

# Carrickfergus Town Centre Masterplan





# Carrickfergus Town Centre Masterplan

July 2010



## **i Preface**

This masterplan is a conceptual plan for the future of Carrickfergus town centre. Although it is a non-statutory document, the primary intention of the masterplan is to provide an aspirational, clear vision supported by strategic regeneration objectives for the town centre, providing a context in which individual high quality developments or projects can be brought forward and fully assessed and appraised for viability. Delivering these projects successfully will depend on certain future conditions being right. As an enabling tool the masterplan proposes a number of actions which may be supported by Government departments such as the Department for Social Development and other agencies including Carrickfergus Borough Council.

Those bodies commissioning the masterplan are not formally bound by the proposals but they will consider fully appraised proposals demonstrating good value for money, which meet their strategic objectives and may provide funding subject to any budgetary constraints. It will be the responsibility of a new Masterplan Implementation Board to monitor, review and progress the masterplan and to respond to any changing conditions in order to maximise any development opportunities and sources of funds for the vision of the town centre to become a reality.

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Copies of the appendices are available to download from [www.dsdni.gov.uk](http://www.dsdni.gov.uk) and [www.carrickfergus.org](http://www.carrickfergus.org)

# 1

## Introduction

# GLORIA PRISCA NOVATUR

## 1.1 Introduction

Carrickfergus is an old town, famed for its castle and lough shore setting. It was once the capital of Norman Ulster, laid out to a 12th Century defensive walled plan. The town and its centre have evolved over successive centuries, none more so than in the 20th, when industrial development, house building and road infrastructure radically altered the character of this medieval town.

Gloria prisca novatur is the town's motto, proudly inscribed on the refurbished market cross. Translated as "Glory in the Old Made New", these powerful words have distinct resonance with the town's people of today.

In many ways, modern day Carrickfergus is a juxtaposition of old and new. Its majestic Castle sits atop the rock of Fergus, surveying the lough and harbour below. Yet a dual carriageway encircles its landward side in a stand off of historic proportions.

Similarly, the town walls that have withstood so many a siege, find themselves overwhelmed by modern development and breached by an army of trolley laden shoppers.

Yet Gloria Prisca Novatur speaks of the future and the potential for change. Can the old be made new in way that brings prosperity to Carrickfergus and its people?

The Carrickfergus Town Centre Masterplan seeks to rise to this challenge. It puts in place a vision for the future of the town centre, developed with those who live and work there. Through an approach to the new that respects the old, it demonstrates the exciting potential of this historic town and the scope for all to find glory in its transformation.



## 1.2 Background

The Carrickfergus Town Centre Masterplan was commissioned in January 2009 by the Department for Social Development (DSD) in partnership with Carrickfergus Borough Council and the Carrickfergus Development Company. It represents a 15-20 year vision for Carrickfergus Town Centre and will be used by both the public and private sectors to guide regeneration and development decisions.

The Masterplan area shown on the adjacent plan is based on the town centre boundaries as defined by DOE Planning Service. This extends from the railway line in the north to Belfast Lough in the south, and from Davy's Street in the West to Fisherman's Quay in the East. However, key to a successful masterplan, is the ability to look beyond such boundaries and develop a holistic strategy for the area.



## 1.3 Masterplan Role

The Carrickfergus Town Centre Masterplan is a non statutory plan to guide regeneration and development. It will inform the investment decisions of organisations and individuals from the public, private and community sectors, with a common goal of revitalising Carrickfergus Town Centre. It seeks to establish a shared vision for the future of the town, defining priorities and principles of development.

As a non statutory plan it will not form part of planning policy, but will be used as a material consideration. However, the Masterplan was prepared in advance of major changes to the Northern Ireland administrative and planning systems and is therefore likely to inform future policy.

The Masterplan itself illustrates the potential shape and content of future development in the town centre, relating to land in public and private ownership. Proposals serve as guidance and should not be treated as a prescriptive blueprint for development.

All proposals contained within the plan will require further consultation and development with stakeholders prior to delivery, as well as following the appropriate stages of the planning process.

The Action Plan located at the end of this document tabulates and prioritises projects for delivery over the short, medium and long terms. This plan will be subject to regular review to ensure it reflects changes since this document was produced.

A set of appendices to accompany this document are available online.\* These include details of background research and the full findings of the public consultation process.

\* Appendices can be downloaded at [www.dsdni.gov.uk](http://www.dsdni.gov.uk), and [www.carrickfergus.org](http://www.carrickfergus.org)

## 1.4 Masterplan Team

The Masterplan process was managed by an Advisory Group consisting of officials and public representatives of the DSD Regional Development Office, Carrickfergus Borough Council and the Carrickfergus Development Company, a partnership between Council and the Carrickfergus Chamber of Commerce and Trade. It was prepared by the following multidisciplinary consultant team, led by Urban Designers and Landscape Architects, The Paul Hogarth Company.

Organisation	Role
The Paul Hogarth Company	Lead
JMP	Transport
DTZ Consulting	Planning
PriceWaterhouseCoopers	Economics
CB Richard Ellis	Property
TEAM	Tourism
Nolan Ryan Tweeds	Cost
Cleaver Fulton Rankin	Legal

## 1.5 Policy Context

While non-statutory, it is important that the Masterplan is viewed in the appropriate policy context. (Also see Appendix A - Baseline Studies)

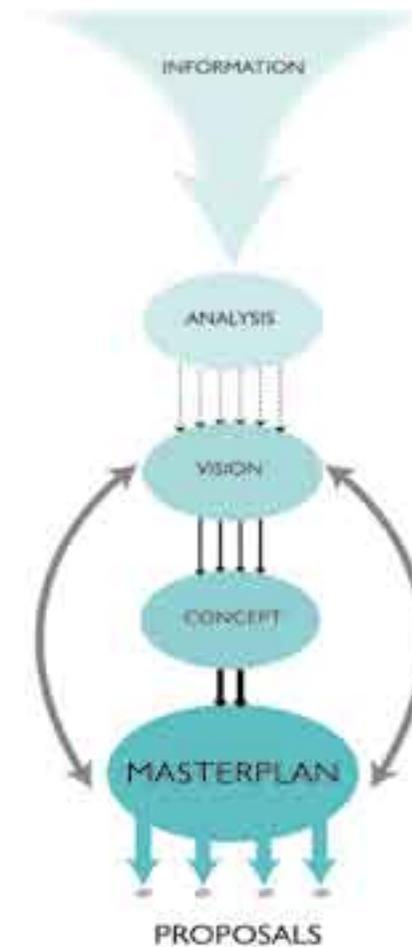
'Shaping our Future', the Regional Development Strategy 2025 (RDS), sets out the over-arching development strategy for Northern Ireland for the next 20 years and provides a framework for the future development of the region. The RDS recognises Carrickfergus' role as a heritage town but with a strengthened housing role and notes the need for continued regeneration of the town centre and waterfront.

Planning Policy Statements (PPS's) set out policies on land use and other planning matters and apply to the whole of Northern Ireland. Key policies of note include: PPS 3: Access, Movement and Parking PPS5: Retailing, Town Centres and Commercial Leisure PPS6: Planning / Archaeology and the Built Heritage & Areas of Townscape Character PPS12: Housing in Settlements.

PPS 5 recognises existing Town Centres as the best location for retail, office and related uses. It promotes the vitality and viability of Town Centres; focussing development, particularly retail in areas which maximise the benefits for all consumers; and maximising the opportunity to use means of transport other than the car.

While not yet adopted, The Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan is also an important material consideration. It sets out planning objectives for Carrickfergus Town Centre, as well as policies on appropriate landuse types and quantities. The Walled Town is also a Conservation Area and reference must therefore be made to the Design Supplement prepared by DOE.

The Northern Ireland Review of Public Administration (RPA) will involve the transfer of many powers including planning, to 11 new Council areas. Carrickfergus will therefore become part of a larger cluster to include Larne and Ballymena.



However, at the time of publication, no decision has been made on any funding or responsibilities being transferred to councils nor any confirmation of the date of transfer.



## 1.6 The Masterplan Process

The process of developing a masterplan for Carrickfergus Town Centre took a year to complete, beginning in Spring 2009. The consultant team gathered information on the town via desktop research, consultation meetings and workshops and site appraisal, the data from which was then subjected to analysis. Once these findings were agreed, a Vision and Concept were developed, defining priorities for the town. This was then developed into a Draft Masterplan, which underwent a process of public consultation in September 2009. Upon receipt of feedback, the Masterplan and Action Plan was finalised, presented to and formally endorsed by Carrickfergus Borough Council and launched in July 2010.

