



Annan Town Centre Regeneration Plan 2020

Annan Regeneration Steering Group
with
Dumfries and Galloway Council
Architecture & Design Scotland

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REPORT PREPARED BY ANNAN REGENERATION STEERING GROUP
with
Dumfries and Galloway Council and Architecture+Design Scotland
supported by
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ANNAN TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION PLAN 2020



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Introduction

This regeneration plan for Annan town centre has been prepared by Annan Regeneration Steering Group, whose members are drawn from the local authority, community organisations and businesses.

Preparation of the plan was supported by Dumfries and Galloway Council, Architecture + Design Scotland and a team of professional specialists¹.

The plan sets out **strategic objectives** to guide regeneration activity in the town centre over the next five years, and a package of **priority actions** for implementation. Its purpose is to support, guide and stimulate town centre regeneration activity and investment by providing a focus for action and clarity on priorities.

The plan takes account of:

- **Community aspirations**, as voiced through consultation and engagement activity related to the town centre over the last two years. These form the basis of both the strategic objectives and the priority actions.
- **Annan today**: an understanding of the town centre's assets.
- **National and local policies**, including the need to tackle climate change, generate inclusive economic growth and improve people's health & well-being.
- The capacity and ambitions of **local organisations** to deliver projects, and anticipated availability of future resources for future delivery.

The priority actions should be seen as a **package of interlinked projects**, rather than separate initiatives. For example, a number of projects propose complementary improvements along the High Street such as greenery, lighting, events and better public space.

Some of the priority actions are '**quick wins**' where visible change on the ground can be achieved in the next 6-12 months. These smaller projects are important to demonstrate success and build momentum. Other **more complex actions** tackling deep-seated issues will take longer to come to fruition, for example, where funding support is needed from external agencies.

Collaboration will be vital to successful delivery. From the simplest to the most complex, every action priority in this plan needs a number of organisations to work together. Annan Regeneration Steering Group will have an important role in co-ordinating that collaborative action. Section 5 contains more information on the future role of the Steering Group.

¹ Benton Scott-Simmons (landscape architecture), WMUD (urban design), Nick Wright Planning (urban planning), Icecream Architecture (community engagement), 4-consulting (economics)

We hope that the document is a useful point of reference for the local community, potential funders and public bodies, including the [Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal](#), [South of Scotland Enterprise](#) and local authority policies and services such as (for example) the next review of the Dumfries and Galloway [Local Development Plan](#). It represents a package community-led proposals which has been designed to support delivery of Scottish Government agendas such as the climate emergency, health and wellbeing, and the Town Centre First Principle, as well as being informed by relevant policy, advice and guidance including Scottish Planning Policy, the Scottish Town Centres Toolkit and of course the Local Development Plan.



Context

Annan has a population of around 9,000. It lies in Dumfries and Galloway, roughly halfway between Dumfries (15 miles to the west) and Carlisle (18 miles to the east).

2.1 Annan today

The A75 by-passes the town and provides a direct connection to both of those regional centres as well as linking to the M74. There are also direct rail and bus services to Carlisle, Dumfries and Glasgow.

The Royal Burgh of Annan has a long history, having been made a Burgh of Barony by the Bruce family (Lords of Annandale) in the 13th century. The town developed as a market town, acting as the focus for agriculture in the surrounding area. Although invisible from the High Street, the sea was also an economic driver: Annan harbour, less than 10 minutes walk from the High Street, boasted shipbuilding, fishing, and passenger and freight services in its heyday. Fish processing remains an important source of employment for the town.

The many fine buildings in the town centre such as the Town Hall, other public buildings, churches and hotels reflect the town's prosperity, particularly in the nineteenth century. Appendix 1 contains more information about the historical development of the town centre. More general information about the town's history can be found online at annan.org.uk/history/.

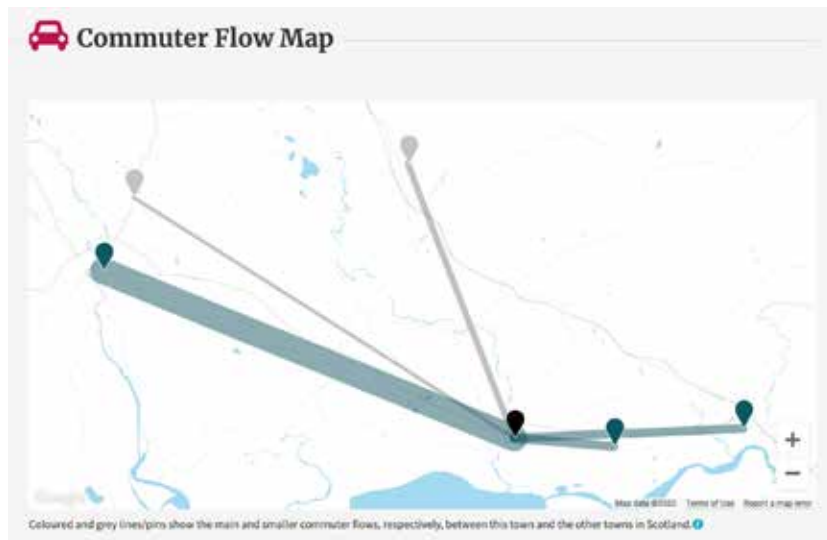
Today's town centre is focussed on the High Street, and includes the range of shops, businesses and facilities that might be expected for a town of its size.

The accompanying infographics from [Understanding Scottish Places](#) are derived from 2011 Census data and other official sources. Please note that these statistics pre-date the closure of Pinneys in 2018, when 450 jobs were lost. Some of the key points are:

- The town's population increased by approximately 10% between 2001 and 2011 (the two most recent censuses). This is higher than population growth across Scotland (5%) and Dumfries and Galloway (2.5%) over the same period.
- The number of jobs increased in the most recent period where official statistics are available (2009-14), in contrast to other comparable towns like Girvan, Montrose and Banff, each of which saw a decline in employment.
- The three largest employment sectors are education, manufacturing and retail, accounting for 41% of all jobs in Annan. The proportion of employment in tourism (10.4%) is around the average for Dumfries and Galloway (10.1%).
- The number of businesses in Annan grew by nearly 5% between 2011 and 2018.
- There are significant commuter outflows to Dumfries and, to a lesser extent, Easttriggs, Gretna and Lockerbie. Unfortunately statistics are unavailable for cross-border flows, for example to Carlisle.

- The number of [Listed Buildings at risk](#) is comparable to other similar Scottish towns.
- The [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020](#) shows that the town's neighbourhoods are very mixed in terms of 'multiple deprivation' statistics, which cover income, employment, health, education and skills, housing, geographic accessibility and crime. There are no neighbourhoods amongst the most deprived 10% in Scotland.

More information about the town centre's current transport and movement patterns, quality of place and economic context can be found in Appendices 2, 3 and 4 respectively.



Population

Population 2011

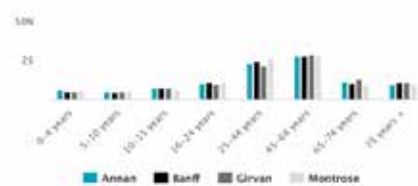
9k

Banff 4k

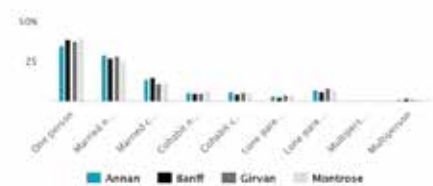
Girvan 7k

Montrose 12k

Age



Household composition



Households 2011

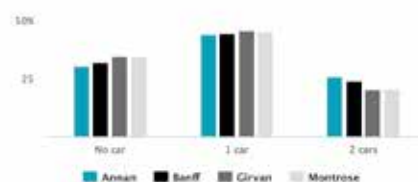
4k

Banff 2k

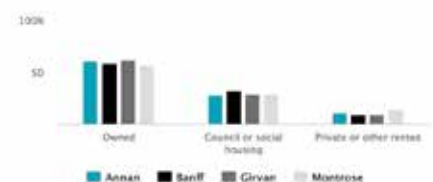
Girvan 3k

Montrose 6k

Car ownership



Tenure



Population change 2001 to 2011

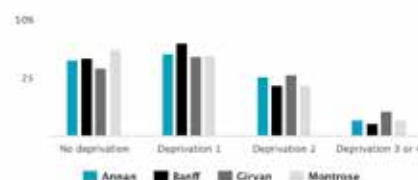
8%

Banff 2%

Girvan -5%

Montrose 12%

Deprivation dimensions



Commercial



Public



Connectivity and environment assets



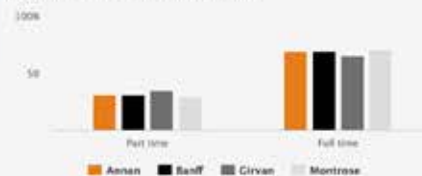
Employment

Jobs



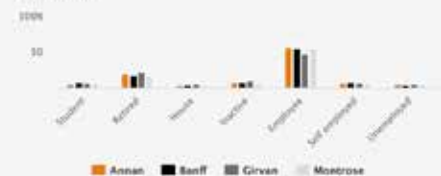
Employment type

(% working full time vs part time aged 16-74)



Occupation

(% aged 16-74)

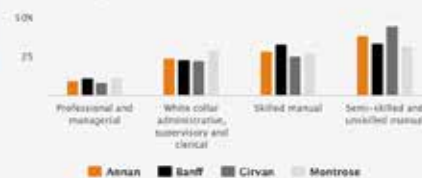


Jobs change 2009 to 2014

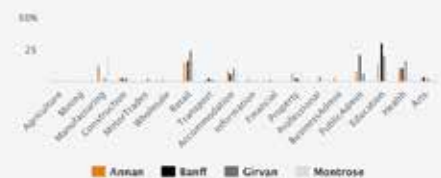


Social Grade

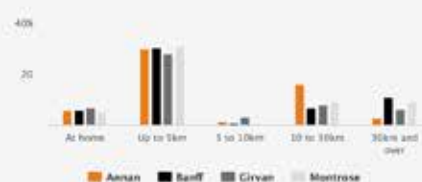
(% households aged 16-64)

