflects its historic significance.



6.3 PROGRAMME OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT WORKS

FLOOD ALLEVIATION MEASURES (3.2.4)

As public consultation feedback highlighted events of extensive flooding along Quay Road, it is recommended that a flooding and drainage assessment is undertaken so that appropriate flood alleviation measures are put into place. These measures could include the use of sustainable drainage solutions, the upgrading of the onsite drainage network, the use of anti-flood valves and the creation of additional channels to handle future exceedance events.



Flooding at Quay Road

STRANGFORD PUBLIC ART COLLECTION (3.3)

The installation of public art works at prominent locations throughout Strangford will also form an important component of the enhanced public realm works within the centre of the village and along the harbour front area. Careful consideration should be given to the role and siting of the art pieces, whether along the fringe of the village where they will help to define gateways or within central areas that are popular and well used by the public.

Local artists could be appointed to produce individual pieces in accordance with an overall strategy. A number of key themes could also be explored ranging from Strangford's maritime traditions including its history of boatbuilding, to the village's evolution and its strong Norse connections.

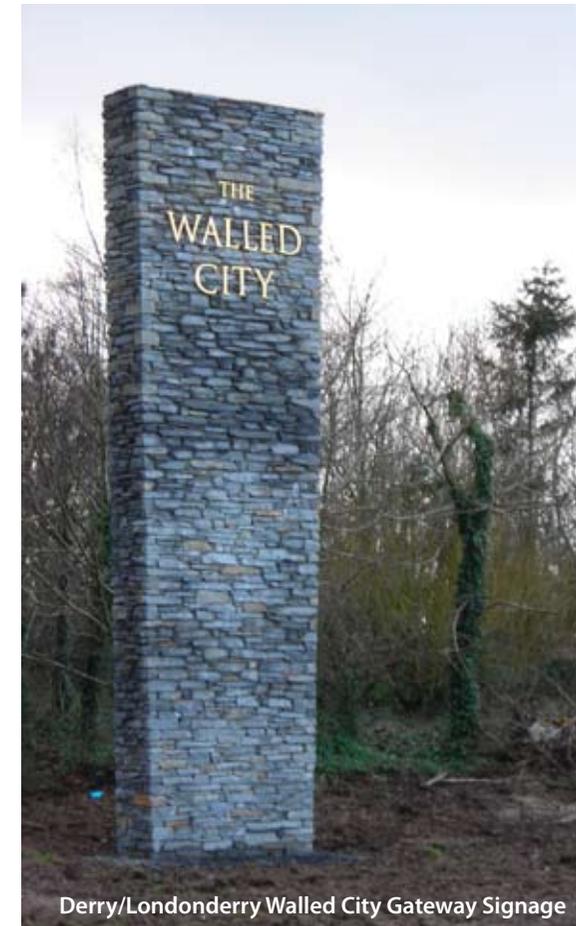


6.3 PROGRAMME OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT WORKS

STRANGFORD VILLAGE GATEWAY SIGNAGE (3.4)

The Plan has identified two specific locations which are considered to define the outer extents of the village, namely along the southern approach routes of the Downpatrick Road and Shore Road. Memorable gateways at both locations will assist in not only defining the boundaries of Strangford, but of equal importance is the role they will play in signifying to visitors that they have reached a point of arrival to the village.

Emphasis can be placed on these gateways by the creation of new spaces or the installation of art features, the design of which should reflect the character and potential branding of the village. The Downpatrick gateway could also play a vital traffic calming role given comments received regarding traffic speeds along this busy approach route.



6.4 TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND CALMING

TWENTY'S PLENTY (ST JOSEPH'S PRIMARY SCHOOL) (4.1)

During both drop-in consultation sessions, members of the public highlighted the need to raise awareness of speed limits in close proximity to St. Joseph's Primary School. Residents commented that they regularly witnessed high traffic speeds along this stretch of the Downpatrick Road, allegedly by cars rushing to catch the ferry.

In response the Plan has identified a stretch of the Downpatrick Road where speed restrictions should be limited to 20mph, in the hope to encourage drivers to act more responsibly when driving in close proximity to the primary school.

This project would require input from local councillors, Down District Council, PSNI, Roads Service and St. Joseph's Primary School in order to enable 20mph road markings to be installed along a demarcated stretch of Downpatrick Road and the erection of 20mph signage at key locations in order to make it clear to motorists that they are travelling in a 20mph zone.