Carrickfergus Town Centre Masterplan was developed through the extensive involvement of local people. It generated much public discussion and debate about the future of town, the findings of which are incorporated into these proposals. The continued involvement of local people in the development and delivery of the plan will be critical to its success.



# 2

**Carrickfergus: Analysis**



Artist's impression of Carrickfergus in 1620 (Image courtesy of NIEA)

## 2.1 Carrickfergus: Past

Carrickfergus Town Centre has a long and colourful history dating back over 800 years. An understanding of its evolution and historical significance is therefore an important starting point for the Masterplan. For the purposes for this document, however, only a brief account of its extensive history is possible.

Carrickfergus was established by the Anglo Normans in the 1170s, becoming the powerbase of their occupation of Ulster. Led by the famous knight, John De Courcy, construction of the first castle began on the Rock of Fergus to which the town owes its name. Religious association with the town also dates from this early period, with St Nicholas' Church being one of the island's few examples of a medieval church that remains in use.

From its earliest days, medieval Carrickfergus had a turbulent existence and was the subject to frequent attack by the Irish and Scots, as well as the French and Americans.



Historic Evolution of the Town

Defensive walls are thought to have been erected early in its history, with the town walls seen today completed by Sir Arthur Chichester in 1615. Sieges of the town included an attack by Williamites in 1689 and by the French army in 1760, the scars of which are both visible on the town walls today. Naval attack also beset Carrickfergus in 1778, when one of the earliest American battleships captured HMS Drake in the bay of the town. Further turbulence through the Troubles conflict of the 70's, 80's and 90's also impacted upon the town and its people.

Sadly, much of Carrickfergus' medieval character was lost through 19th and 20th Century development. While street patterns remain, the majority of buildings date from this era.

Yet arguably, it was the construction of the 4 lane Marine Highway that had the most physical impact on the town centre. Built in the 1960's to serve industrial plants at Kilroot, the narrow gap between Castle and Town was chosen as the most appropriate option for this wide road, greatly changing the character of the town in the process.

Land reclamation is another key feature of Carrickfergus' development, built to accommodate the ship based export of coal and passage of the Marine Highway. In 1985 this area was transformed through the development of a marina and apartments, reconnecting Carrickfergus with its maritime tradition.



1960s: Carrickfergus in the process of change, shortly before construction of the Marine Highway.



2000s - Carrickfergus Today

## 2.2 Regional Context

Before studying the town centre in detail, it is important to understand the regional context of Carrickfergus.

Carrickfergus is located on the northern shores of Belfast Lough, 12 miles from the capital city of Northern Ireland. It sits upon the A2 coastal road, connecting northwards to the town of Larne and beyond to the north coast. Carrickfergus is also served by a railway line that connects Belfast and Larne. Both of Belfast's airports are within a 20 minute drive of the town, as are the main sea ports of Belfast and Larne.

At present, Carrickfergus operates as a key residential settlement on the periphery of Belfast, with many residents working in the city, accessing it by car, bus and train. Peak hour traffic congestion between the town and Belfast is a significant problem and plans are currently in place to widen the A2 Shore Road at Greenisland.

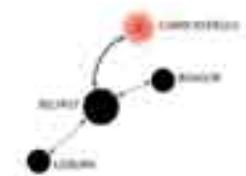
The adjacent diagrams (far right) illustrate several of the key physical and economic relationships Carrickfergus has with nearby towns. Consideration of these is important in relation to the future social and economic role of the Carrickfergus town centre.

The town's relationship with Belfast (A) is central and commuting to the city will remain a key feature. Potential exists, however, for Carrickfergus Town Centre to attract more visitors and investors from the city. Carrickfergus is also a vital part of the Belfast Lough (B), with the marina serving as a point of arrival to yachts both locally and from further afield.

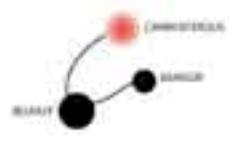
The relationship with County Antrim towns (C) including Larne and Ballymena is also of importance, with movement between towns for business and shopping purposes. This will increase in significance with the proposed Council boundaries in the future.

Carrickfergus is also on the Causeway Coastal Route (D), with many tourists briefly stopping over in the town on their way to the north coast and Giants Causeway. Consideration should be given to how this role can be further capitalised upon, possibly in reverse as a final point on the southwards route.

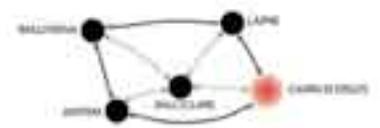
Finally, Carrickfergus is well positioned in relation to air and sea travel (E), making it potentially well suited as a short break destination.



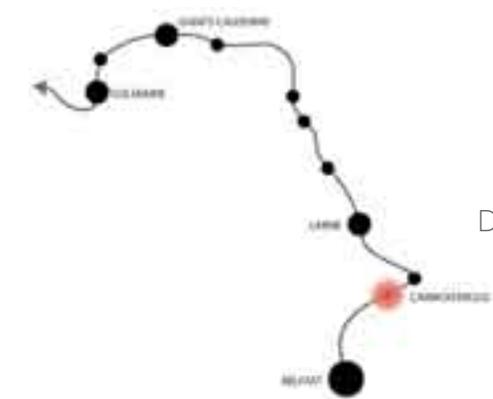
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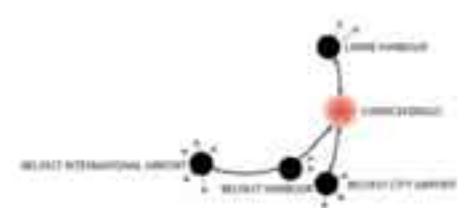
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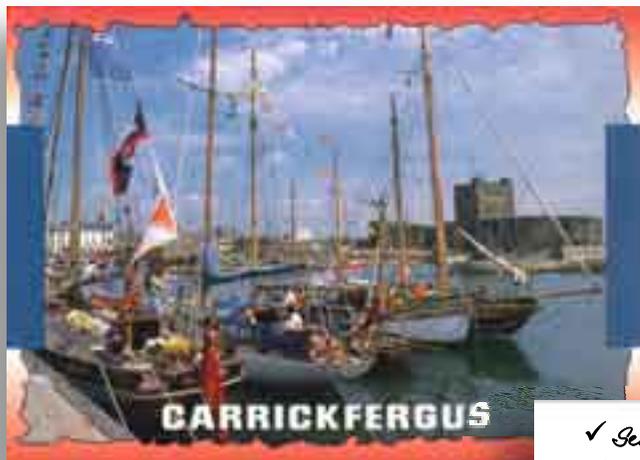
E

## 2.3 Carrickfergus: Present

### 2.3.1 Introduction

In many respects Carrickfergus should be a picture postcard town. It has numerous features that are commonly looked for in a vibrant town centre. These include a seafront promenade, harbour, historic castle, town walls, narrow streets, unique shops, museum, marina and good transport connections.

However, when standing on a town centre street in Carrickfergus today, one is struck by a place quite different to that of the postcard image. Understanding the complex reasons behind this simple observation is critical to determining how the town can be improved.





### 2.3.2 Assets

The features listed on the postcard all represent significant assets of which many other towns would look upon with envy. In fact a number of these are of national significance, including Carrickfergus Castle, Town Walls, Marina and the Gasworks Museum. As with any attraction or public facility, there is scope for all of them to be improved and developed. In addition, the physical relationships between these attractions and with the wider town centre require improvement. For example, few of the visitors to the Castle choose to cross the main through road and explore the town, let alone realise that a marina and a museum are both a short walking distance away.

This issue does not just affect tourism, but the functioning and economy of the town centre as a whole. A town centre through which people don't move easily on foot, fails to capitalise upon their potential use of shops and other facilities.





### 2.3.3 Barriers

Analysis reveals that a number of significant barriers to pedestrian movement exist within Carrickfergus Town Centre. Some of these impede movement physically whilst others present a psychological barrier in the minds of pedestrians.

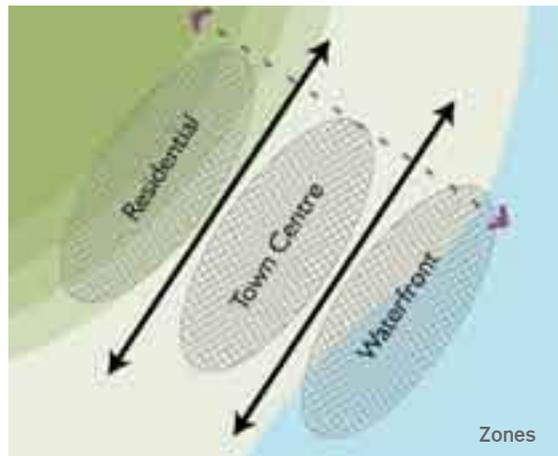
Barriers include the town walls, which were built to protect the town, yet still hinder east / west movement. North / South movement is affected by the railway, while East / West movement is limited by the busy Albert Road. Similarly at the waterfront, fencing blocks off movement to the waters edge and large expanses of car parking discourage pedestrian movement, particularly at night.