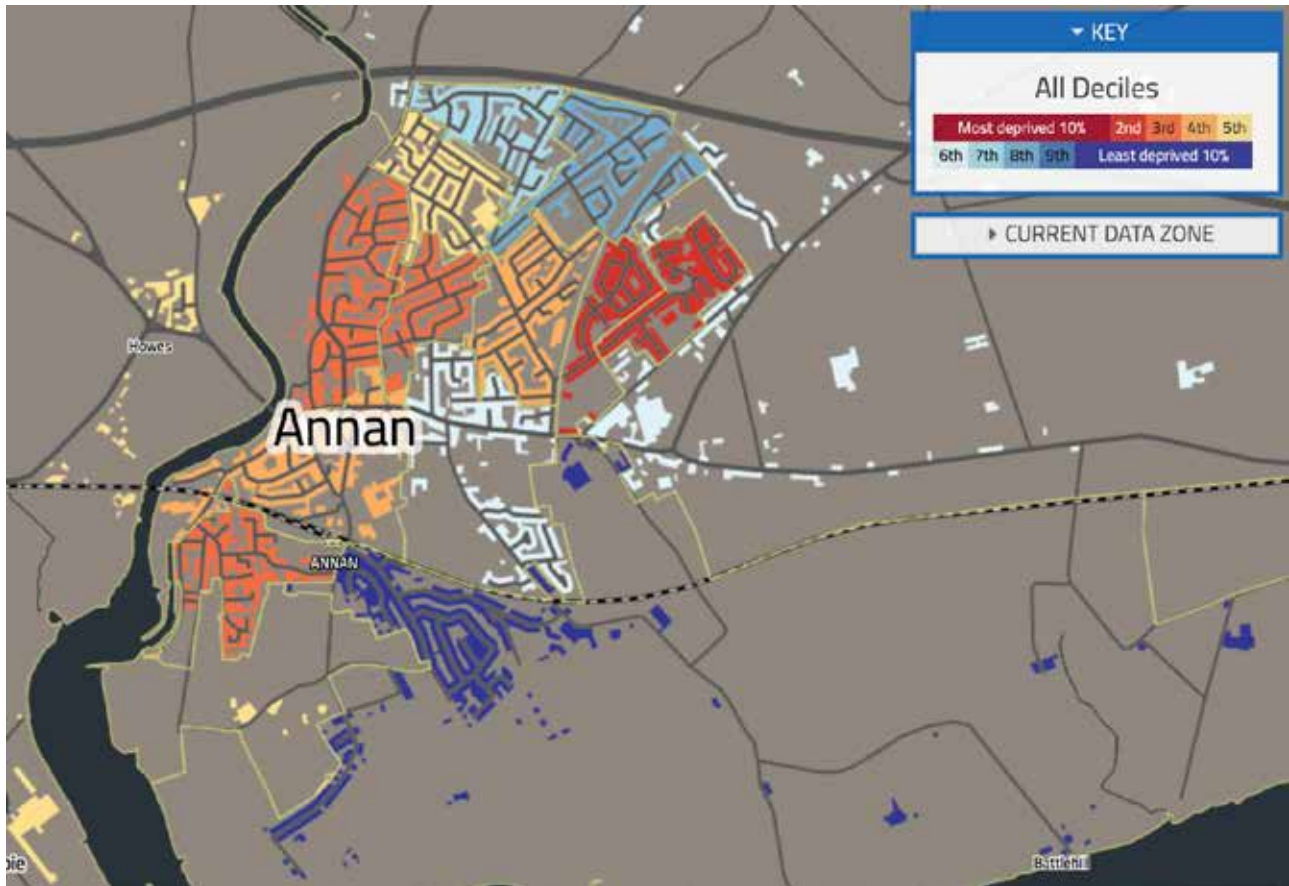


Sector Diversity



Distance travelled to work





2.2 Community aspirations

During 2018 and 2019, a range of consultation activities took place with the local community in relation to the town centre. These included:

- Online engagement social media (Facebook @AnnanOnline with almost 1,000 followers) and an online survey.
- Public engagement using on-street activities, a stall at local community events, dedicated drop-in sessions and exhibitions.
- Engagement with young people in local primary and secondary schools and Youth Council members, including the every pupil in Annan Academy.
- One-to-one discussions with town centre businesses and community organisations.

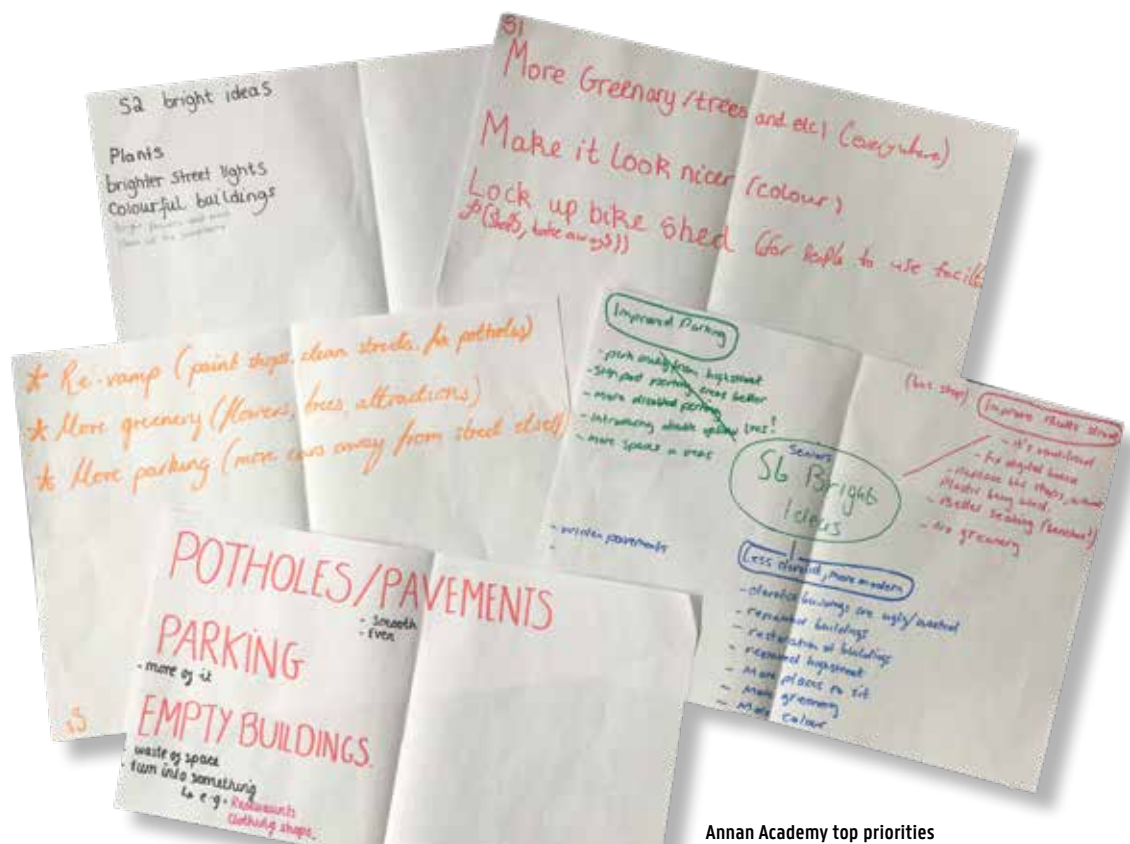
Key points from these wide-ranging discussions about the town centre included:

Buildings

- Too many vacant properties in poor condition, with one owner cited as being responsible for many of them.
- Prominent derelict buildings like Central

public consultation event - 15 April 2018





Annan Academy top priorities

Hotel, Erskine Church and Albert Hall need to be brought back into use.

- Poor disabled access to a number of buildings, especially those with steps and doors directly onto narrow pavement on central section of High Street.

Public space, colour and greenery

- Need more trees and flowers, lighting and colour.
- Public realm should be smarter.
- Need more activities like farmers market, festivals and other events, throughout the year but especially in winter.
- Better public spaces with more seating.
- Improve the bus station.
- Prevent flooding at lane entrances and Fish Cross.
- Repair poor quality pavements and tree at Fish Cross.



public consultation event - 15 April 2018





public consultation event - 15 April 2018

Getting about

- Narrow pavements and sub-standard disabled access along the central section of High Street.
- Poor traffic light phasing for pedestrians crossing the High Street.
- Mixed views on the amount of parking on the High Street: some people say it is too dominated by parking which makes for a poor quality environment, others say that keeping the same amount of parking is essential.
- Too much illegal on-street parking along High Street, too many spaces blocked all day – enforcement is poor.
- Make better use of car parking off the High Street (publicly and privately owned), including better signage.
- Disabled parking is poorly located/designed – especially at Fish Cross.

- Any street reconstruction work should minimise disruption to businesses and customers.

Opportunities

- The future of the town centre needs to think beyond retail and shopping – there should be more things to do at weekends and evenings, more for young people, a nicer environment to spend time outside, a year-round programme of events and activities – all of which will create more opportunities for enterprise and community activity.
- Need to encourage visitors to come off the A75 – signpost what's on offer in and near town centre (e.g. cafes, toilets, harbour, heritage) and car parking.
- Make more of heritage – the harbour, castle, Solway Firth, river etc.



engagement stall on the High Street

- Tap into the growth of cycling – the National Cycle Network passes through town and there are active local clubs with strong membership.
- Create more homes in the town centre – for example re-using vacant upper floors and derelict buildings.
- Climate change, carbon emissions and the move towards a net-zero society, with the Scottish Government's commitment to reduce emissions by 75% by 2030 and net-zero emissions of all greenhouse gases by 2045.
- Inclusive economic growth, where opportunities are created for all, the dividends of increased prosperity are shared fairly, and poverty and inequality are effectively tackled.
- Improving people's health and well-being, including promoting active lifestyles and better mental health.
- Promoting sustainable modes of transport and active travel, to tackle the climate change, reduce emissions and pollution, and improve health and well-being

These key points from community engagement form the basis of the strategic objectives at the heart of this regeneration plan (see section 3).