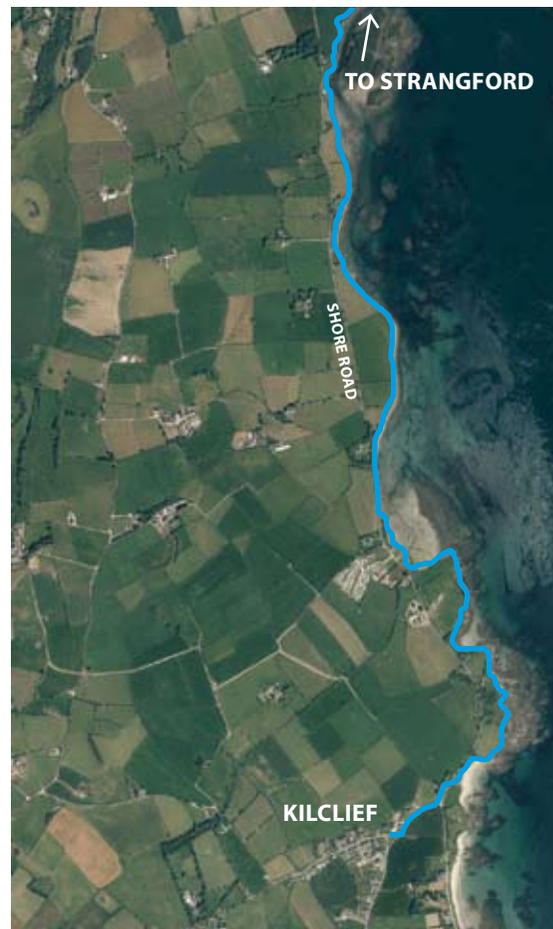
Entrance to St. Joseph's Primary School, Downpatrick Road

6.5 FORMALISED NETWORK OF WALKING ROUTES

COASTAL WALKING AND CYCLING PATH TO KILCLIEF (5.1) —

The formalisation of a continuous and safe pedestrian connection between Strangford and the neighbouring village of Kilclief has been highlighted as an aspiration of the community. While pedestrians can presently walk and cycle to Kilclief by way of the existing road network, the purpose of this project is to examine ways in which users can formalise a route which hugs the coastline as far as feasibly possible.

Where access to the coastline is not possible, due to topographical challenges or land ownership issues, the Shore Road can be used as a linking section between stretches of publicly accessible coastline.



STRANGFORD VILLAGE WALKING NETWORK (5.2)

One of the key findings of the analysis work highlighted the range of walking routes on offer within and around the village. However confusion was found to exist in relation not only to the naming and extent of these routes, but also to their relationship with one another. The Plan proposes that the network of walking and cycle routes be formalised, with clear identities and relationships identified between each. As a result, the following five routes have now been identified, which are intended to be explored as individual looped walks or as a series of interconnected routes;

- Strangford Heritage Trail
- Castleward Bay Trail
- Black Causeway Trail
- Spur to Links amenity area
- Coastal Path to Kilclief

6.5 FORMALISED NETWORK OF WALKING ROUTES

STRANGFORD HERITAGE TRAIL (5.2.1) —

This trail comprises two loops, the larger of which follows Dufferin Avenue north before crossing over the wooded Compass Hill and continuing south to the centre of the village via the 'Squeeze Gut', in close proximity to the Tower House. The smaller looped section of this trail is largely related to the harbour front and takes on board the Old Quay, Lower Green, Ferry Terminal, St Mary's Church and Upper Green.

CASTLEWARD BAY TRAIL (5.2.2) —

Accessed directly off the Downpatrick Road via 'My Ladies Walk', this looped trail follows the route of the 'Strangford Path' around the eastern shores of Castleward Bay. Users can then continue south along Dufferin Avenue back to the starting point, or else continue eastwards into the village centre via the Heritage Trail.



BLACK CAUSEWAY TRAIL (5.2.3) —

The Black Causeway Trail represents one of the longer walking and cycling trails within Strangford. This trail comprises a looped walk south out of the village via Downpatrick Road and Black Causeway Road which then follows 'The Loanan' east towards the Shore Road. From this point walkers and cyclists can then embark on a longer trek south to Kilclief or else return to Strangford along the coastal path.

SPUR TO THE LINKS AMENITY AREA (5.2.4) —

A key spur route has been identified by residents that connects Downpatrick Road to the Shore Road. This route, which cuts through the Links housing area, will improve pedestrian connections to the enhanced sports facilities and recently constructed playground. An emphasis will be placed on ensuring that existing footpaths are adequately surfaced, lit, signposted and of a sufficient width.

6.5 FORMALISED NETWORK OF WALKING ROUTES



Squeeze Gut

FORMALISED ENTRANCE AT MY LADIES WALK (5.3)

My Ladies Walk refers to a short stretch of the Strangford Path that connects Downpatrick Road to Dufferin Avenue. A relatively new entrance has been constructed along the Downpatrick Road between Nos. 5 and 9 (planning approval granted in July 2004 - R/2004/0128/F). This entrance comprises two formal brick and stone pillars and iron gates, which are wide enough to accommodate vehicles. Metal fencing has also been installed and has been set back around five metres from the Downpatrick Road.

These gates are for the most part locked and at the time of writing it was noted that the area to the rear of the right stone pillar had been used for the storing/dumping of construction waste.