However, arguably the most significant barrier in Carrickfergus Town Centre is the Marine Highway.

This major piece of transport infrastructure cuts the town in two, discouraging movement between the historic core and its potentially asset rich waterfront. The few crossing points and two foreboding underpasses are not sufficiently pedestrian friendly to overcome this problem.

A proposal to create a spine road through the north of Carrickfergus has existed for some time. This road would draw through traffic away from the town centre, while servicing existing and proposed housing to the north. Implementation of the Carrickfergus Spine Road would have a marked effect on town centre traffic volumes and contribute to the reduction of barriers to pedestrian movement.





### 2.3.4 Environmental Quality

Another key issue in Carrickfergus is poor environmental quality across the town centre. The town can be broadly split into three zones located between the barriers of the railway and highway. To the north are extensive areas of housing, in the centre is the historic core and to the south the waterfront.

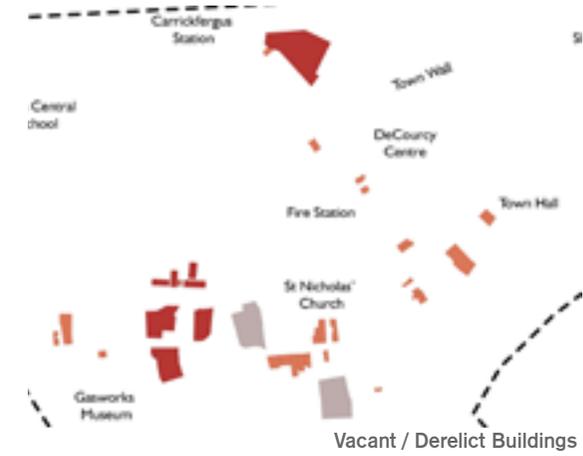
Each of these zones suffer from a generally low quality of environment. Housing estates to the north are characterised by large open areas and varied architectural quality. Meanwhile the historic core suffers greatly from prominent derelict and vacant buildings, others adorned with inappropriate signage or materials and streets consisting of poor quality materials and furniture.



To the south, the waterfront is characterised by swathes of car parking within which buildings are located. This results in a barren and windswept environment, suited to cars and not pedestrians. Addressing these issues of environmental quality are key to the future of the town centre.

For the centre of a relatively large town, Carrickfergus can at times appear very quiet, particularly in the evenings and on Sundays. This can largely be attributed to the land uses currently located there, the extent of vacant buildings and the way in which they are designed and managed.

The town centre is currently dominated by shops and civic buildings, resulting in a concentration of activity during weekdays and Saturdays, with a significant reduction at other times.



This is further affected by vacant and derelict buildings as mapped above, and buildings that contribute little activity to the streets, also mapped. When closed, many of the buildings present armoured shutters to the street, further affecting the quality of the environment.

Limited activity levels have an economic impact, with insufficient footfall to support shops in some areas. Real and perceived levels of safety are also influenced by this issue, with seemingly deserted streets at night becoming the venue for antisocial behaviour. Efforts will therefore be required to diversify landuses, renovate vacant properties and examine the design of some existing properties.



### 2.3.5 The Local View

What do you like and dislike about Carrickfergus? This question and others were posed to local residents and business owners throughout the Masterplan process. The input of local people in their experience of living and working in Carrickfergus Town Centre provides valuable data. This Masterplan received a particularly high level of interest from local people with views expressed by a wide section of the community.

The people of Carrickfergus understandably take pride in their town and its history. Residents have fond associations with many of its key attributes, including the Castle, seafront promenade, Shaftsbury Park and Marine Gardens.

Within this context, local people are committed to safeguarding the heritage of their town, including historic monuments and long established businesses.

Like all places, however, local people are well positioned to point to elements they would like to see changed in Carrickfergus. The consultation process revealed that vacant and derelict buildings, as well as the condition of streets and spaces, were of particular concern. They feel strongly that such areas bring down the overall quality of the town centre.

Consultation also indicated a desire for more shops and facilities in the town centre, with local retailers sharing this concern, pointing to the impact of supermarkets on the town.

Transportation and car parking were also cited as key issues in Carrickfergus, with residents placing importance on being able to park centrally with little or no cost involved.

The people of Carrickfergus are broadly united in the need to improve the town centre. Addressing the issues cited above, as well as the many others contained in Appendix B - Consultation Report, must form a central part of this masterplan.



### 2.3.6 Conclusions

The thorough process of consultation and analysis undertaken for this masterplan provides an accurate picture of Carrickfergus today. For a town centre with so many attributes, its appearance and economic performance point to significant issues in need of being addressed.

Carrickfergus must firstly capitalise on its regional location, with improving road and rail links to Belfast and other large settlements. This will require the strengthening of its identity to attract investment to the town.

The town centre requires urgent improvements to its environmental quality, as evidence suggests dereliction and vacancy deter investment and visitation by locals and tourists. This in turn directly affects the viability of shops, cafes and other footfall dependent businesses.

The many assets of Carrickfergus, including nationally important historic features, must be the driving force behind its regeneration. Analysis established that there is scope to improve each of these and importantly, the connections between them. Not only will this involve signage and public realm improvements, but restructuring parts of the town to function more effectively.

The brutal impact of the Marine Highway on the townscape Carrickfergus is still clearly evident some 40 years after its construction. Cars and other vehicles must be able to access the town centre with ease. However, this must not be to the detriment of the town as a place to enjoy by foot, be it for shopping, socialising or visiting attractions. Reversing the negative impact of the highway must therefore form a key part of the masterplan.

Most importantly, Carrickfergus Town Centre needs an injection of life and activity to sustain and develop its economy.

Ways must be found to encourage a larger percentage of its population to use the town centre, overcoming the barriers and deterrents that currently affect it. Visitor numbers must also be increased, by making Carrickfergus Town Centre a place in which people want to spend time. This will include diversifying uses in the centre so to generate more physical and economic activity.

Having identified the weaknesses and many strengths of Carrickfergus, it is now necessary to determine the direction to take. What kind of place would you like Carrickfergus to be? Resolving each of the above issues independently from one another would bring benefits, but more than likely miss opportunities for the greater good of Carrickfergus and its residents. The Masterplan, therefore, provides the ideal tool by which to develop a vision for the future of Carrickfergus Town Centre.

# 3

## Vision for the Future

“Carrickfergus Town Centre will be an attractive, healthy, relaxed and safe place to work, live and visit, welcoming to all, including families and young people. Its reputation for excellence and high quality will focus on history and heritage, culture and the arts, leisure, niche retailing and maritime activities. Carrickfergus will be a distinctive town with a unique blend of both ancient and modern, including state-of-the-art infrastructure, public realm and lively streets.”

### 3.1 Shared Vision

This statement (left) represents a Shared Vision for the Future of Carrickfergus. Importantly, it was developed through a collaborative process involving local residents and stakeholders, beginning in 2007 before the Masterplan process began.

It paints a verbal picture of an exciting place. A town centre that is not only safe and attractive, but economically prosperous and sustainable. A forward looking, dynamic place that is firmly rooted in the rich heritage of the town.

The Shared Vision defines the priorities that the people of Carrickfergus have for their town. It therefore provides all a single target for those with regeneration and development interests, be they from the public, private or community sectors. For Carrickfergus Town Centre to reach and exceed its potential, it will require all future projects and initiatives, no matter how small, to contribute positively to the fulfilment of this vision.



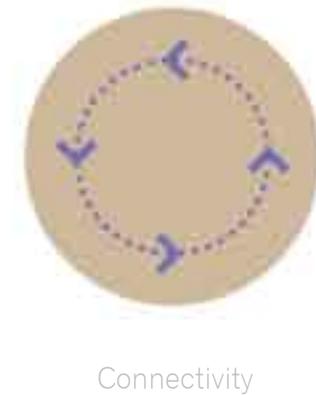
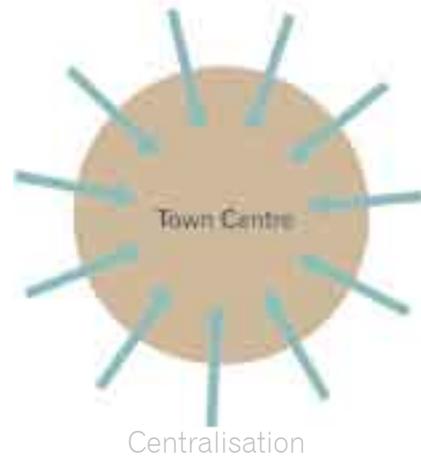
## 3.2 Regeneration Aims

Having established a Shared Vision for the future of Carrickfergus Town Centre, it is now necessary to identify the means by which it can be achieved.