2.3 National and local policy

As well as responding positively to the community aspirations expressed above, it is important that this Action Plan contributes to the delivery of national and local policy agendas. Key policy drivers include:

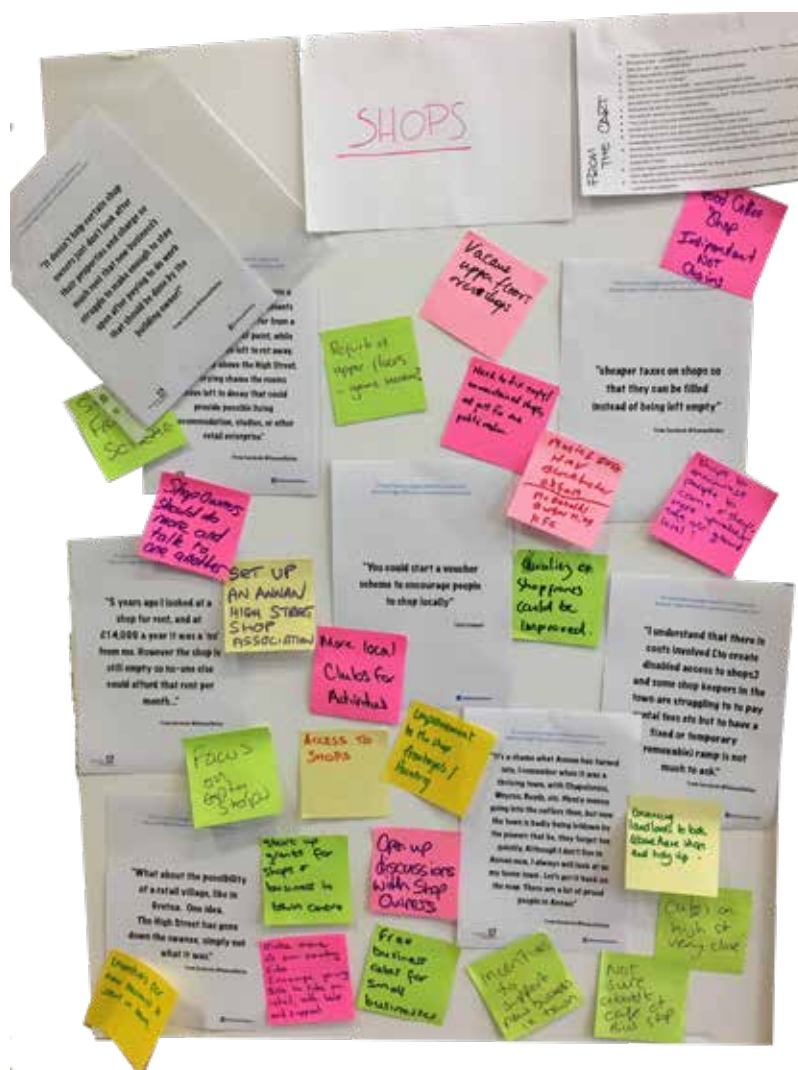
This action plan will help to deliver these regional plans and strategies. To maximise the potential for that to happen, the implementation of the

actions in this plan should reflect the aspirations and requirements of these strategies. In terms of specific policy documents, the most relevant are shown in the accompanying diagram. The relevant sections of key documents are summarised in Appendix 5.

NATIONAL
<p>National Performance Framework Place Principle Scottish Planning Policy Town Centre Toolkit National Transport Strategy 2</p>
REGIONAL AND LOCAL
<p>Local Development Plan 2 Annan Regeneration Masterplan Strategic Housing Investment Plan Local Housing Strategy Regional Economic Strategy Active Travel Strategy Carbon Management Plan Major Festival and Events Strategy</p>



Exhibition poster about initial draft proposals



comments from public drop-in event in the Town Hall

Strategic objectives

In response to the context summarised in section 2 - community aspirations, Annan as it is today and national/local policy – this regeneration plan has seven strategic objectives:



Create a vibrant and active town centre which is attractive for young people has an important role in keeping and attracting young people to the town. Through the consultation process, young people emphasised the importance to them of a town centre which is colourful, 'green', not dominated by vehicles and which has more events and activities throughout the year (indoor and outdoor).



Create more opportunities for people to come together for community activities inside and out, and to live more active lifestyles.



With a climate emergency having been declared by the Scottish Government in 2019, this is an absolute priority. This town centre regeneration plan will contribute by making the High Street more comfortable and attractive for pedestrians, easier to get to on foot and by bike from residential areas around the town, whilst still providing accessible parking for those who need it.



To support business activity in the town centre, increase footfall by making the High Street a more attractive place, easier to get to, and with more events and activities.



Create more homes in the town centre by bringing vacant upper floors back into use, converting/re-using derelict property and new build. The increasing ageing population and their needs should be a particular focus; one-person households are set to become the most common house type nationally, and can be attractive to young and old alike. A recent report by Architecture & Design Scotland, "[Town Centre Living: A Caring Place](#)", illustrates what can be achieved when considering an ageing population.



Improve the condition of historic buildings in the town centre and make more of the town's history. New and retrofit developments should utilise energy efficiency and adaptations to mitigate the impacts of climate change and meet national targets.



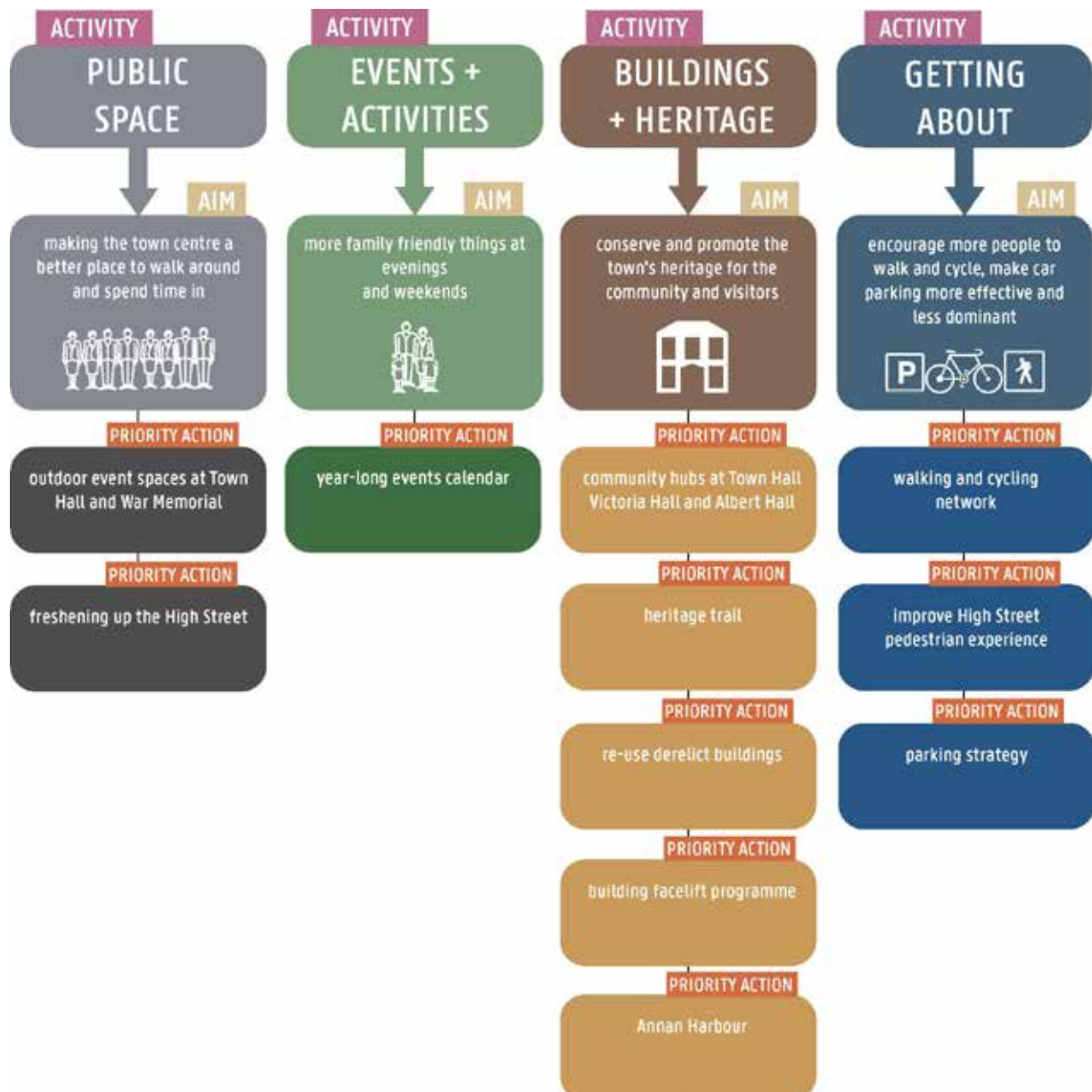
Develop the town's "evening economy" so that there are more family friendly places to eat and drink, more community activities and more events.

These strategic objectives are important in two ways. Firstly, they are a framework for the priority actions described in section 4 of this regeneration plan. Secondly, they can be used as criteria against which to assess any future projects which might be proposed for the town centre.

Priority actions

This section describes a package of priority action projects which are designed to achieve the strategic objectives described in section 3. They cover four areas of activity which emerged from the community engagement activities (see section 2.2).

Those areas of activity, and the priority actions relating to each, are shown in the accompanying diagram. Each priority action is described in more detail on subsequent pages. For each project, potential quick wins and key players are indicated.



PUBLIC SPACE

PRIORITY ACTION

outdoor event spaces at Town Hall and War Memorial



OUTDOOR EVENTS SPACES AT TOWN HALL AND WAR MEMORIAL

Proposals

- Improve layout, design and lighting of these outdoor spaces so that they can be used for weekend/evening events like markets and festivals. These spaces can however remain as car parking at other times.
- Create a series of popup events to trial the concept and build support for events and associated temporary reduction in car parking.
- Deliver in conjunction with Year-Long Events Programme project (see under Events and Activities).