The Plan proposes that dialogue is initiated with the relevant landowner to explore ways in which the construction waste can be removed in the short term. This would greatly improve the appearance of this visually prominent entrance. However the longer term aspiration would be to secure public access to Dufferin Avenue at this location, in the form of a discreet gate or stile which would not hinder the security/operation of the existing vehicular entrance.



Playground at the Links



New entrance at My Ladies Walk

6.6 REDISCOVERED HERITAGE ASSET BASE & VISITOR PROVISION

ESTABLISH A STRANGFORD BUILDING PRESERVATION TRUST (6.1)

As a natural progression of the vacant and derelict building assessment, as outlined in section 3.1, the Plan proposes that a Building Preservation Trust be established within Strangford.

The main aim of this organisation, in addition to raising public awareness with respect to the range of historic buildings and structures within the village, would be to spearhead projects that target specific buildings at risk. Here the Trust would be instrumental in a number of activities ranging from the identification of suitable renovation projects, overseeing the renovation work and securing appropriate funding streams. One key building that would benefit from such an approach is the Strangford Presbyterian Church as discussed in section 2.9.



Tower House

TOWER HOUSE PROJECT (6.2)

The Tower House, located along Quay Lane, dates back to the late 16th century, however detailing at first floor level appears to indicate the remodeling of an earlier tower. The current entrance to the Tower House, within the north-east wall, is a reconstruction and would have most likely been originally located on the first floor. The structure itself is a small, rectangular, three-storey tower house with no vault or stone stairway. The importance of the Castle's position overlooking the harbour and commanding views over the coves and The Narrows beyond, was probably the reason for it being rebuilt and maintained in the time of Queen Elizabeth. The building was considerably restored shortly after 1960 when it was taken into State Care. Consultation feedback indicated that the Tower House was not being utilised to its full potential and that access was somewhat limited.

6.6 REDISCOVERED HERITAGE ASSET BASE & VISITOR PROVISION

INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS (6.2.1)

Despite being one of the villages key historic structures, internally the Tower House is presently in a poor state of repair. The Plan proposes that public access is provided to the upper floor of the building and that the structure is fully rewired in accordance with modern building standards.

INCREASED COMMUNITY USE (6.2.2)

Feedback received during the analysis stage of the project highlighted residents' preference for increased community use of the Tower House. Measures here include an extension of the facilities opening times, the nomination of local keyholders and the increased use of the building by local schools and community groups. The use of the building for key civic events was also highlighted as a priority.



EXTERNAL UPLIGHTING AND INTERPRETATION (6.2.3)

In conjunction with internal improvements, the Plan proposes external feature uplighting of this historic building. This would not only create an iconic and attractive feature at night but would also greatly enhance the setting of the building. The sensitive location and installation of interpretative signage would also help to convey the rich history of this and the important role it played

TOWER HOUSE PEDESTRIAN LINK (6.2.4)

Improving the pedestrian link between the Tower House and Lower Green would also play a pivotal role in enhancing the setting of the building. Here high quality stone surfacing is proposed around the building itself and along the full extent of the laneway to the Lower Green. Opportunities exist for new development to front onto this laneway, as outlined in section 2.4.

6.6 REDISCOVERED HERITAGE ASSET BASE & VISITOR PROVISION

STRANGFORD TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE INCLUDING TOILET AND SHOWER FACILITIES (6.3)

While a tourist information centre can be found within the castle walls at Portaferry, consultation feedback highlighted the need for a similar facility within Strangford. It is considered that the development opportunities identified along Quay Lane (section 2.4), would provide the ideal location for such a facility within the village.

This prominent harbour front location, adjacent to the Lower Green and within short walking distance of the Upper Green, could provide visitors with local and national tourist information in addition to accommodation booking services. Toilet, shower and locker facilities could also be provided within the centre to accommodate visitors arriving to Strangford via leisurecraft.



COMMUNITY AND VISITOR EVENTS PROGRAMME (6.4)

This proposal aims to maximise the involvement of the community in projects and enable residents and visitors to be kept abreast of a programme of community and visitor events within Strangford.

Various methods of communication should be utilised to disseminate information throughout the town, including a user friendly website and facebook page. Combining existing information sources within a single 'SharePoint Community', would provide a point of reference which enables contributors to provide daily updates on community events.

6.6 REDISCOVERED HERITAGE ASSET BASE & VISITOR PROVISION

COLLABORATIVE WORKING FORUM FOR KEY TOURISM BODIES (6.4.1)

A whole host of tourist activities and events happen throughout the year within Strangford, spearheaded by a range of organisations which include the National Trust, Portaferry Community Collective, Down District Council, Strangford Lough & Lecale Partnership and Strangford Sailing Club. The purpose of this working forum would be to enable these groups to come together so that they can strengthen the tourism offer in this area.

LOWER GREEN EVENT SPACE (6.4.2)

While it is acknowledged that the Green is used as the location for specific events such as the annual funfair, it is the communities aspiration to fully utilise this area as a formal village event space. The Plan promotes the use of this key civic space as a venue for a host of high quality events and festivals of local, regional and national significance.