Based on analysis of the town and the resultant Vision, three important Regeneration Aims will guide the development of Carrickfergus Town Centre. These are Centralisation, Connectivity and Quality.

Centralisation - Carrickfergus Town Centre must become the only destination for the traditional uses found in a town centre. Shops, offices, restaurants and community facilities are key to ensuring that it is a busy and lively place. The significant development of such uses outside of the centre will only serve to weaken its position.

Connectivity - Carrickfergus Town Centre must be a place that is easy to access and navigate around. This applies for residents and workers, as well as visitors.



This will involve overcoming the physical barriers that currently exist and ensuring that footpaths, cycleways, public transport routes and car parks are well designed and located. Improving connectivity will encourage people to spend more time in the town centre, bringing many social and economic benefits.

Quality - Carrickfergus Town Centre must strive for the highest quality in all aspects of its existence. This includes the quality of environment, its streets and buildings. It includes the quality of offer, its shops and tourist attractions. And it includes the quality of experience, including customer service and community spirit. Coordinated well, raising the bar in terms of quality can become a self perpetuating process, attracting new investment, residents and visitors to the town.

In addition to the three aims, Carrickfergus must aim to be a Healthy Town Centre. A concept established by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and supported through an international network, Healthy Cities and Towns:

- Provide a high-quality, clean, safe physical environment
- Protect natural environment
- Foster a sense of community and community participation
- Meet all basic needs of residents
- Provides a wide variety of experiences, resources and interactions
- Create a diverse, vital and innovative economy
- Promote the local cultural and natural heritage
- Provide appropriate public health facilities
- Promote active lifestyles, health and wellbeing

### 3.3 Concept Plan

The sustainability of Carrickfergus Town Centre is fundamental to its future, in physical, social and economic terms. Through analysis, two economic drivers have been identified for Carrickfergus Town Centre: Leisure and Residential.

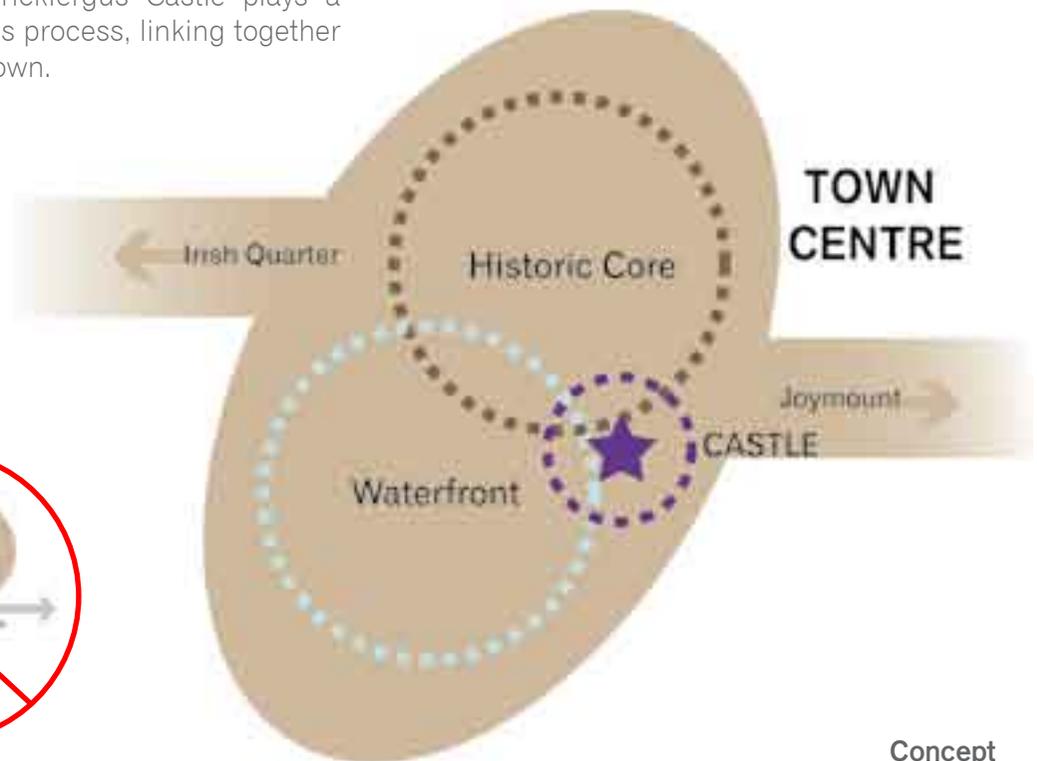
It is advocated that by building on the existing strength of the town as a leisure destination and by increasing the resident town centre population, the sustainability of the town centre will be greatly reinforced. This would in turn create a more fertile environment for the other town centre activities of Tourism, Retail and Commerce.

The adjacent Concept Plan illustrates how the town centre must develop. At present the historic core and waterfront operate as almost separate entities, very different in function and character. However, for the Shared Vision to be realised in full, it is essential that Carrickfergus Town Centre is treated as one, comprehensive entity, albeit made up of distinct character areas.



Economic Drivers

If followed, Carrickfergus will function as a town centre with a waterfront and marina, as opposed to a town centre next to them. Importantly, Carrickfergus Castle plays a pivotal role in this process, linking together all areas of the town.



Concept

## 3.4 Introducing the Masterplan

The Carrickfergus Town Centre Masterplan illustrates how the established regeneration aims and concepts can be met to realise the Shared Vision. It is not a precise blueprint for development, but an indication of how development should take place for the greater good of the town centre.

The adjacent plan shows existing buildings in white and refurbished and proposed buildings in lilac. Public streets and spaces are shown in brown and greys, with existing and proposed parks shown in green. Proposed urban blocks are diagrammatic and would consist of a series of individual buildings.

The plan focuses on the sensitive reconfiguration of the Walled Town, through the development of derelict and vacant buildings and enhancement of the public realm. It also involves the reshaping of buildings that currently contribute negatively to its special character, whilst also ensuring that the town walls play a greater role in the life of the town.

The masterplan also proposes comprehensive change to the town's waterfront, introducing an urban landscape of streets and spaces dominated by people, rather than cars.

Key features of the Masterplan are listed below and explained further in the following chapter.

- A) Appropriate redevelopment of vacant and derelict town centre properties, introducing new town centre uses.
- B) Comprehensive upgrade of public realm, using high quality materials and craftsmanship
- C) Reshaping of the De Courcy Shopping Centre to establish retail via covered streets and spaces
- D) Conservation of the Town Walls, coupled with improved access and historic interpretation
- E) Strengthened connection of Shaftsbury Park with adjacent spaces and buildings
- F) Redesign of Marine Gardens and beach to become a public park of national significance
- G) Restoration of Fisherman's Quay with new facilities for water sports and fishing
- H) Regeneration of Irish Quarter West, including infill development and public realm
- I) Reduction of the Marine Highway in width to create a street
- J) Improved access arrangements to, from and within the Castle
- K) Landmark Arts and Visitor Centre, supporting the Castle and local artists
- L) Major new 'Esplanade' civic space to create an improved setting to the castle and venue for large events
- M) Extension of Davy Street to introduce a new waterfront environment of streets and spaces
- N) Restoration and enhancement of the Harbour, to create a vibrant urban waterfront
- O) A State of the Art Centre for Sailing Excellence, supported by a modernised Boat Yard facility.
- P) Implementation of a Parking Strategy



# 4

## Town Centre Proposals

## 4.1 Introduction

For the purposes of explaining the Carrickfergus Town Centre Masterplan, the town has been divided into four recognisable parts:

- The Walled Town
- The Waterfront
- Irish Quarter
- Scotch Quarter

Each area has its own distinctive history and character. However, in line with the concept of a cohesive town centre, it is critical to Carrickfergus that they are not treated as separate entities.