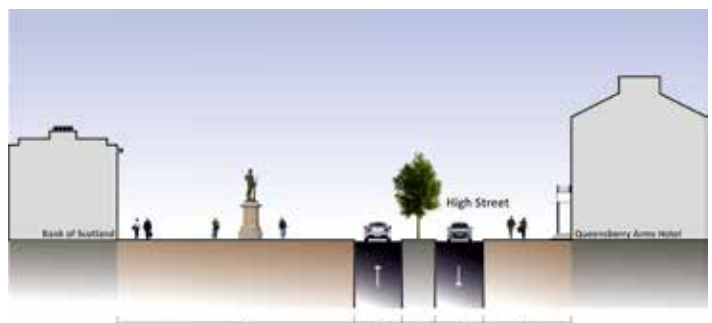
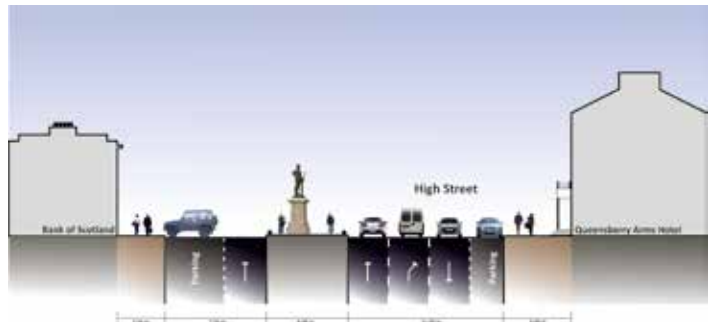
potential micro-spaces for enhancement, with precedent pictures from elsewhere



Plan with from workshop 2 presentation



Illustrative graphics showing how these spaces could be redesigned and used as pop-up event spaces



Key players

Annan High Street Together (businesses)

Community Council

Schools and Youth Council

Local authority

External funders

PUBLIC SPACE

PRIORITY ACTION
freshening up the High Street



FRESHENING UP THE HIGH STREET

Proposals

- “Green” the town centre with flowers, baskets, planters etc along the High Street and side-routes to bus station, car parks, station, school, swimming pool etc with year-round seasonal interest.
- Create ‘pocket parks’ for people to meet and linger at places like Fish Cross, the Museum, near Cafe Royale and near the Farmers Den – incorporating different combinations of nature, seating, artwork, play and local flood alleviation.
- Develop an “incredible edible” community project of fruiting trees, shrubs and flowers with different flavours for different streets, and planting on gap sites, verges and high gables.
- Develop imaginative colourful lighting and street art, particularly for evening and winter interest, with community involvement.
- Introduce competitions for best planting, best artwork etc.



Sustainable Urban Drainage



Incredible Edible precedents



Image of Fish Cross with The Tree



proposed improvements in and around High Street

Key players

Annan High Street Together (businesses)

Community Council

Schools and Youth Council

Local authority

External funders including Transport Scotland

EVENTS + ACTIVITIES

PRIORITY ACTION

year-long events calendar



YEAR-LONG EVENTS CALENDAR

Proposals

- Develop a programme of weekend/evening indoor and outdoor events in the town centre, encouraging local organisations to lead and take part in events (e.g. local schools, clubs, community groups, shops, cafes, cinema and businesses).
- Encourage more evening community activities in venues like the Town Hall and Victoria Hall.
- Facilitate easy and affordable booking of street space for outdoor events (e.g. proposed outdoor event spaces outside the Town Hall and War Memorial), for example by annual block-booking of a monthly slot which local organisations can then use.
- Deliver in conjunction with Outdoor Events Spaces at Town Hall and War Memorial project (see under Public Space).

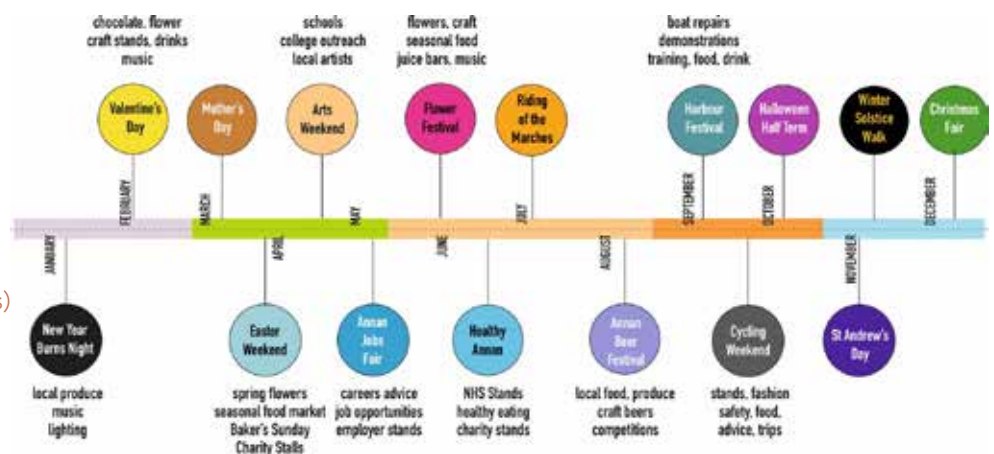


visualisation of space outside for Town Hall used for harbour festival | riding the marches



Key players

Community Council
Annan High Street Together (businesses)
Community groups
Schools and Youth Council
Local authority



Illustrative year-long community-led town centre events programme

BUILDINGS + HERITAGE

PRIORITY ACTION

community hubs at Town Hall
Victoria Hall and Albert Hall

COMMUNITY HUBS: VICTORIA HALL, TOWN HALL, ALBERT HALL

Proposals

Renovate and modernise existing halls with complementary roles for increased community use in evenings and at weekend, including dedicated youth space in at least one hall. For example:

- Victoria Hall: modernise and increase use for events and community activities.
- Town Hall: modernise public rooms for public events and community activities.
- Albert Hall: redevelop as enterprise hub or similar.



hall locations



exemplar - St Bride's Centre, Douglas, South Lanarkshire

Key players

Local authority

Owners

External funders

Community organisations

Youth Council



Victoria Hall



Town Hall



Albert Hall

**BUILDINGS
+ HERITAGE**

PRIORITY ACTION
heritage trail



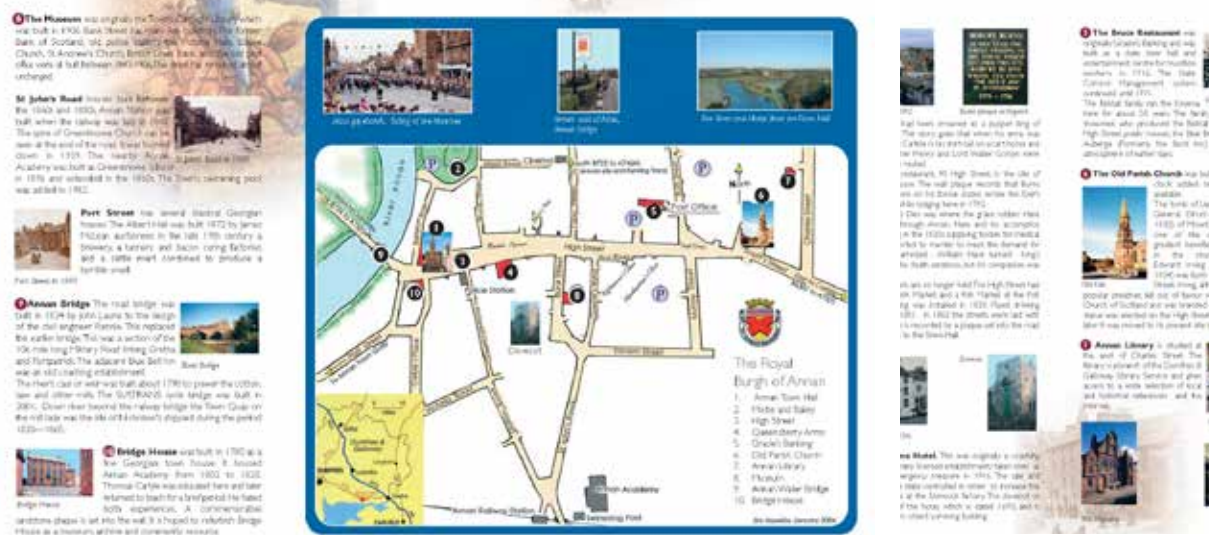
HERITAGE TRAIL

Proposals

- Create heritage trail linking places of interest in the town centre with other points in and around the town, including Robert the Bruce's castle, the harbour and the river.
- Design and implement signage, wayfinding and information around the town centre and from the A75, building on the existing Heritage Trail, National Cycle Network, Annandale Way and path networks.
- Market and promote the Heritage Trail (e.g. website, app, social media and leaflet).



potential heritage trail route



www.annan.org.uk

screen shots of earlier heritage trail leaflet

The Lonsdale Twin Cinemas, M101, Road This is a modern two screen cinema which shows a wide variety of the latest films.
Telephone 01951 206901

Annan Museum, Bank Street. A permanent exhibition featuring local history and art and a programme of special exhibitions are held from March to December.
Telephone: 01461 201304

Annan Library Charter Street This is a branch of Dumfries & Galloway Library Service which provides local information, internet facilities and a wide selection of local reference books.
Telephone: 01461 202809

The Devil's Porridge: St John's Church, Dunedin Road, Eastings

Through the lens: Glimpses of old Annan Burgh

by Dumfries & Galloway Library Service

Through the lens Glimpses of Annan landward districts

Walking in and Around Annon by Annon Initiative

Reference Maps

Ordnance Survey Explorer 322 and 323

Scale : 25 000 4cm to 1km (2.5in to 1 mile)

Ordinance Survey Landranger 85, 78 and 79

Scale 1:50 000 2cm to 1 km (1:25 in to 1 mile)

Other useful contacts

BUILDINGS + HERITAGE

PRIORITY ACTION

re-use derelict buildings

RE-USE DERELICT HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Proposals

- Renovate prominent Listed Buildings at risk such as Central Hotel, Erskine Church, Albert Hall and former William Hill premises on High Street (historic white building just east of the Bank Street junction)
- Approach will need to be tailored for each building and discussed between landowners, Registered Social Landlords, Historic Environment Scotland and local authority; include consideration of public or community acquisition.
- Investigate feasibility of new Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme with appropriate priorities, grant proportions and conditions.
- Identify potential buildings which could be used to support town centre living, especially for an ageing population.