CLOGHY ROCKS VISITOR STOPOVER SITE (6.5)

At low tide, the landscaped car park at Cloghy Rocks, along the Shore Road around one mile south of the village, offers visitors views of both common and grey seals. A range of typical shore birds can also be spotted from this location, including curlew, oystercatchers, herons and redshank. At present, the layby area comprises a gravel lane with turning head as well as a number of interpretative panels.

Here the opportunity exists to establish a modest visitor stopover site, which could accommodate a small number of motorhomes/touring caravans within a secure landscaped area.

This stopover area would be an ideal base from which to explore Strangford, Castleward Bay and further afield and be linked back into the village by way of the Coastal path, as outlined under section 5.1.



7 ACTION PLAN

One of the key roles of the Action Plan is to prioritise those projects that have been identified under each of the six overarching aims. The realisation of these proposals will require input from a number of various organisations and individuals from the public, private and community sectors.

It is important to ensure that any available funding streams are targeted so that the area achieves the maximum economic, environmental, physical and social benefit from the listed projects. In this regard, the Action Plan also identifies a range of potential funding sources which are considered relevant to the specific project proposed.

The information included within the Action Plan includes the priority of each project, based on demand and the likely impact it will have on the area. Each project has therefore been allotted a short, medium or long-term timeframe. Here short-term projects refer to those that the community would like to see progressed within one to five calendar years. Medium-term priority refers to those projects which could be taken forward and realised within five to ten years, while long-term aspirations would be delivered over the next ten to fifteen years.

While these priorities timeframes indicate the agreed prioritisation of projects set out within the Action Plan, it will be essential to consider the time restraints associated with specific funding streams, particularly those with imminent deadlines. The Action Plan table also identifies the stakeholders whose involvement in the relevant initiative would be necessary.

It is important to note that the following Action Plan table should be used as a 'live' document to ensure progress is monitored regularly and updated accordingly. Invariably, new projects and opportunities will arise in future, and these should be assessed against the overarching aims identified and added to the Action Plan table where appropriate. It will be the responsibility of Strangford Community Association to undertake a regular review of the Action Plan in order to evaluate progress made and identify projects where future funding resources should be targeted.

Integrated Village Plan Projects				Timeframe for Delivery	Lead Delivery Agent(s)	Stakeholders / Potential Funders
1. REORGANISED HARBOUR FRONT	1.1	Harbour Stakeholder Forum		S	SCA	
	1.2	Reorganised Ferry Terminal Operations	1.2.1 Modernised ticket system	S	DRD	
			1.2.2 Relocated slipway	S	DRD	
			1.2.3 Car park holding area	S	DRD	
			1.2.4 Relocated ferry terminal	M	DRD	
			1.2.5 Construction of a vehicular bridge	L	DRD	
	1.3	Development of a publicly accessible pontoon at Quay		S	DDC, SCA	DDC
1.4	Enhanced public realm along harbour		S	DDC, SCA	DDC	
1.5	First Flight Wind Project (accommodation of service vessels)		M	DRD, SCA	DRD	
2. IMPROVED COMMUNITY FACILITIES	2.1	Strengthened representation on Strangford Community Association		S	SCA	SCA
	2.2	Upgraded Inverbrena Hall	2.2.1 Internal renovations	S	IHC	IHC
			2.2.2 Improved exterior lighting	S	IHC	IHC
			2.2.3 Installation of lift access	M	IHC	IHC, DDC
			2.2.4 Extension and reconfigured entrance	M	IHC	IHC, DDC
			2.2.5 High quality public realm	L	IHC	IHC, DDC
			2.2.6 Pedestrian connection to Shore Road	L	IHC	IHC, DDC
	2.3	Expanded health service provision		M	SCA, NIEA, SEHSCT	NIEA, SEHSCT
	2.4	Creation of new Business Incubator Units		M	SCA, NIEA	NIEA
	2.5	Mixed use development opportunities		M	SCA, NIHE	NIHE, NIEA
2.6	Mixed tenure residential development opportunities		M	SCA, NIHE	NIHE, NIEA	
2.7	Supported Primary School Provision		S	SCA, SEELB	SEELB	
2.8	Enhanced sports facility at the Links area		S-M	SCA, DDC	DDC, SNI	
2.9	Strangford Presbyterian Church Renovation		M	SCA, BPT, NIEA	BPT, NIEA	
3. ENHANCING THE PUBLIC REALM	3.1	Vacant and Derelict Building Assessment		S	SCA, UAHS	UAHS, NIEA, NIHE
	3.2	Village Centre Public Realm Works	3.2.1 Lower Green	S	SCA, DDC	DDC
			3.2.2 Old Bus Stop Area	S	SCA, DDC	DDC
			3.2.3 Street Furniture	S	SCA, DDC	DDC
			3.2.4 Flood Alleviation Measures	M	SCA, DOE	DOE, DDC
3.3	Strangford Public Art Collection		S-M	SCA, ACNI	ACNI	
3.4	Strangford Village Gateway Signage		S-M	SCA, DDC	DDC, DRD, Priv	