Conserved town walls

Public square at bastion

New street along walls

Reconfigured De Courcy Centre

Reconfigured Museum, Library and Nursing Home

Mixed Use development providing frontage onto walls

Public Square on Lancasterian Street

High Quality Streetscape

Public art tracing route of walls

Mews style development

Improved Market Square

Redevelopment / Refurbishment of town centre properties

Courtyard developments

Castle access improvements

ALBERT ROAD

LANCASTERIAN STREET

NORTH STREET

HIGH STREET

WEST STREET

Key

- Existing Buildings
- Buildings to be Refurbished
- Buildings to be Redeveloped

## 4.2 Walled Town

### 4.2.1 Introduction

The Walled Town is known as the traditional centre of Carrickfergus, formed around the High Street, West Street, North Street and Lancasterian Street. It is defined by the railway to the north and Marine Highway to the south, and by Shaftsbury Park to the west and Albert Road to the east. It is characterised by one, two and three storey buildings closely formed along the afore mentioned streets. This urban pattern is accentuated by two important landmarks, the 12th century church of St Nicholas and Carrickfergus Town Hall.

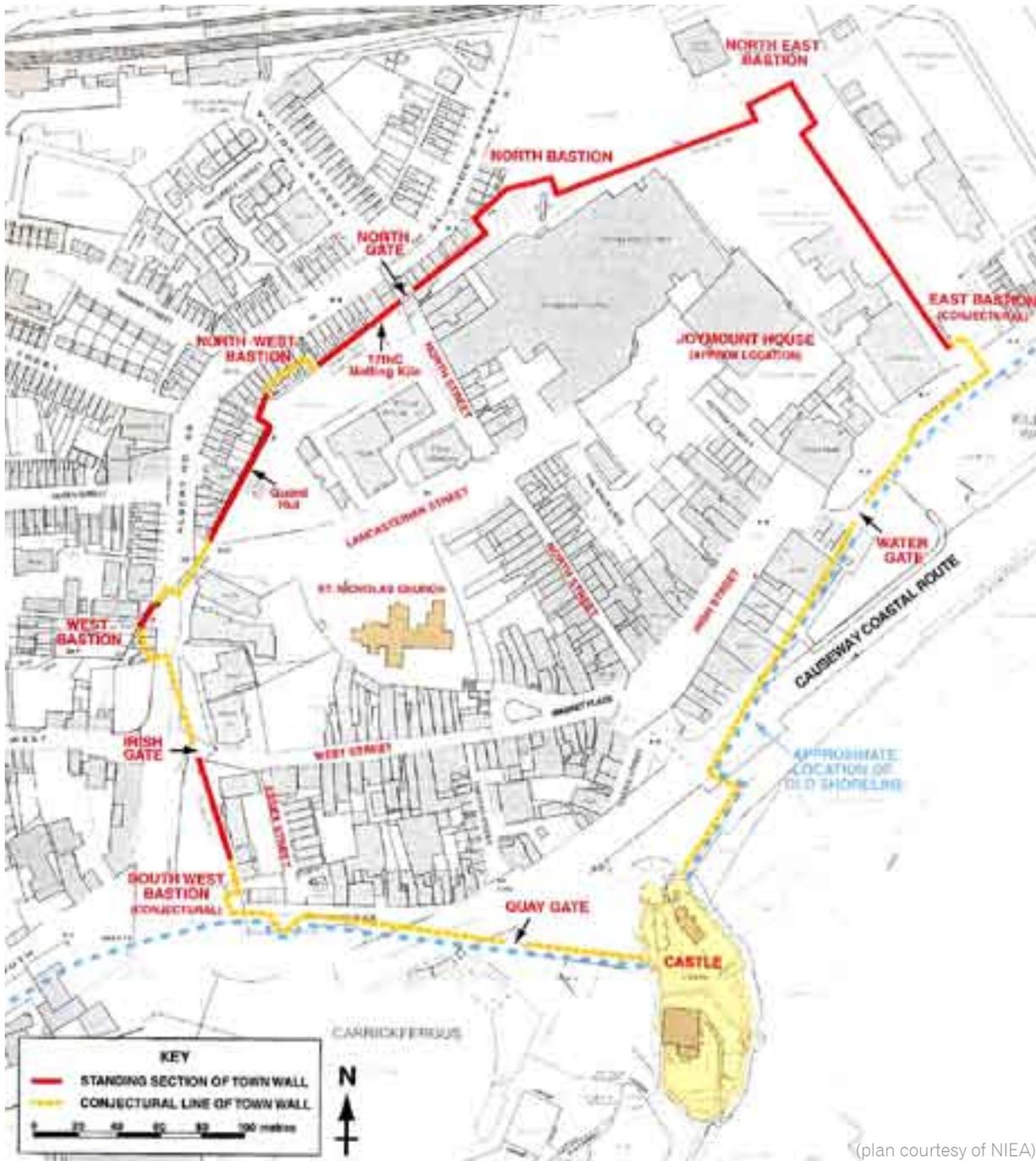
Shops and offices predominate the area, alongside churches and civic buildings. The De Courcy shopping centre built in the 1980s exists to the north, contrasting in layout to the surrounding areas.

Derelict buildings and vacant shop units are scattered throughout this area, indicative of a challenging retail environment and accommodation that is no longer fit for purpose.

The streets are of generally low quality, with concrete paving of limited merit. Medieval town walls that once encircled the town remain intact along their north and western stretches, although are relatively hidden from view in many places.

The broad approach of the Masterplan to the historic core revolves around conserving and enhancing its historic character, whilst sensitively modernising buildings to accommodate a revitalised mixture of uses.





(plan courtesy of NIEA)



### 4.2.2 Town walls

The medieval walls of Carrickfergus are truly special, despite the fact they play little active role in the life of the town today. The adjacent plan shows the route of the walls in relation to the modern town, with areas that remain intact shown in red.

The Masterplan proposes that the walls be conserved, that their setting and access be improved and that the historical significance of the walls are shared more widely with the public.

Critically, the walls should play a role in the daily life of the town, rather than being simply a hidden preserve of tourists to the rear of the town. Conservation of these protected structures is of paramount importance to ensure that they are safeguarded for future generations for enjoyment and study.



This will require a coordinated conservation and management plan that will survey the structure in detail and put in place a programme of specialised restoration works.

Subject to archaeological advice, areas of the wall that have been replaced with inappropriate materials such as brick and concrete, should be replaced with stone.

Other stretches where the wall is no longer in existence, should be celebrated using public realm, artworks and lighting. Reconstruction of the walls is unlikely to be appropriate in most instances. The setting of the walls must be afforded robust protection through the enforcement of planning policy. Applications for new development in their vicinity must be carefully considered in respect of the walls.

To fulfil the masterplan objectives, however, it will be important that redevelopment of properties takes place to present a more positive frontage onto the walls. A new narrow street is proposed to follow the inner line of the wall on its east and northern stretches, enabling buildings to front onto the structure and for people to follow its route (above).

As well as new footpaths alongside the wall on either side where possible, potential exists to allow public access on top of the walls at specific locations. Most likely to be feasible is the north easterly corner, where steps and safe walkways would give visitors a spectacular perspective on the walls and town.

The history of the walled town of Carrickfergus is rich and diverse, yet at present very little interpretation provision exists.

It is proposed to implement a coordinated series of interpretative measures along the wall through which the stories of the walls can be shared with visitors and locals alike. These will include signage, artworks and lighting and must be designed with care, so not to detract from the walls themselves. Walking tours that take place at present should be supported and developed to become a regular feature. Consideration should also be given to the use of actors dressed in period costume for specific tours or events.

In undertaking these works, the walls have potential to become a major tourism attraction in Northern Ireland of interest to a wide range of people young and old. Complementing the Castle and other attractions, if developed carefully, the walls can bring multiple social and economic benefits to the town.



### 4.2.3 Streets, Squares and Courts

The Walled Town is built on a medieval street plan, although few buildings of that era remain. The quality of the public realm is a major issue in Carrickfergus, with concrete pavoids and asphalt greatly degrading the overall appeal. Not only does this reduce the historic charm of Carrickfergus, but also has serious implications for its effectiveness as a retail destination.

A programme of public realm works is currently in preparation which will introduce stone surfacing and new street furniture to Irish Street, North Street and the High Street. Critical to its success will be the quality of design and workmanship, ensuring that this is a long term investment in the town, rather than a short term fix in need of future replacement.



This project should be seen as a first phase of wider public realm improvements throughout the town centre. Further phases must include Lancasterian Street and northward linkages to the railway station by Victoria Street.

The masterplan also identifies opportunities for two new squares within the historic core.

The first is at the northern eastern corner of the walls, where a large bastion has stood the test of time. Here a square should be developed to enhance the setting of the wall and become a focal point along the walking route of the walls.

The other opportunity exists at Lancasterian Street in an area currently used for parking at the north western corner of the walled town.

This important point along the walls includes an excellent view of St Nicholas's Church and the castle beyond. Once the provision of parking is allocated to a nearby location (see Parking Strategy), this area should be developed into a small square, with development fronting onto it.