Location of priorities



Albert Hall



Central Hotel



81 High Street - bike cafe proposal

Key players

Owners

Local authority

Registered Social Landlords

External funders such as Scottish Land Fund and others

BUILDINGS + HERITAGE

PRIORITY ACTION

building facelift programme

BUILDING FACELIFT PROGRAMME

Proposals

- Consider easy-access small grants scheme for building maintenance and improvements.
- Investigate feasibility of new Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme with appropriate priorities, grant proportions and conditions.
- Streamline consents process for town centre shopfront and building improvements.



the derelict condition of Erskine Church



buildings at Annan Bridge before the CARS projects



the need for maintenance - building on High Street



restored buildings at High Street/Port Street near Annan Bridge

Key players

Owners

Annan High Street Together (businesses)

Local authority

External funders

BUILDINGS + HERITAGE

PRIORITY ACTION

Annan Harbour



ANNAN HARBOUR

Proposals

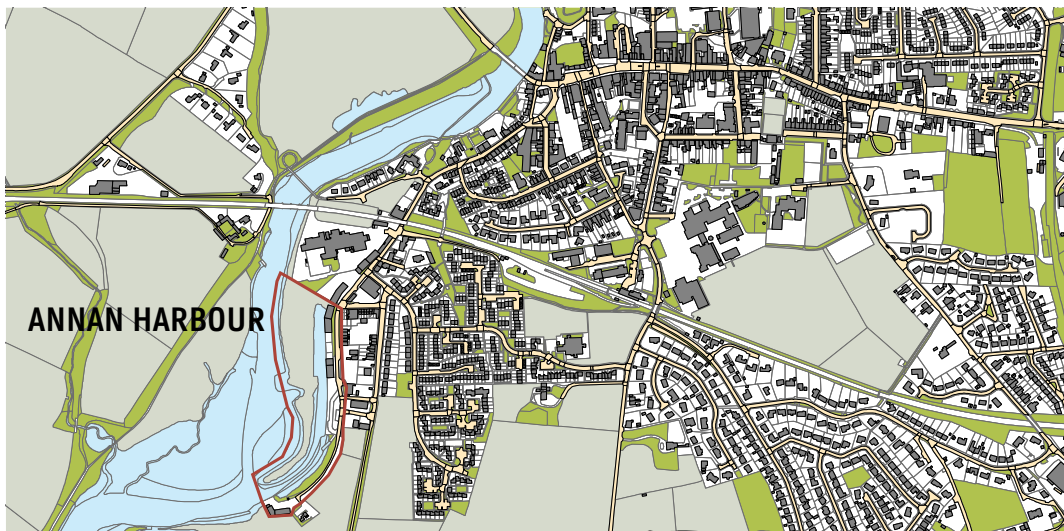
- Create a visitor hub and heritage/environmental improvements at the harbour.
- Improve signage to the Harbour in conjunction with Heritage Trail project (see under Buildings and Heritage).



Annan Harbour Festival



Annan Harbour



Annan Harbour location

Key players

Annan Harbour Action Group

External funders

Local authority

GETTING ABOUT

PRIORITY ACTION

walking and cycling network

WALKING AND CYCLING NETWORK

Proposals

- Create town-wide child-friendly cycling network and infrastructure linking residential areas, town centre and other public destinations such as schools, bus station, rail station & swimming pool.
- Investigate town-wide e-bike hire/lease scheme for local residents and visitors.
- Create covered cycle parking at bus stops.



potential walking and cycling network plan



Key players

Local authority

External funders such as Sustrans and the Energy Savings Trust

PRIORITY ACTION

GETTING ABOUT

improve High Street pedestrian experience

IMPROVE HIGH STREET PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE

Proposals

- Widen narrow sections of High Street pavements to put the needs of pedestrians first.
- Ensure pavement surfaces and crossings are wheelchair-accessible and dementia-friendly throughout the town centre (for ideas, see A+DS report “A Caring Place”).
- Prevent intrusion of parked cars onto footways.
- Make it easier to cross the High Street throughout the town centre.
- Improve pedestrian links to car parks and other.



illustrative High Street improvements

Changing Places

A Changing Places toilet is available in the Frodsham Street Public Toilets. The toilet is larger than a standard accessible toilet and includes extra equipment such as a ceiling track hoist and adult size changing bench. The toilet is operated using a RAADAL key and is open every day from 8am to 8pm.

Community Toilet Scheme

Several city centre shops, bars and restaurants have signed up to the Community Toilet Scheme which allows members of the public to use their toilet facilities.

For further information please visit:
www.cheshirewestandcheshire.gov.uk/communitytoilets

Public Toilets

Access points to the Rows

The Rows are a feature unique to Chester which comprise elevated walkways on the main shopping streets. There are a number of steps acrossing the Rows, however, all sections are also accessible to wheelchair users. The location of these access points is shown on the map.

- Bridge Street Row West and Watergate Row South**
Ramp on Pierpoint Lane lead to Carluccio's restaurant OR via passageway from Weaver Street
- Watergate Row North**
Ramp access from Gros Street (next to Neros) OR level access via Gros Street (limited headroom)
- Eastgate Row South and Bridge Street Row East**
Level access through the Grosvenor Shopping Centre (open Mon-Sat 09.00-17.00, Sun 11.00-17.00, Bank Holidays 10.00-17.00) OR via lift on Pepper Street

dementia-friendly initiatives in Chester



illustrative lane improvements



plan of High Street improvements

Key players

Local authority

External funders

GETTING ABOUT

PRIORITY ACTION

parking strategy

PARKING STRATEGY

Proposals

Develop and implement parking strategy to encourage greater use of car parks off the High Street to support a more pedestrian-friendly High Street environment, including consideration of:

- Improved signage to car parking close to the High Street, encompassing public and privately owned car parks, both on- and off-street.
- Phased approach to progressively rationalise on-street parking along the High Street, including consideration of marked bays and time limits to ensure more efficient parking and quicker turnover, with focus on disabled parking and deliveries.
- Improve pedestrian links between car parks and High Street.
- Use bus station for visitor drop-off and pick-up
- Provide more sustainable alternatives to use of the car – so must be delivered in conjunction with Improve High Street Pedestrian Experience and Walking & Cycling Network projects (see under Getting About).



bus station drop-off

Key players

Local authority

External funders

parking strategy aims



potential extent of parking review and strategy



digital parking signage



Making it happen

Successful delivery of this town centre regeneration plan will take around five years of concerted action. Whilst some more straightforward projects can and should be delivered more quickly (such as those identified as potential 'quick wins' in section 4) to demonstrate success and build momentum, preparatory work on other more complex projects should also start now.

Successful delivery of this town centre regeneration plan will take around five years of concerted action. Whilst some more straightforward projects can and should be delivered more quickly (such as those identified as potential 'quick wins' in section 4) to demonstrate success and build momentum, preparatory work on other more complex projects should also start now.

The plan's package of proposals in section 4 deliberately targets a limited number of priorities, in response to the community aspirations, national and local government policy agendas and local context described in section 2. The package is consciously aims to have maximum impact in delivering the plan's strategic objectives, outlined in section 3.

Circumstances change: new policy agendas emerge, new funding streams appear, and new challenges occur. It may be the case that the package of projects may need to be adjusted during the lifetime of the plan. If circumstances do change, the strategic objectives outlined in section 3 should provide a useful baseline against which to consider new projects.

Annan Regeneration Steering Group will perform a number of important roles in delivering this plan:

- Ensure that the various inter-related priorities in the plan are all taken forward, including capital projects (like re-using derelict buildings and improving public spaces) and ongoing 'revenue' projects (such as a year-long events programme and building maintenance).
- Support local organisations to build capacity and work together – each project in this plan will need people and organisations to collaborate on its delivery, and the Steering Group should help and support where needed.
- Champion and lead implementation of the plan, including reviewing the plan in 2-3 years' time or when circumstances change.

The Steering Group will also consider whether its organisational structure, governance and membership are appropriate to fulfil those roles. It may be appropriate, for example, for the organisation to establish a Development Trust or similar body which is able to hold assets (including funding and property) in order to deliver projects.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Historical development of the town centre

The quality of the individual buildings and the heart of the town being intact contributes to Annan's charm. Whilst this is an important asset, it is how the space between the buildings is maintained and the flexibility of its use that will determine Annan's success in the future.

Historical development

Annan has a distinctive sense of place, and while there has been extensive residential expansion at the edges of the town, the central core of the Annan has remained virtually untouched since the 1800s.

- Annan first appeared on maps over seven centuries ago - the town was initially based

around the river port and royal castle but the Annan we know today is less than two centuries old

- Annan has retained much of its dense historic core which contrasts with the extensive areas of low-density suburban development which have considerably expanded the boundary of the town
- many heritage assets can be seen in Annan – the motte and bailey and the river crossing, for example, relate back to the first days of settlement and an attractive collection of historic buildings and spaces at the west end of the High Street are particularly important and valuable.



The following six plans show the development of Annan from the earliest Ordnance Survey map in 1861 to the present day



- 1861 - mid-19th Century plan of Annan showing compact town centre and some linear development. The town's population was around 6,000 in a tight and walkable core area with a distinctive market place on High Street.



- 1898 late 19th Century plan of Annan showing compact town centre with new building along and between roads. The population had risen to around 7,000 with significant new development in the Station Road/St John's Road area.

historical development



- 1931 - the town centre starts to fill out while retaining its form with new development focused on the north of the town. Although the extent of the town had continued to expand, the population had fallen to 6,300.



- 1949 - the town centre retains its form but more development took place in the north and north east of the town. This was a lower density form than in previous periods heralding the familiar layout of today. The population in 1949 was 6,500.



- 1970s - the town centre retained its form but there was considerable expansion to the north, north east and south of the railway. This skewed the town's form and created a disconnect between neighbourhoods, communities and the town core.



- 2017 - the town centre retains its form and there is further peripheral development in the north east of the town as well as the Tesco development, The population of the town in 2011 was 8,960.