Integrated Village Plan Projects			Timeframe for Delivery	Lead Delivery Agents	Stakeholders / Potential Funders	
4. TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND CALMING	4.1	Twenty's Plenty (St. Joseph's Primary School)	S	DRD	DRD	
5. FORMALISED NETWORK OF WALKING ROUTES	5.1	Coastal walking and cycling path to Kilclief	M-L	SCA, NIEA, DRD	NIEA, DRD, Priv	
	5.2	Strangford Village Walking Network	5.2.1	Strangford Heritage Trail	S-M	SCA, NIEA
			5.2.2	Castleward Bay Trail	S-M	SCA, NIEA
			5.2.3	Black Causeway Trail	S-M	SCA, NIEA
			5.2.4	Spur to the Links play and sports area	S	SCA, NIEA
5.3	Formalised entrance at My Ladies Walk	S	SCA, DDC	NIEA		
6. REDISCOVERED HERITAGE ASSET BASE & VISITOR PROVISION	6.1	Establish a Building Preservation Trust	S	SCA, NIEA	NIEA	
	6.2	Tower House Project	6.2.1	Internal Improvements	M	SCA, NIEA
			6.2.2	Increased Community Use	S	SCA, NIEA
			6.2.3	External uplighting	S	SCA, NIEA
			6.2.4	Tower House Pedestrian Link	M	SCA, NIEA
	6.3	Refurbishment of Orange Hall for community use	M-L	SCA, NIEA, BPT	BPT, NIEA	
	6.4	Community and Visitor Events Programme	6.4.1	Collaborative working forum for key tourism bodies	S	SCA
			6.4.2	Lower Green Event Space	S	SCA
6.5	Cloghy Rocks visitor stopover site	S-M	NIEA, SCA	NIEA, DRD		

TIMEFRAME

S= Short (1- 5 yrs)
M = Medium (5 - 10 yrs)
L = Long (10 - 15 yrs)

DELIVERY AGENTS, FUNDERS AND STAKEHOLDERS:

ACNI	Arts Council of Northern Ireland	NIEA	Northern Ireland Environment Agency	SNI	Sport Northern Ireland
BPT	Buildings Preservation Trust	NIHE	Northern Ireland Housing Executive	UAHS	Ulster Architectural Heritage Society
DDC	Down District Council	NITB	Northern Ireland Tourist Board		
DOE	Department of the Environment	Priv	Private Sector		
DRD	Department for Regional Development	SCA	Strangford Community Association		
DSD	Department for Social Development	SEELB	South Eastern Education and Library Board		
IHC	Inverbreena Hall Committee	SEHSCT	South East Health and Social Care Trust		



Quay Road and Lower Green

8 CONCLUSION AND DELIVERY

This Integrated Vision and Action Plan has been developed by the people of Strangford and will help guide anyone with an interest in improving the village.

The Plan sets in place a clear vision for the future of this historic village. However in order to realise its full potential, it will require various groups within the village to work together and be committed to its delivery.

The realisation of those projects contained within the Action Plan (Section 7), will make a discernible difference to the functioning of the village. Securing the delivery of a number of short-term projects, particularly those that can be achieved through forward thinking and on a modest budget, will quickly demonstrate to the people of Strangford the physical, economic and social benefits that the Plan can bring to the village.

Key to the success of this Plan will be a **collaborative approach to its delivery** which should be coordinated and monitored by a group comprising a range of stakeholders from across the village.

While it is understood that the successful progression of the Plan will require ongoing support from both Down District Council and statutory agencies, it is recommended that the Strangford Community Association considers the establishment of a **Plan Delivery Action Group**. This group should include representatives from the Community Association, Down District Council, local businesses, clubs and societies and include a number of sub-groups tasked with taking particular projects forward.

The purpose of this Action Group will be to encourage community participation, build on local capacity and ensure effective local coordination in the delivery of the suite of projects.