The development of small courtyard spaces is another possible component of the Walled Town. Modelled on the highly successful example in Scotch Quarter, opportunities exist for back lands to be developed so to support small shops, galleries and cafes in an intimately designed environment. Potential for such development exists off North Street and West Street in particular.



ALBERT ROAD

LANCASTERIAN STREET

NORTH STREET

HIGH STREET

WEST STREET

Key

-  Existing Buildings
-  Buildings to be Refurbished
-  Buildings to be Redeveloped

#### 4.2.4 Infill Development and Redevelopment

Many buildings within the historic core of Carrickfergus are in need of redevelopment. These include buildings that have fallen into disrepair and dereliction, but also others that contribute negatively to the overall character of the historic town.

These buildings are marked on the adjacent plan have been identified as in need of refurbishment or redevelopment. This should be undertaken to meet the principles set out by the masterplan and subsequent design guide.

Importantly, opportunities to introduce living and working above the shops should be explored, so increasing the use and liveliness of the town centre, particularly in the evenings and weekends. Development over 3 storeys should not be permitted within the walled town area.

The masterplan also proposes redevelopment of the De Courcy shopping centre, located at the north of Lancasterian Street. By reintroducing a series of streets, partially covered to protect from the elements, the opportunity exists to greatly improve the character of this part of town, whilst also providing new, high quality retail units and other community facilities. Potential for a new health centre in this location should also be explored.

It is also proposed that over time the library, Joymount Nursing home and Carrickfergus Civic Centre / Museum be carefully redeveloped. This would provide good quality buildings that could retain existing uses, whilst also introducing complementary uses such as apartments and a Writer's museum associated with the library.

Potential also exists for the existing Carrickfergus Museum to have a more direct relationship with the walls and its bastion. Importantly, redevelopment of this area will create a far more appropriate environment in proximity to the walls.



- Reduced Marine Highway and crossing improvements
- Improved Castle access
- Esplanade Civic Space
- Landmark Arts and Visitor Centre
- High quality public realm
- Mixed Use development incorporating existing uses
- Extension of Davy's Street
- Covered street
- Park and Greenway to North
- Mixed used development and public car parking
- Harbourside walkway and controlled water level
- Historic vessels
- Cafes and galleries
- Viewing tower
- Sailing Centre of Excellence
- Boat Yard and reclaimed dry land storage area
- Area of future marina expansion





## 4.3 Waterfront

### 4.3.1 Introduction

The Waterfront is defined as the area south of the Marine Highway and Belfast Road, encompassing Carrickfergus Castle, the harbour and marina. As noted through analysis, significant potential has been identified to improve this area so that it looks and functions as an integral part of the town centre, rather than being a distinctly separate entity. Overcoming the pedestrian and psychological barrier of the Marine Highway will be key to achieving this objective.

The Masterplan presents a series of ambitious proposals, transforming this area into a bustling town centre waterfront, dominated by people and boats, as opposed to asphalt and cars. This can be achieved through the comprehensive approach to planning the area, including high quality public realm, mixed used development and an innovative approach to car parking.

Within this context, the Castle and Sailing Club can be complemented with a series of other facilities and attractions.



### 4.3.2 Carrickfergus Castle



Carrickfergus Castle is widely regarded as one of the island's finest examples of an intact Norman castle. Its impressive fortifications are a nationally important landmark and tourist attraction. The continued conservation of the Castle and its success as an attraction are fundamentally linked to the Shared Vision for Carrickfergus Town Centre.

At present, conflicting demands are placed on the castle, including it operating as a visitor attraction, information office, shop and venue for functions. All of these uses are important to Carrickfergus and should therefore be encouraged to grow and develop accordingly. However, the physical confines of this historic monument mean that Carrickfergus Castle is unable to adapt sufficiently to accommodate them (e.g. industrial kitchens, electrical installations etc).

It is therefore proposed to develop a new Visitor and Arts Centre in the neighbouring car park, so to relieve Carrickfergus Castle of the pressures major events such as weddings and conferences entail. This in turn will enable the castle to be further developed as a first class visitor attraction, allowing for excavation, restoration and the reduction of historically inappropriate features.

Amongst these proposals, a maintenance project has been identified to replace the roof of the main castle tower. This presents an excellent opportunity to deliver public access to the rooftop, therefore giving visitors panoramic views across the town centre and Belfast Lough.



As also identified through analysis, it is vital to Carrickfergus that the Castle and Town Centre are physically connected in a more significant manner, so that the social and economic benefits enjoyed by each entity can be shared.

Currently tourists who visit the Castle rarely venture into the town. The masterplan proposes to reduce the width of the Marine Highway in this location. This will enable a public realm project to take place in this area, thus greatly improving pedestrian connectivity across this road, as well as the setting of the Castle. Connectivity will be further improved by the design of a new stairway to the Castle, leading directly from its front gate to the road crossing point. This structure must be very carefully designed to complement the castle without comprising its historic integrity.

Potential also exists to reduce in height mounds of grass to the north west of the castle gate (image right). These currently obstruct views from the High Street and the Harbour. Their reduction, subject to detailed archaeological examination, would greatly enhance the sense of connectivity between the historic core and waterfront area. Public realm must be used to tie these elements together, also providing the opportunity to create a setting for the historic gun emplacements located there.



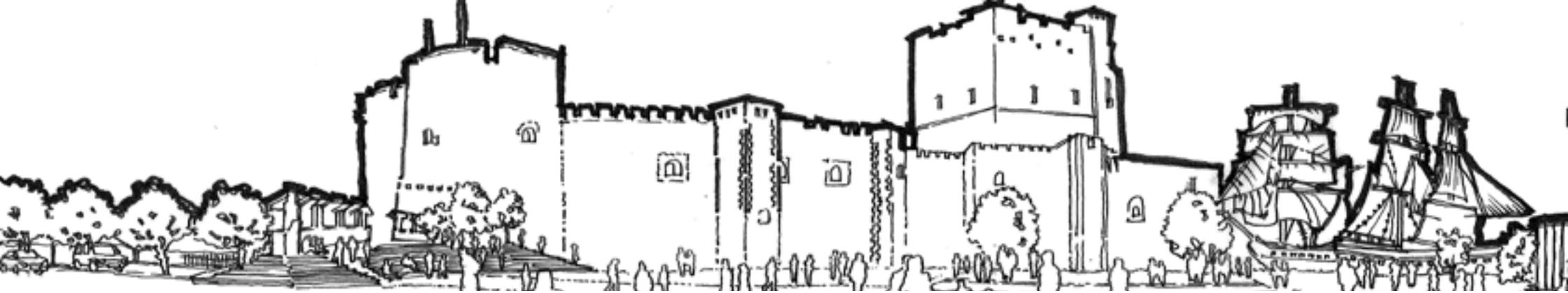


### 4.3.3 Castle Esplanade and the Visitor and Arts Centre

It is proposed to develop a major civic square (or Esplanade) and a landmark Arts and Visitor Centre on the site of the current Harbour Car Park. This would greatly improve the setting of the castle, while creating new outdoor and indoor space for a range of events and activities. This would in turn improve the Castle as a tourist attraction, by relocating functions and events that presently compromise the visitor experience.



The harbour car park next to Carrickfergus Castle is popular due to its central location and lack of charges. However, as with all large surface car parks, it is unattractive and greatly compromises the historic setting of the Castle and harbour. Car Parking would therefore be accommodated beneath the proposed square or as part of adjacent waterfront development sites. In addition, the car park has been an increasingly popular venue for events, including the 2007 BBC Proms in the Park.



The Esplanade should be constructed using natural stone materials so to complement the Castle, with an emphasis on quality of design and workmanship. Access to the pier, harbour and water's edge should be facilitated, possibly through the use of large terraced steps and seating. Potential exists to bring water closer to the foot of the castle, therefore accentuating the drama of its location. The space must be designed in a manner that accommodates a variety of events and activities, both large and small, day and night. This would involve limiting the use of permanent structures and integrating lighting and underground infrastructure for use at major events.

The Visitor and Arts Centre presents Carrickfergus with an exciting opportunity to create a landmark building of architectural significance.

However, due to the sensitivity of its setting, the building must be designed to respect the castle and harbour. This will include awareness of views from the Belfast Road, therefore requiring the building to be partially underground and no higher than 1.5 or 2 storeys in height. The building will be required to have good linkage to and from the castle, so ensuring that visitors can move easily between them.

Within the building a number of uses could be accommodated, with flexibility between them a desirable feature. A theatre would form the centre piece of the development, with striking views to the castle. Function rooms, visitor information facilities, as well as kitchens and public conveniences would also be required.

Potential also exists to seamlessly integrate the building with the public space, therefore allowing its roof to be used as terracing for tourism and events.