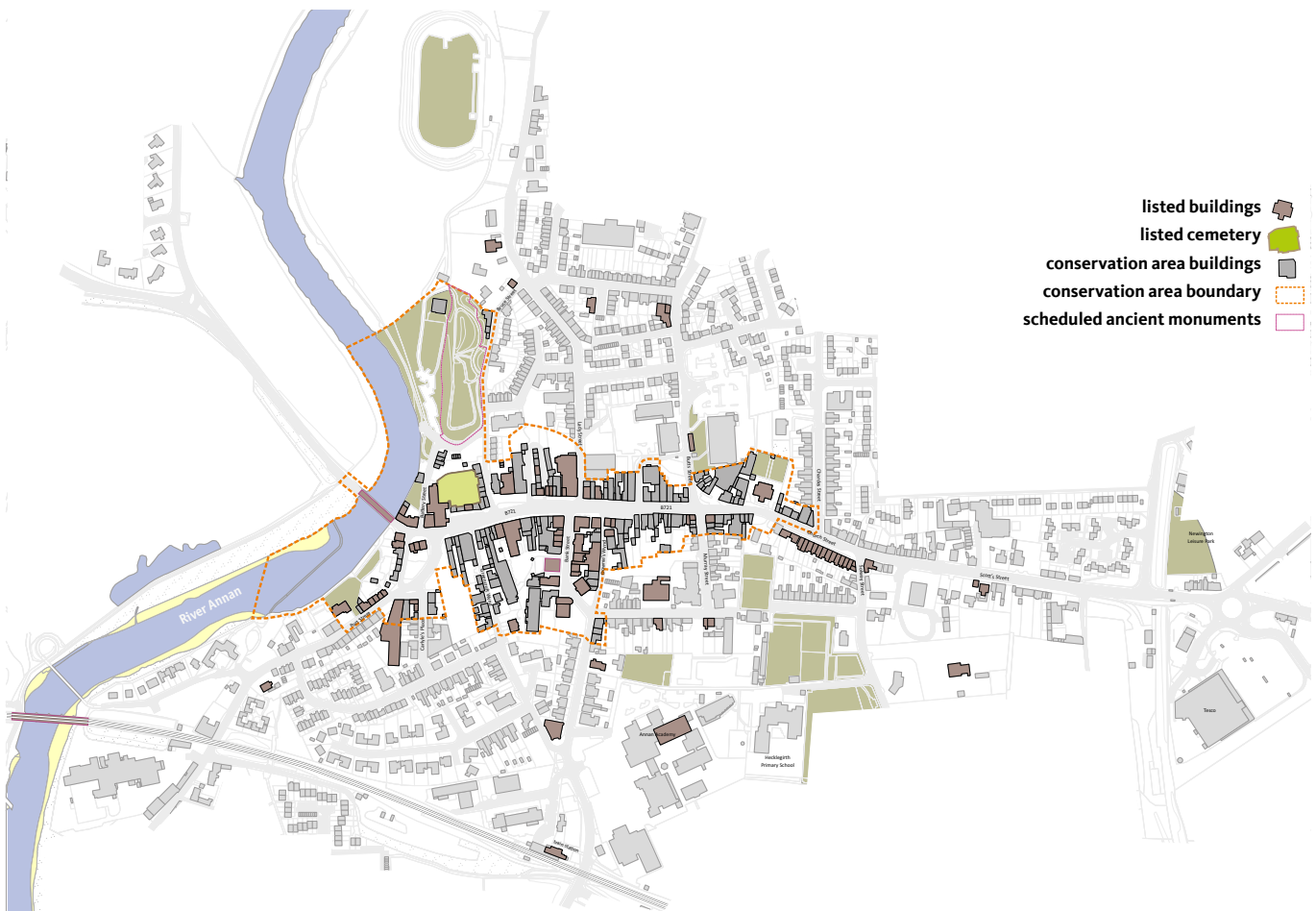
Heritage assets

The recognisable historical heart of the town, part of the Annan Conservation Area, is compact and walkable. The town centre is quite legible; a series of notable landmark buildings, structures and spaces mean it is easy for people to orientate themselves and find their way about.

- typical of historic Scottish towns, Annan has a clearly identifiable, organically shaped High

Street, with a Town Hall and clock tower at one end and a significant parish church with steeple at the other

- there is a concentration of listed buildings in the Conservation Area
- the Conservation Area itself has excellent groups of red sandstone buildings, landmarks and intimate courtyards
- bridges and the river landscape are also distinctive heritage assets at the west end of the town centre

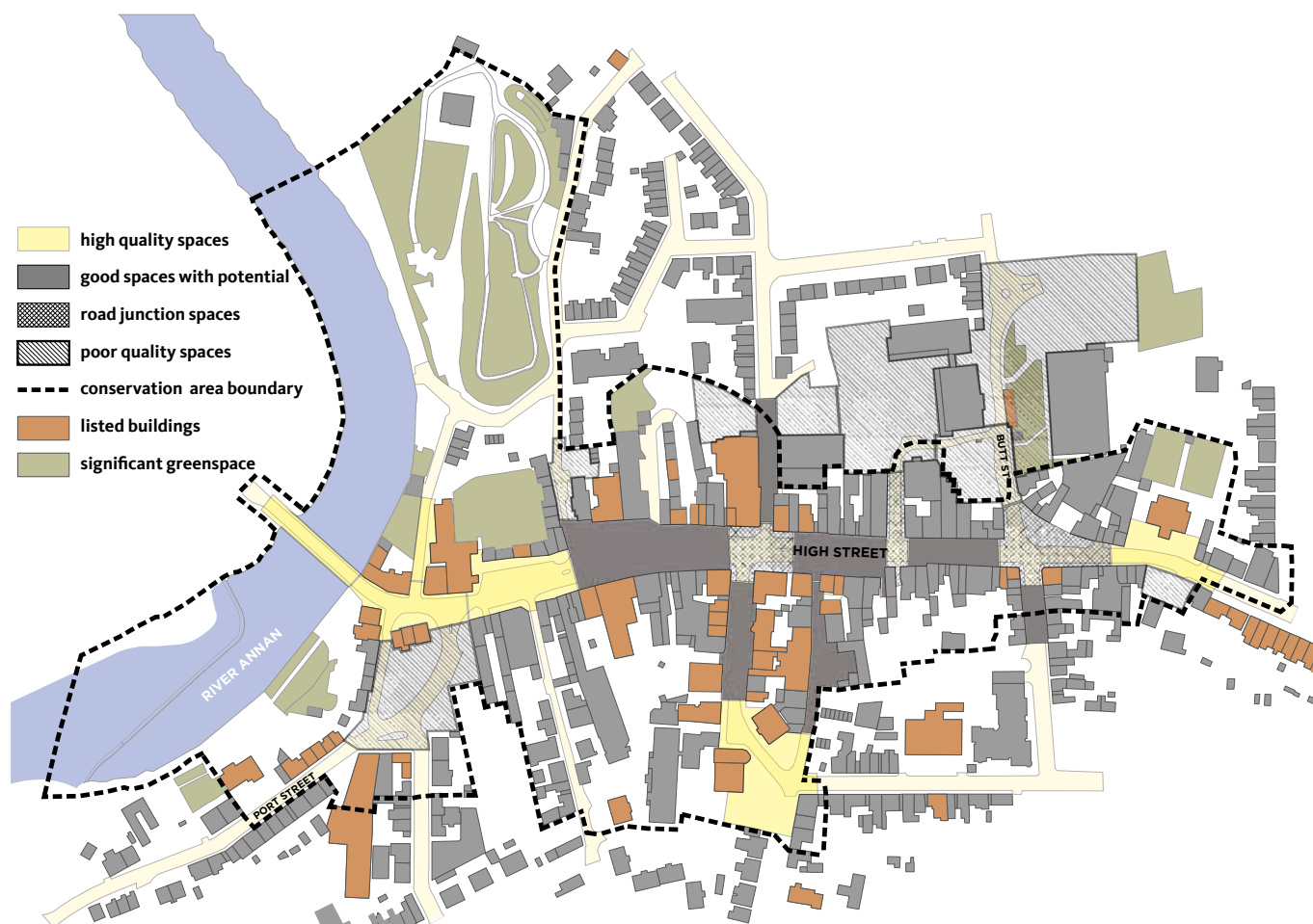


heritage assets

Street character

While the built form of the High Street itself is homogenous, the quality of its public realm is poor, overly dominated by vehicle traffic and parked cars and is not of a quality commensurate with its heritage assets. There are significant areas of poor quality space both within and adjacent to the Conservation Area.

- the High Street and immediate environs are relatively homogeneous, being built mostly of dark red sandstone and 2-2.5 storeys in height; occasional white painted buildings provide an attractive contrast to the red sandstone



street character

- the quality of the built environment along the High Street itself is mainly good and the west end of the street, approaching the bridge, is especially interesting and attractive
- other especially distinctive areas include the Annan Old Parish Church churchyard and the south end of Bank Street
- the road junctions have a low-quality environment, usually because of a proliferation of clutter on footways and frontages, insensitively sited signage and other roads infrastructure
- areas to the rear of the High Street frontage

- are eroded and hollowed out in places, creating a no man's land between the High Street and the residential areas beyond; however, this zone has remnants of rich spatial sequences, including a range of intimate courtyards, lanes and closes
- there are some public green spaces close to the town centre, each with a distinct character of its own; there is an interesting contrast between the enclosed churchyards and the open riverside green spaces

While there are many positive aspects of the street character, the over-riding impression is of an outdated town centre with many poor quality shops and very little civic life on the street.

Appendix 2

Transport and movement

Centrality

It is significant that Tesco is currently the most 'central' part of the town. This is not an unusual outcome in cases where a more substantially scaled road system and development is grafted on to an old one. The impact of this is acute in a rural population heavily reliant on the car.

Annan's town centre is easily walkable, and most facilities fall within a five-minute walking distance of each other. There is ample parking within a short walk from High Street, but these locations are not visible or accessible to visitors.

Parking

- numerous small car parks are tucked in behind the High Street, and there are several other larger car parks further afield serving the railway station, supermarket and Annan Academy
- parking in Dumfries and Galloway is currently not decriminalised which means that the local authority do not enforce their own parking policies (Decriminalised Parking Enforcement or DPE), such as the issuing of Penalty Charge Notices for parking offences. In areas without DPE this falls to Police





Scotland but the view locally is that parking offences are not given enough priority

- there are currently 100 off-street parking spaces in Annan together with an additional 32 short stay spaces:

Car park	No of Spaces	Disabled Spaces	Duration of stay
Murray Street	82	3	long stay
Butt Street	12	-	long stay
Fish Cross	3	1	long stay
Town Hall	32	1	short stay