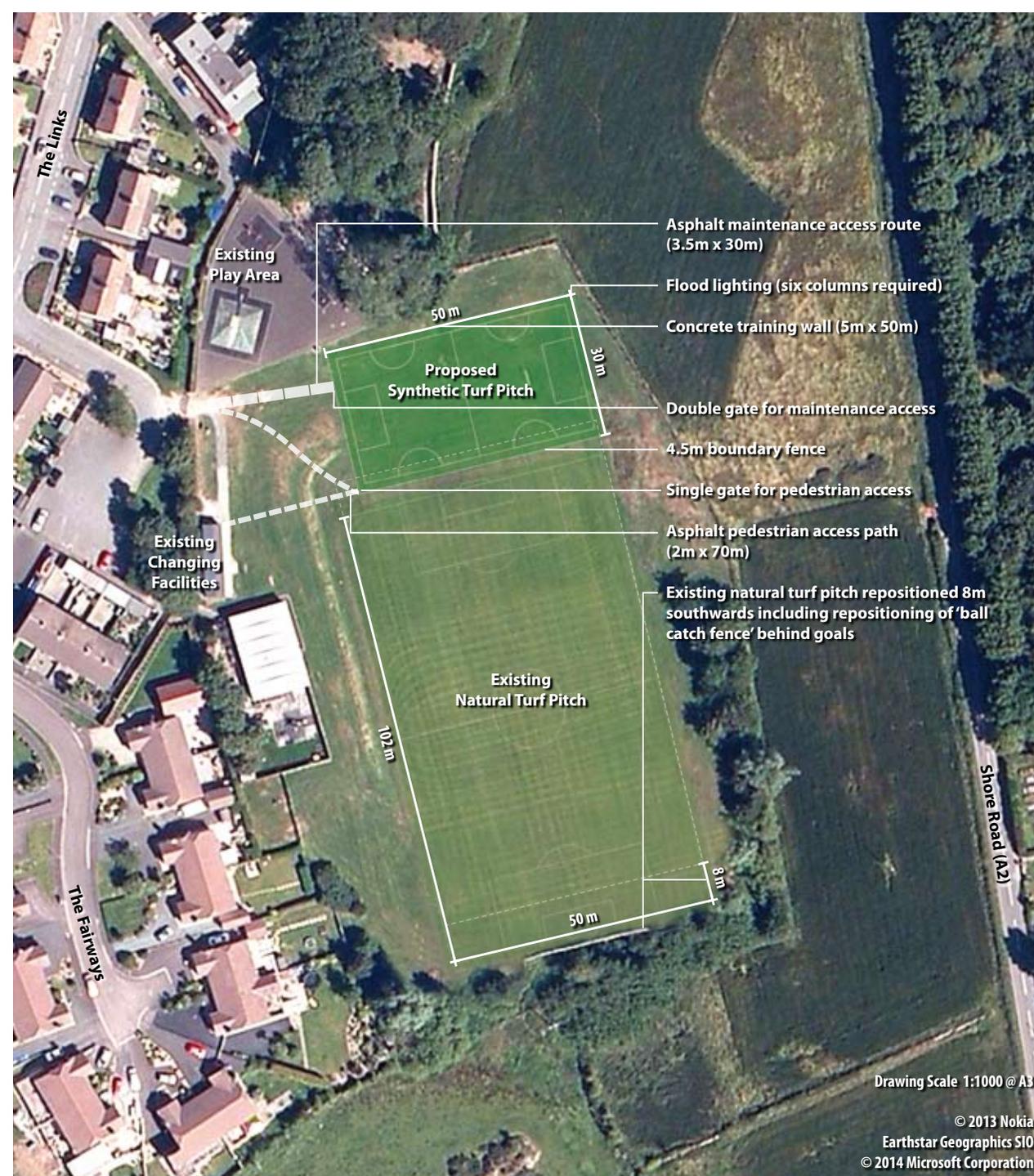
Some initial tasks of this Action Group could include:

- Identification of relevant funding sources;
- Realisation of selected 'short-term' projects to increase the credibility of the Plan;
- Address needs of local community groups.

Strangford is a village which has a strong maritime connections combined with a rich and colourful history. Through the realisation of the initiatives contained within this Plan, the opportunity exists to improve the way the village both looks and functions.

The Strangford Integrated Village Plan is for all those who live, visit and work in Strangford. Its success over future years will rely on a continued process of dialogue and engagement with a range of groups and organisations from across the village.

EXEMPLAR IMAGES



Drawing Scale 1:1000 @ A3

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BUDGET COST ESTIMATE

Ref.	Description	Cost (£)
a	Synthetic turf pitch (30m x 50m) including flood lighting, 4.5m boundary fence incorporating 0.75m rebound board, double gate for maintenance access and single gate for pedestrian access.	£300,000
b	Concrete training wall (5m x 50m)	£40,000
c	Asphalt maintenance access route	£5000
d	Asphalt pedestrian access path	£5000
e	Existing natural turf pitch repositioned 8m southwards including repositioning of 'ball catch fence' behind goals	£2000
TOTAL COST (a-e)		£352,000

Please note that these costs are indicative and exclude the following:
 Site Investigation, VAT, Professional Fees, Finance Charges, Planning Applications, Surveys, Main Drainage Infrastructure Works / Upgrades, Service Infrastructure Upgrades, Associated work by Statutory Authorities, Statutory Fees, Land Acquisition Costs, Archaeology Requirements, Adverse Ground Conditions, Treatment and Disposal of Contaminated Excavated Material, Dewatering, Removal of Deleterious Materials, Site Services and Service Diversions, Out of Hours Working.