The importance of this site is such that the design quality of both the Visitor and Arts Centre and the Esplanade are of paramount importance. Potential exists to hold an international design competition for this project, therefore attracting world class architects and landscape architects to participate.



#### 4.3.4 Carrickfergus Harbour

The harbour at Carrickfergus is a central component of the town's history and character, dating back to the earliest settlement and famed as the landing point of King William III. Use of the harbour by boats has been limited in the recent past, however newly installed pontoons seek to facilitate greater activity.

The harbour, its piers and adjacent lands are a major asset for Carrickfergus and scope exists for it to be carefully developed for the benefit to the town and its residents. This would require comprehensive planning and management to develop a vibrant waterfront area, that has an appropriate physical relationship with the Castle and the town.

The potential for mooring larger historic vessels in Carrickfergus Harbour should be actively pursued. A replica of the John Paul Jones' USS Ranger or its victim HMS Drake, for example, would provide another tourist attraction and potential facilities for a floating museum or restaurant. This could be complemented by onshore development of a maritime museum

Potential exists to implement a retaining sill at the entrance to the harbour, therefore maintaining high tide levels at all times. A significant project that would require reinforcing the impermeability of Alexandra Pier, this would greatly improve the character of the harbour, its value as a setting for development and its potential use for small craft, rowing boats and canoes.

The Alexandra Pier itself requires environmental improvements to improve walking surfaces, lighting and interpretation. Potential also exists to introduce two small buildings on the pier to accommodate uses such as an ice cream parlour, cafe or gallery. The 1960s radar station at the head of Alexandra Pier is a protected structure, yet has been for some time in state of disrepair. Urgent restoration of this unusual building is required, with its development as a tourism attraction the most likely end result.

### 4.3.5 Waterfront Development



Lands along the western side of Carrickfergus Harbour were reclaimed for industrial purposes in the early 20th Century. They are now occupied by a number of uses, including supermarket, cinema, nightclub, hotel, restaurants, apartments, marina, sailing club and boat yard. It is proposed that a major redevelopment scheme takes place on this peninsula, retaining all existing land uses and adding others, so to comprehensively enhance the quality of this environment and creating a new, vibrant waterfront quarter.

The masterplan for this area is centred on an extension of Davy Street from the North, to form a spine road to the end of the peninsula. Either side of this new street, a series of perimeter blocks would be developed, with active frontage on the outside and car parking on the interior.

The result of such development is a more traditional urban layout of streets and spaces, greatly contrasting the car park dominated environment that currently exists there. Within these blocks, existing uses can be accommodated, whilst also introducing harbour side restaurants, apartments, offices and other uses. Critical to the design of this area will be avoiding the creation of blank walls, fences and car parks that currently blight the area. Car parking would consist of multi-storey car parks concealed behind development. Heights of proposed buildings must be managed to around 3 storeys, so to avoid negatively impacting the setting of the castle.

Another key structuring element would be a linear park or greenway, extending northwards along the route of the former tramway.

Along the harbour's edge, the opportunity exists to develop cafes, restaurants and bars, tying in with the hotel, apartments and other uses. At the end of this stretch, a 2.5 storey high viewing tower can provide a destination for visitors and views across the Lough. Importantly, the opportunity must be taken to ensure full pedestrian access around the harbour.

Located at the southern head of the peninsula are Carrickfergus Sailing Club and Carrickfergus Boat Yard. Both facilities are key to the existing and future viability of this area and in realising the Shared Vision for Carrickfergus. However, both facilities are also in need of improvement, enabling them to function more effectively and develop their operations.

The potential establishment of a Centre of Sailing Excellence at the Sailing Club has been recognised for some time. This presents a fantastic opportunity for the club and for Carrickfergus and should be actively pursued. However, key to the regeneration of the waterfront will be to ensure that this centre is designed in a manner to benefit all. For example, locating a building behind high fencing and surrounded by car parking would add little to this part of the town.

Another challenge is accommodating the boat yard, which is intrinsically linked with the functioning of the sailing club and marina. Supporting this business will require expansion of its facilities, including increased land for storage of boats. However, by its nature, the boat yard is an industrial facility that would not sit well next to apartments, bars or a hotel envisaged for the harbour.

The masterplan therefore proposes a layout for this area that balances all of these complex issues and requirements. The Sailing Centre of Excellence would be located in proximity to the viewing tower and hotel, with scope to share facilities accordingly. The newly proposed slipway would be located in front of the centre at the head of the extended Davy's Street, with a public area for spectators. Further west, the boat yard would be relocated, with an area of reclaimed land to provide shared storage space for the yard and sailing centre. A new internal space with water based access for working on vessels would be created. To protect adjacent properties from any noise pollution, it would be shielded by offices belonging to the boat yard and other maritime businesses.

Pedestrian linkage to railway station

Mixed Use development incorporating public car park

Pedestrian Linkage with Tesco's

High quality streetscape

Mixed used development with active street frontage

Improved access to Gasworks Museum

Community Greenway linking to marina





## 4.4 Irish Quarter

Irish Quarter is another key area of Carrickfergus Town Centre, with a distinct history and character associated with it. For the purposes of this masterplan, its approximate boundaries are defined as Davy's Street to the West, Albert Road to the East and Irish Quarter South to the South and the Tesco supermarket to the North. At present the area suffers from a relatively low quality of environment, blighted by vacant buildings and restricted space for pedestrians.

The masterplan addresses this area through a range of development and public realm proposals. Vacant sites must be developed in an appropriate fashion, with scope for residential, office and some retail uses. Provision for a car park is also earmarked to the north of Irish Quarter West, serving the town centre shops, churches and other facilities.

The existence of Tesco in this area presents another challenge, due to the sheer size of this development in relation to adjacent properties. Whilst its existence brings significant economic activity to the town, efforts are required to improve the physical integration of this store with the town centre as a whole.

Another key component of Irish Quarter is the Gasworks museum. The Gasworks Museum requires enhancement to raise its profile and accessibility in relation to the town centre. The potential to develop a new access from Irish Quarter South should be explored, therefore establishing a stronger connection to the proposed Visitor and Arts Centre area.

Public realm enhancements in Irish Quarter will be key to its regeneration. These should include the widening of pavements, provision of improved lighting, street furniture and paving materials.

New pedestrian connections with Tesco should be implemented to create direct routes attracting shoppers to visit the store and the town centre by foot.

Another potential connection could exist to Carrickfergus Central Primary School associated with any future redevelopment of this building. In doing so opportunities for greater linkage with the railway station should also be explored.



Water sports facility and pier

Restored Fisherman's Quay

Linkage of parks via new rail bridge

Play facilities

Frontage onto Shaftsbury Park

Reduced Marine Highway

Lawns

Enhanced beach

Gardens and Memorial

Kiosk and toilet facilities

Joymount Court urban space  
with car parking

SCOTCH QUARTER

JOYMOUNT

MARINE HIGHWAY

## 4.5 Scotch Quarter

### 4.5.1 Introduction

The Scotch Quarter, including Joymount, is located to the east of the historic core. For the purposes of the Masterplan, its boundaries are defined as the Town Hall to the west and Fisherman's Quay to the East, and the railway line to the North and Belfast Lough to the south. Scotch Quarter centres around two large parks in the area, Shaftsbury Park and Marine Gardens.



### 4.5.2 Existing Parks and Beach

Shaftsbury Park is popular with local people, but due to its location, is hidden from the rest of the town. Overtime, efforts are required to connect this park with adjacent areas including Marine Gardens and the Leisure Centre to the north.

By constructing a new railway bridge, potential exists to join Shaftsbury Park with the grounds of the leisure centre and football club, therefore forming a larger park. This would also create better pedestrian linkages to the town centre from the North West. The park would also be greatly improved by the development of frontages onto the park from properties to the south and west. The setting of the walls in this area should also be enhanced, with scope to relocate the bowling club to improved facilities elsewhere, thus enabling better access to the walls.

Gardens in front of Joymount Presbyterian Church have scope to be enhanced, creating a horticultural showpiece in the centre of the town.

Marine Gardens is an extensive park built on land reclaimed through construction of the Marine Highway. It consists of large areas of lawn, gardens, a war memorial and car parking, used on a regular basis for market stalls. Analysis concluded that this park had scope for significant improvement and potential to become a far more popular destination. The proposed narrowing of the Marine Highway and associated speed restrictions would have a very positive affect on the quality and safety of this space, connecting it more directly with the lough shore. Redesign of the park should also involve flexible spaces for events, potentially in conjunction with car parking at Joymount Court.