- there is additional on-street parking on the side streets which is important for residents

as most properties don't have off-street parking

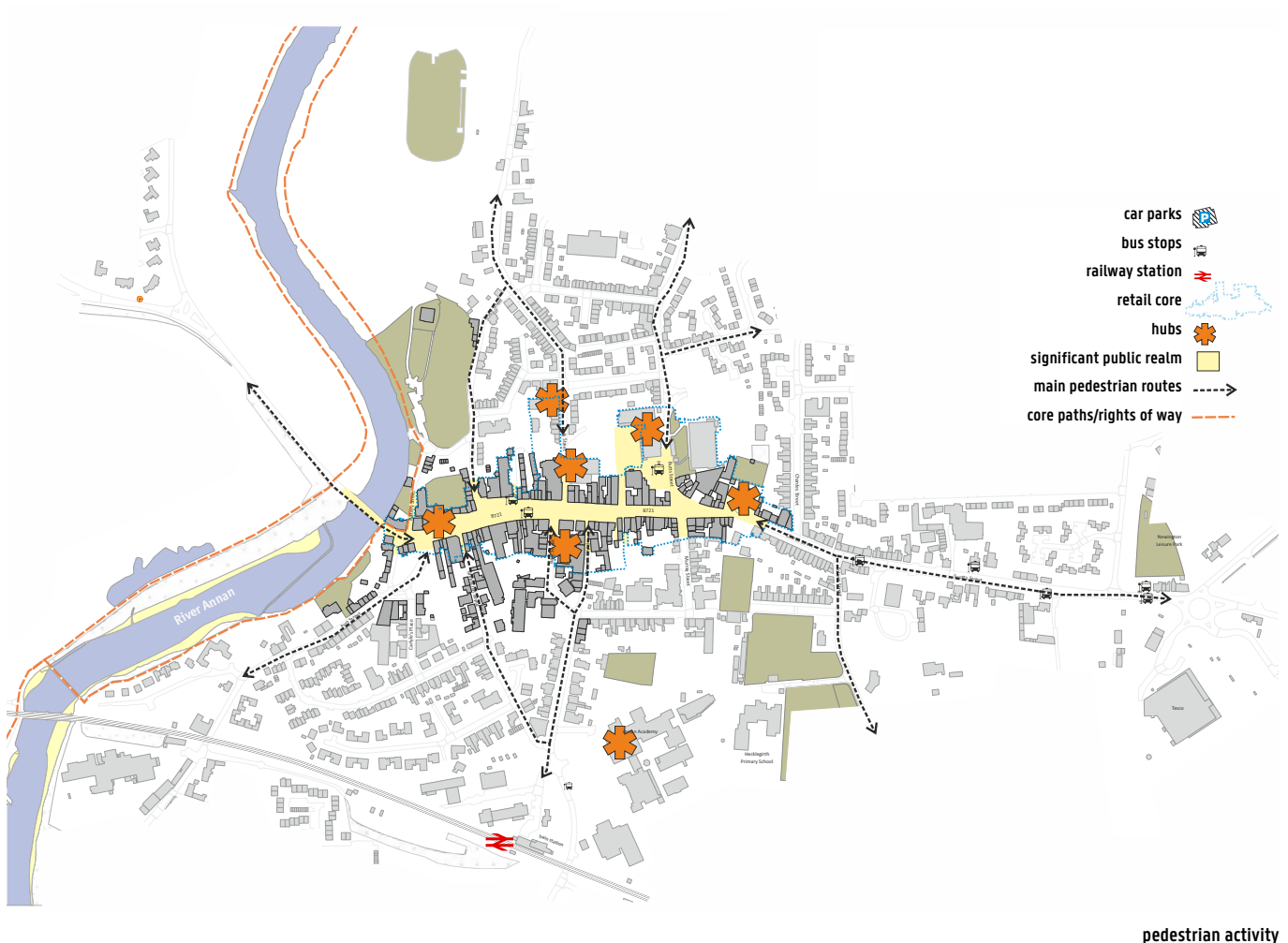
- as a rural centre many people expect to be able to park directly outside high street premises
- spaces off the high street itself are not visible and the concern is that visitors, who are unfamiliar with the town, will drive straight through without stopping
- a lack of enforcement means that parking restrictions are routinely ignored and the spaces on the High Street are frequently blocked for long periods of time
- there is substantial car parking provision, including accessible parking, but this isn't operating at capacity due to poor sign posting and layout eg Downie's Wynd
- Council policy is for free town centre parking across the whole of Dumfries and Galloway

- the High Street is within a 5-minute walk of the railway station
- Tesco, the largest supermarket serving the town, is comparatively remote from the traditional heart of the High Street
- It takes a little over 5 minutes to walk the length of the High Street
- the bus station is just behind the High Street and lies within a 5- minute walk of virtually all town centre functions
- High Street is on many bus routes, with several bus stops along its length

Spatially, the High Street offers the potential for public realm of quality. While localised

environmental improvements have been undertaken in the past, their impact on the overall quality of the town centre is lost.

- High Street is Annan's most significant east-west pedestrian route; it is legible and of a manageable scale for shopping
- localised widenings in the High Street provide potentially exciting spaces, but they suffer from the dominance of traffic and vehicle-related design that displaces other more positive social uses
- the quality of materials underfoot on the High Street ranges from newly laid stone at the Town Hall to standard concrete slabs and asphalt elsewhere; most footways are in fair condition with natural stone kerbs providing



an important unifying element which should be retained where possible'

- unnecessary clutter on the footway is an issue, especially at junctions
- the quality of surfaces underfoot declines in areas further away from the High Street and the standard of thresholds to significant buildings is disappointing
- road junctions prioritise the car over pedestrians and altering dropped kerbs and introducing at grade crossings at key junctions would improve accessibility (e.g. supporting a more accessible town centre such as Chester or Moffat)
- Core paths run along both river edges,

but links into the Town centre are indirect and can be difficult to locate due to lack of signing, and are often in deplorable condition due to erosion and regular winter flooding

Cycling

Annan has a large cycling scene, with four clubs locally including the Fechan Flyers based in Ecclefechan. These clubs are active, participating in a range of activities including youth events, racing, time trials, touring etc. and have plans to grow.



Cycling activity in Annan High Street



- whilst the National Cycle Network Route 7 goes through Annan, there's currently not much long distance touring through the town, however, the Land's End to John O'Groats route, which runs parallel to the M74, is quite busy
- Sustrans are currently reviewing how to improve the National Cycle Network; with NCN7 passing through Annan, this provides an opportunity for related investment
- there is no bike shop in Annan, the nearest are in Dumfries, Longtown and Carlisle, but the trend is for now for purchases to be made on line
- Sustrans provide a map of cycle routes
- within the area and Annan Distillery is also referenced separately in a feature on cycling to distilleries in Scotland
- there is generally a lack of cycling infrastructure. Could Annan become a destination for cycling? The provision of a Cycle Hub, for bike repairs and maintenance that is associated with a coffee shop with safe and secure cycle parking is something that local groups have been considering
- encouraging cycling as part of a wider community action plan that places a greater emphasis on health, wellbeing and community development should be considered



potential civic space: inappropriately used as a car park



shabby backcourt parking area



human scale historic environment dominated by vehicles



basically good buildings dominated by roads infrastructure



left circa 1950 and right 2018 above - contrasting images of the negative impact of vehicles on High Street

Appendix 3: Place quality

High Street has an attractive underlying structure and some strong feature buildings and spaces. If it had more life and colour - which a thriving economy could provide - as well as a more positive atmosphere which visitors expect from town centres today, it would become more attractive to visitors and hold their attention for much longer.

- Annan was originally a compact town but the impact of low density expansion has created issues about how people move around the town, the need to accommodate vehicles and wider issues of movement

- the impact of the attractive heritage assets in the town centre could be increased by reducing roads-related paraphernalia
- the zone behind the High Street has latent charm and the lanes and courtyards have considerable potential
- despite being a valuable public transport hub, the environment around the bus station and Butts Street area is sub-optimal and lets down the rest of the town centre
- some of the hubs identified could become more significant if seen as positive parts of the public realm – for example, one option might be to improve the hubs - which might be more effective than rolling out a comprehensive resurfacing scheme for High Street



poor approach to the town centre from the railway station



interesting and original artwork advertising

The conclusion of the analysis process can be summarised as follows:

Strengths

- natural setting between river and firth
- location within Dumfries and Galloway
- retention of its dense historical core
- an attractive collection of historic buildings
- legibility making the town centre easy to navigate
- notable landmark buildings
- homogeneous character supporting a strong sense of place
- walkable town centre
- good access to public transportation
- sufficient parking for the size of the town
- construction has started on the Carrs Billington site (residential) and consent has been granted for residential development of the former garage site on Station Road

Opportunities

- a rich spatial sequence to reconnect the High Street with the residential areas
- the varied range of intimate courtyards, lanes and closes
- the proximity of public green spaces to the town centre, e.g. the cemetery
- the opportunity to create better links between the enclosed urban areas and the open riverside green spaces, the Harbour and Solway Firth
- proximity to Annan Distillery as an important local tourist attraction
- space within the public realm to improve the character and quality, e.g. introduce trees
- space within the road carriageway to reallocate use and achieve a more equitable balance between vehicles and pedestrians
- the creation of opportunities for civic and social use of the High Street spaces, e.g. for events, seating

Weaknesses

- road junctions are poor
- an excessive amount of clutter such as obsolete road signs
- the pavements are sometimes too narrow and uncomfortable for pedestrians
- the backyard areas to the rear of the High Street create a 'no man's land' between the High Street and the residential areas beyond
- lack of a central space or focal points
- existing parking provision isn't visible or readily accessible
- lack of parking for tourist buses
- vehicle dominated design throughout High Street
- large timber lorries accessing the High Street via Solway Street
- links to adjacent core paths are weak and in poor condition
- the quality of surface underfoot is poor

Threats

- complacency – do nothing
- dominance of vehicles
- detriment to historic core caused by parked cars
- Tesco feels like the most central part of the town
- by its geography, Annan Distillery's competition with the town centre
- detriment to urban fabric caused by vacant and underused buildings e.g. Erskine Church, Albert Halls, Central Hotel and 7-9 Greencroft Wynd
- continuing the low density expansion of the town exacerbates problems for the historic core

Appendix 4: Economic context

The current situation

Annan has relied on a small number of large employers, notably Pinney's and Chapelcross. Their closure suggests that there are significant economic challenges ahead for Annan. While the employment situation has changed, the town centre needs to change if Annan is to continue to prosper. It is unlikely that the challenges facing Annan can be met by simply tackling one or two frequently cited issues.

Several changes are needed to help make Annan a better place to do business, capture new investment and attract tourism. Our engagement with businesses sought to capture a broad range of views and to be clear what Annan's challenges and opportunities were.

More importantly, Annan's town centre has focused on accommodating the needs of vehicles from heavy industry in the local area including Kerr's Timber sawmill and those travelling to and from local manufacturing plants. At the outset we explored with businesses how Annan's town centre could evolve with a new collective vision. From the vision of how Annan could take advantage of new opportunities a series of potential projects was developed.

Tourism

The Scottish Government's definition of sustainable tourism shows around 206,000 jobs in Scotland. This means nearly one in eleven jobs (8.0%) in Scotland can be found in sustainable

tourism businesses. Using this definition, sustainable tourism accounts for 10.4% of employment for Annan. Tourism accounts for 275 of jobs in Annan. The proportion of work in tourism is around the same as Dumfries and Galloway (10.1%) and just over 2% points higher than in Scotland.