9 PRIORITY PROJECT

APPENDIX 1

BREAKDOWN OF FEEDBACK FROM QUESTIONNAIRE

STRANGFORD INTEGRATED VILLAGE PLAN - QUESTIONNAIRE FEEDBACK

Words/Phrases to describe Village	What do you like most about your Village?	What things do you think needs to be addressed?	Any further comments?
1		Refreshment of dilapidated picnic/seating area in Square More appropriate street lighting ('old' style)	Coastal path to Kilclief and Ballyculter Important that the Village is for residents and not a 'pretified' tourist attraction
2	Full of potential	Views Architecture History	Community spirit An active village committee Activities for teenagers
3		Its size	Speed of traffic Parking on both sides of Road especially in summer months Causes major problems
4	Quaint Pretty Connected to the sea	Unique location Good feeling of community	Traffic
5			Village walk
6	Village Friendly Peaceful	Location People	Derelict buildings Parking across private entrances
7	Pretty Historic Friendly	Its small Quiet Friendly people	We need to get the Spinnaker open again Derelict buildings need refurbished
8	Pretty Quiet A bit dead		More community events Litter - especially out the Shore Road
9			Traffic calming around Primary School Bus shelter used as football posts
10			Revamp Inverbrena Hall both internally and externally
11	Scenically most attractive	The people Environment	Parking and congestion Parking on double yellow lines
12	Relaxing Picturesque Views	Has all of the amenities one requires to live in such a lovely setting	Rundown derelict buildings and frontage Litter along Castle Ward Road Detritus along inner edges of pavement to Black Causeway needs clearing Pavement very narrow
13	Typical Rural Welcoming	Atmosphere Identity	Insist on characteristics eg fauna
14			Upgrade hard standing area beside Squeeze Cut
15	Huge potential	The architecture Being beside the sea	Wrecked buildings 1960 old bus shelter Village green
16	Pretty Historic Friendly	Heritage Community spirit Lovely historic buildings	Ferry problems - traffic congestion etc Heritage conservation and awareness More walking routes Signage and maintenance of existing walks Public outdoor spaces for regular events
17	Potential By-passed Historic	Village feel Appropriate size No large supermarket	Employment Catch tourists before they drive off
18	Scenery Coastline Wildlife		Upgrade Inverbrena Hall
19	Quiet Tired	Community spirit Access to lough Should make more of architecture/feel of village Ferry is a massive asset	Traffic waiting for ferry need to use designatged waiting area One or two derelict properties are eyesores (especially the one at ferry)
20			Inverbrena Hall - externally is an eyesore Inverbrena Hall - internally
21	Friendly	The Avenue and the Harbour	Prevent parking on the village green
22	Lovely Peaceful Friendly	Very little at the minute	Boat owners have destroyed the lower green Should be no parking of any boats, cars or caravannes on green Need more flowers in containers around the village Old fun fair should be relocated to playing fields
23	Unique identity Fabulous setting Friendly	Mix of people - religion, class and background Location Look of the village The natural heritage (lough, wildlife, Castleward) Lots of creative and talented people	Poor access in public transport Litter Managing the ferry queues Separation between age groups - children well catered for (youth club/GAA) but teens and young adults very disengaged Some eyesores in private ownership
24	Welcoming Quiet Beautiful	Closeness to the water The people	Change the signs coming into the village Cut away the overgrown plants
25	Picturesque Quiet Boring	Sense of community Living with village amenities but yet rural Living beside the water	Derelict buildings - should be compulsary purchased Lack of funding for community centre Overgrown hedges on way into village Signage - 'Strangford' sign is tired and old and not unique to Strangford No parking on the green - reinstate the barriers Renew grass in the 'Top Hat' area of green (where boats are launched) Sunday and Bank Holiday traffic jams - despite what DOE say, marshalling yard is not used routinely

Words/Phrases to describe Village	What do you like most about your Village?	What things do you think needs to be addressed?	Any further comments?
26 Unique Friendly	Conservation protection Beauty	Derelict houses Protection of lower green Preserve the view of the water	No cars
27 Seaside Homely Welcoming	Character of the village The welcoming appeal for visitors	Business improvement Festivals and events - improve tourism Derelict buildings Bus shelter (upper green) Playing fields (goal posts for children) Extension to the pontoon Traffic calming at the school	Plans should be for all of the people in the village Involve the pontoon in developments for tourism
28 Relaxing Beautiful Limited	Community feeling Friendliness Beauty	Getting more people to stop not just drive through	Development needed but don't spoil character of the village
29 Non sectarian Friendly Attractive	Have networked with a wide range of people There are no flags or obvious sectarianism	Maintaining Inverbrena Hall as a centre/focus for community activities Maintaining businesses Improve timing and frequency of buses	Funds for improvements to derelict buildings - legacy of ill feeling
30 Forgotten about Its all Newcastle Lower village green car park	Village green looks great	Derelict homes either side of the lower green	Remove excessive signage - not required
31 Friendly Attractive Trouble Free	Beside the sea Ferry traffic yachting	Dog fouling Speeding traffic Unightly derelict houses	More seats along waterfront
32	Ambience and charm	Leave well alone	Need a childrens crossing at school
33 Colourful Friendly Small	Different coloured and brightly painted houses	Rubbish and glass bottles at bus stop Drinking at bus stop Using bustop as toilet	Should be a camera as drunk teenagers are throwing glass bottles at next door house
34 Quaint Quiet Friendly	People Buildings Hole in Wall	Derelict businesses and houses School needs to remain open Need visitor parking Congestion by ferry traffic and Castleward on busy days	
35 Picturesque Scenic Beautiful	Location Friendly People	Derelict buildings, More activities More activities More recycling facilities More tourism opportunities Better public transport	
36			Deal with National Trust when they are holding 'events' at Castleward - lead to massive tailbacks on the Main Road and stops people getting in and out of Strangford
37 Neglected Quiet Old	The community feel The fresh sea air	The lower green had always been used by the local people - it can still be used as a trading place for events - entertainment, farmers market, picnic areas around the walkways. People coming to Strangford at holiday times and queue for hours waiting for the ferry. Their children need occupied - the green is the ideal spot. Existing car park and 'dogs toilet' should be cleaned of greenery/trees and returned to a proper car park with sign posts Two derelict buildings need pulled down - one at the slip and one in Castle Street Wall at Quarry Hill needs cleared of briars and bushes. Wall needs re-pointed and the walkway cleared and tarmaced The old weighbridge needs levelled up and cleaned or filled The footpath in Castle Street needs repaired/replaced The Community Hall needs painted and cleaned up	
38 Traditional Neglected Weary	Its traditional feel The close community feel Basic amenities available without big town feel	Parking on lower green Neglected areas at the entrance to Strangford Derelict Buildings	From the Ferry terminal, Stangford has become a through road and this is taking over Stangford Lower Green has always been used for community events. Strangford does not need another carpark. DOE has a large yard near Ferry terminal which could be used for traffic management. This should be used as a proper carpark without all the neglected greenery then return the lower green and make it inaccessible to traffic The traditional stone walls at Quarry Hill need maintained and the walkway enhanced. This is an historical part of Strangford Footpath out of Strangford is always overgrown - now unsafe to walk to causeway We need traffic calming on this road - a school and speeding lorry traffic do not mix Derelict building on Castle Street (beside Strangford Castle) is an eyesore - empty many years and has asbestos roof. Should be legislation to address these derelict buildings if no longer suitable for housing and need pulled down I think taking away the lower green from the people is the final straw Most changes in Strangford are decided by people who live elsewhere
39 Pretty Quaint Tired	Smell of salt sea air The close community History of village		Cuan Place regularly becomes overgrown The footpath and wall on the original Quarry Hill needs to be regularly cleared of weeds Signage entering the village is tired, overgrown and does not relate to its location - should be locally crafted and reflect natural heritage Derelict buildings - especially those overlooking lower green in Castle Street. Owner should be given an "essential works" order or they should be turned into social housing. Does Down District have an "empty home officer"? Lower Green - community reclaimed this piece of foreshore for use by residents. Should not be used for car parking - should be a space for children to play, picnic area, launching of small dinghys and community events Inverbrena Hall needs painting and some general improvement Castle should be opened and used Footpath between village and causeway needs cleared more frequently and hedgerows trimmed more often - unsafe at times because its width is reduced The Avenue - the muddy corner at the Squeeze Gut end requires the drainage issue to be dealt with. Shepherds Hut on the compass hill is overgrown again and missing the bench seat. The bathing box should also be better maintained & presented. Traffic calming on Downpatrick Road Relocation of Primary School entrance away from main road Bank Holiday ferry traffic Residents business and leisure are inhibited which prevents access to and from the village

80

TOP SIX

- 11 Friendly
- 11 Pretty/Attractive/Beautiful
- 9 Quiet/Peaceful
- 3 Welcoming
- 3 Historic
- 3 Full of potential

39% TOP THREE

70

TOP SIX

- 8 People
- 8 Community Spirit/Feeling
- 6 Location/Setting
- 5 Architecture/historic buildings
- 4 Living beside the water
- 4 Beauty/look of village

31% TOP THREE

102

TOP SIX

- 16 Derelict buildings
- 8 Protection of lower green
- 8 Improvements to Inverbrena Hall
- 7 Parking related issues
- 5 Traffic speeds/need for calming
- 5 Traffic congestion at Ferry

31% TOP THREE

61

TOP SIX

- 8 Extend existing/promote new walks
- 6 Prevent parking on the Green
- 3 Need for more small businesses to improve economy
- 3 Any development should respect character
- 3 Address Ferry car parking/traffic speeds
- 2 Remove excessive signage

28% TOP THREE



SHERPANI

STRANGFORD Integrated Village Plan

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