Sustainable Tourism as % of all Employment 2016

Area	Share
Annan	10.4%
Dumfries and Galloway	10.1%
Scotland	8.0%

Most market towns the size of Annan are reliant on tourism. As an example, just over one third (36%) of jobs in Moffat can be found in the tourism industry. This suggests that tourism may be under-represented in Annan compared to other local market towns. The turnover associated with tourism jobs in Annan (set out above) is around £11 million, therefore if Annan were to double or triple tourism expenditure (to match local leading market towns) this would fully compensate Annan for the loss of Pinney's. This again points to the need for a range of projects and initiatives across different sectors to offset recent job losses.

Businesses in Annan

Almost 11% of jobs can be found in the education sector with just over 9% in the food and drink manufacturing sector. There around 2,900 jobs based in Annan but approximately 4,000

residents are employed. This suggests that about 1,000 people commute outside of Annan. This most likely reflects the proximity of Annan to towns like Dumfries and Gretna.

The number of business units (individual business sites) operating in Annan has risen from 320 in 2010 to 335 by 2017, an increase of nearly 5%. However, the proportion of businesses that are independent (sole proprietors or partnerships) has fallen from half (50%) in 2010 to just over one third (36%) by 2017.

Annan's high street fares better than the rest of the settlement. Based on our research, 60% of high street businesses in Annan are independent (February 2018). This is a higher rate of independents than in other Scottish towns (55%). In Gretna less than 12% of businesses are independents, but in some other places, it is more than 80%.

Based on our research (February 2018) around one in nine units on Annan's high street are vacant (11%). This is a similar vacancy rate to other Scottish towns (12%) based on research by Stirling University. The issue of vacant units was raised frequently by businesses as a significant issue, this may be because vacant units were often in more prominent buildings in Annan.

Business engagement

Town centre parking is a significant concern for local businesses with cars on side streets parked

around the High Street and limiting access to the High Street. We noted that the use of the train station has increased significantly and there may be an issue with commuters using the town centre as a park and ride. Most of the businesses downplayed the role of tourists in the town, and they didn't appear to be significant markets for High Street businesses that are usually expected to be focused on visitors.

Some businesses mentioned lorries but this was a mixed message, and we weren't entirely convinced that this was a significant issue. School pick-ups/drop-offs and school buses appear to cause significant congestion around the High Street at the beginning and end of the school day.

The links between some of the edge of town attractions and the High Street are weak (though not through want of promotion) and this poses a difficult challenge for the town centre. The distillery is where it is because of geography and is beyond an acceptable walking distance from the town centre. The real problem is not merely the physical separation from the town nor the availability of coach parking but rather the perceived separation in the quality of offers between the distillery and what is currently available within the town centre. Again this is a reflection of the previous situation where the town centre was relatively stable and Annan didn't have to try too hard. Not only has Annan's economic status shifted but the expectations of the visiting consumer have increased.

Appendix 5

National and local policy context

Scottish Government: National Performance Framework & Place Principle

At the strategic level, the Scottish Government's national policy focuses on a range of issues including climate change, economy and business, health and wellbeing, communities, and children and young people. The full range of policy objectives is shown in the accompanying [National Performance Framework²](#) diagram.

The [Place Principle](#) provides a framework for local delivery of this national agenda. It was agreed by the Scottish Government and [COSLA](#) in 2019, and aims to take a more collaborative approach to a place's services and assets to achieve better outcomes for people and communities. The Principle encourages and enables local flexibility to respond to issues and circumstances in different places.

This town centre regeneration plan has been developed very much in line with the Place Principle, focus on collaborative action to improve Annan town centre as a 'place' which reflects both national policy objectives and local community aspirations.

Scottish Government: Town Centre First Principle

The [Town Centre First Principle](#) was agreed by the Scottish Government and [COSLA](#) in 2014, marking a significant shift in public policy towards town centres. The Scottish Government says that the Principle:

"... asks that government, local authorities, the wider public sector, businesses and communities put the health of town centres at the heart of decision making. It seeks to deliver the best local outcomes, align policies and target

available resources to prioritise town centre sites, encouraging vibrancy, equality and diversity."

The Principle is not a duty and it is not prescriptive. Taking local needs and circumstances into account, it is about:

- *adopting an approach to decisions that considers the vibrancy of town centres as a starting point*
- *ensuring that the health of town centres features in decision-making processes*
- *open, measured and transparent decision making that takes account of medium to longer-term impacts on town centres*
- *recognising that town centre locations are not always suitable and making sure that the reasons for locating elsewhere are transparent and backed by evidence*

Transport Scotland: National Transport Strategy 2

[NTS2](#) sets out a vision for Scotland's transport system for 2020-2040. Its priorities are to reduce inequalities, take climate action, contribute to inclusive economic growth, and improve health and wellbeing.

The Strategy outlines how Scotland's use of transport, and our transport system, needs to adapt over that 20 period to deliver on those priorities. That includes discouraging people from owning or using cars, ensuring places are convenient to get to without having to use a car, and re-vitalising town centres with sustainable and active travel infrastructure and modes.

Scottish Planning Policy & Town Centre Toolkit

[Scottish Planning Policy](#) (SPP) was prepared in 2014. It sets out national planning policies which reflect Scottish Ministers' priorities for operation of the planning system and for the development and use of land – including sustainability, low carbon, nature conservation, resilience and connectivity.

² <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/>



National Performance Framework diagram

Specifically in relation to town centres, SPP ([paragraphs 58-73](#)) enshrines the Town Centre First Principle in national planning policy, stating that:

Planning for town centres should be flexible and proactive, enabling a wide range of uses which bring people into town centres. The planning system should:

- *apply a town centre first policy when planning for uses which attract significant numbers of people, including retail and commercial*

leisure, offices, community and cultural facilities;

- *encourage a mix of uses in town centres to support their vibrancy, vitality and viability throughout the day and into the evening;*
- *ensure development plans, decision-making and monitoring support successful town centres; and*
- *consider opportunities for promoting residential use within town centres where this fits with local need and demand.*

The [Town Centre Toolkit](#) was published in 2014 by the Scottish Government. It contains ideas and examples of how people and organisations can make their town centre more attractive, more active, and more accessible. It is intended to be used as a source of inspiration rather than a set of recommendations or a policy document. This regeneration plan draws on its contents.

Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan

[Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan 2](#) (LDP2) was adopted in 2019. It contains planning policy for Annan town centre, taking account of Scottish Planning Policy described above.

identifies Annan as a District Centre in the Annan Housing Market Area. It also forms part of the Gretna-Lockerbie-Annan (GLA) regeneration corridor, a key component of LDP2's spatial strategy for the region, and is strategically located adjacent to the A75.

The plan states (page 107) that:

Annan is an historic market town with many

outstanding buildings as reflected by their listings and location within the conservation area. A Regeneration Masterplan [see below] has been produced for the town. The brownfield redevelopment opportunities proposed in the Masterplan have not been allocated as many have existing uses and could be brought forward as infill developments during the Plan period. A new High Street Strategy is currently being developed. [this document]

The stated planning objectives for Annan are:

1. Consolidate and enhance Annan's role as a District Centre within the settlement hierarchy.
2. Consolidate and support the role of the town centre in providing a range of retail, leisure, community and other opportunities, and seek further improvements to the town centre historic environment. [The town centre is identified in LDP2 as one of four 'Larger Town Centres' in Dumfries and Galloway, the tier below Dumfries as the 'Regional Centre'.]
3. Support in principle the redevelopment of brownfield opportunities as identified within the Annan Regeneration Masterplan [see



LDP2 Spatial Strategy for Dumfries and Galloway

- below] to aid the regeneration of the town.
4. Identify new business and industrial land to accommodate employment opportunities and growth businesses.
 5. Continue to identify and protect established business and industry areas, recognising their important role in providing local employment.

This town centre regeneration plan is designed to help achieve these objectives.

in addition, the draft [Action Programme](#) (January 2018) that accompanies LDP2 states (page 4) that the existing Annan Regeneration Masterplan [see below] should be updated and a progress report prepared. This report effectively delivers that action as far as the town centre is concerned.

Annan Regeneration Masterplan

This masterplan was prepared in 2009-10 on behalf of the local authority, guided by the Annan

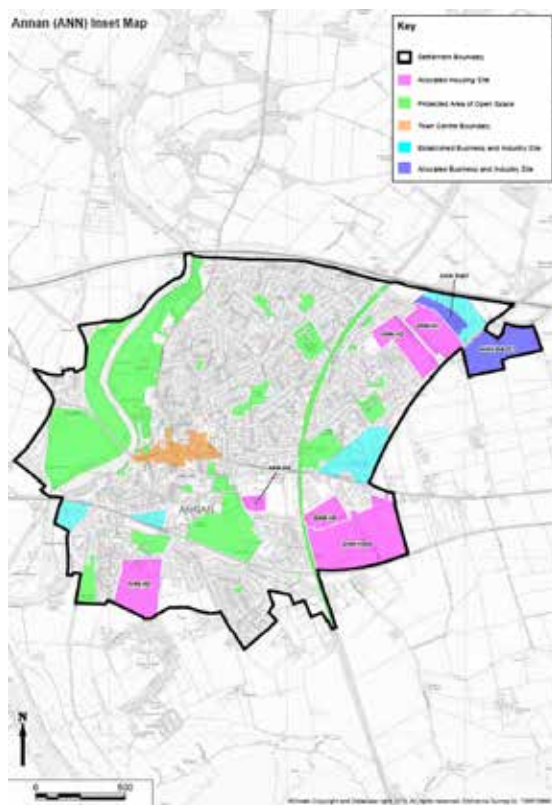
Regeneration Steering Group and community engagement. [The masterplan](#) covers the whole town, not just the town centre. It includes 33 priority projects to be delivered over a 15 year period (2010 to 2025) encompassing public realm improvements, relocations, new developments, building refurbishments, digital infrastructure and open space improvements. The masterplan also contained design guidance for development proposals.

The document was first adopted as planning guidance to the Annandale and Eskdale Local Plan. That plan was replaced by the Council's first Local Development Plan (LDP) in 2014. That LDP was subsequently replaced by LDP2 in 2019 (see above). The Council considered the masterplan to remain relevant to the implementation of LDP2, it has been readopted as planning guidance to LDP2.

A number of projects identified in the masterplan have been delivered, including:

- a Townscape Heritage Initiative for the west end of the High Street
- station gateway public realm improvements
- riverside gateway public realm improvements around Annan Bridge
- grant support for High Street shopfront improvements
- gap site improvements, such as housing on the former Carrs Billington site at the west end of the High Street

The content of the 2010 town masterplan has been taken into account in this town centre regeneration plan.



Annan Inset Map from LDP2, showing extent of town centre in planning policy