Potential for a winter ice rink in this area could be explored. A good quality play area is another key requirement of this park, making it more attractive to families both locally and from further afield. Marine Gardens would also benefit from a small, well designed building in which to house public toilets and an ice cream kiosk.

The Masterplan proposes that this park be the subject of an international design competition, so ensuring the best design quality and raising the profile of the space significantly.

The existing beach along this stretch should be the subject of enhancements, therefore encouraging greater use by residents and visitors. This would include a clean up operation and potential remodelling to improve sand quality, subject to ecological advice.

### **4.5.3 Fisherman's Quay**

Fisherman's Quay is a historic stone pier that defines the western extent of Scotch Quarter. Through the Masterplan, it is proposed to provide formalised facilities in support of activities that currently take place there, including water sports and fishing.

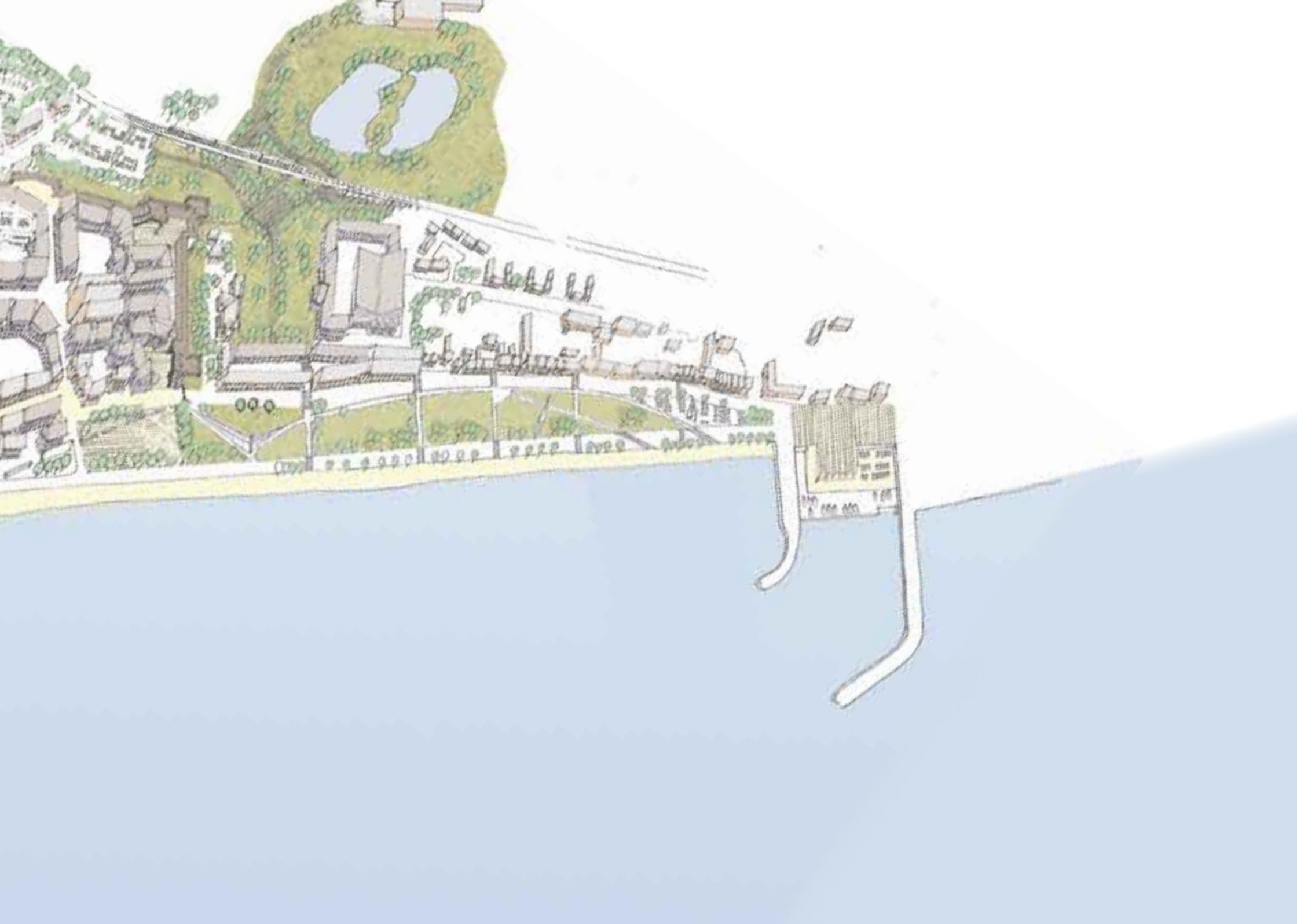
This would include the development of secondary pier for the launching of jet skis, water skiers etc. As part of this enhancement of Fisherman's Quay, a one storey building is proposed, constructed at beach level so to respect lough views from neighbouring properties. This could house water sports club facilities, equipment hire and spectator facilities for competitive events.

### **4.5.4 Kilroot Power Station**

The power station at Kilroot is an important part of Northern Ireland's energy infrastructure. However for Carrickfergus Town Centre, it has a considerable visual impact, especially in relation to areas popular with tourists, such as the Castle.

Efforts to reduce this impact must therefore be explored in partnership with its operators. This could include painting of the building and chimney stack to blend into the skyline and landscape more effectively. Any longer term plans to develop the facility must take into account the need to reduce visual impact on the town centre.





# 5

## Town Centre Policies



## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter identifies a series of key policies by which the regeneration of the town centre should be guided. They are not intended to replace existing planning guidance, however, are drawn from urban design and regeneration best practice.

This chapter contains the following policies:

- Mixed Use Town Centre
- Design Guidelines
- Public Realm, Walking and Cycling
- Signage and Interpretation
- Lighting and Evening Economy
- Promotional Marketing and Branding
- Festivals, Events and Activities
- Transportation
- Car Parking Strategy



## 5.2 Mixed Use Town Centre

Key to the future sustainability of Carrickfergus Town Centre will be its ability to support a mix of uses. This is an important component of successful town centres, directly contributing to the physical, social and economic vitality of a place.

The adjacent analysis of existing landuses shows that the town centre is currently dominated by retail and community services, with relatively few offices and residences within its core. Significant numbers of vacant and derelict properties also exist. Analysis of upper floors within the Walled Town indicates that a high proportion are currently vacant or put to limited use, suggesting that capacity for greater useage exists within the town centre.

Historic reasons for such change are multifaceted and reflected in town centres across Northern Ireland.

They include a decline of town centre shopping linked to the development of shopping centres and retail parks located outside of traditional centres (eg Abbey Centre). A greater ease of movement between settlements, (eg links to Belfast City Centre) and the depopulation of town centres during the Troubles. The result was a general downward trend in the quality of town centre environments.

It is therefore proposed that use of the town centre is intensified to complement existing retail and community services. This would include the refurbishment of buildings to support office and residential units on their upper storeys. This 'old fashioned' approach of 'Living Above the Shops' helps to add vitality to a town centre by generating activity at evenings and weekends. Town centre living is likely to attract younger and older members of the community.

Shopping is a core activity of Carrickfergus Town Centre and must be supported.



The recent and proposed expansion of supermarkets (Tesco and Sainsbury's) however, has exacerbated trading conditions for the town's indigenous retailers.

It is therefore proposed that Carrickfergus Town Centre seeks to define a clear retail identity that complements, rather than competes, with these stores. This would be focussed on the town's current strengths of local produce, a leisure based shopping experience and a friendly, community centred environment. Independent retail would also be supported by the introduction of compatible high street chains.

Consideration must also be given to the impact of rates on the viability of town centre businesses.





## 5.3 Design Guidelines

The architectural, urban and landscape design of new development in the town centre must positively contribute to its quality and character. Carrickfergus, like town centres across Northern Ireland, has suffered from new development that was insensitive to its surroundings. The result has been a poor quality of environment and negative contribution to a sense of place.

The Masterplan proposes that a detailed design guide be produced for Carrickfergus Town Centre, developing on the existing Conservation Design Supplement. This guide will be of particular importance in proximity to the town's important listed buildings, such as the Castle, St Nicholas Church and Town Hall. All buildings should conform to these guidelines, with the exception of specific landmarks, such as the proposed Visitor and Arts Centre or pavilions associated with the Marine Gardens. Guidance should not, however, preclude contemporary architecture and creative design solutions.

Building heights in Carrickfergus require careful control due to the existence of the important landmarks. This must, however, be balanced with the commercial viability of development.

Within the Walled Town, all buildings should be of two or three storeys in height and vary between buildings, thus representative of the existing character (see left). Existing one storey buildings in the town centre should be replaced. In the waterfront area, heights should range between 2.5 to 4 storeys, with scope for variation also beneficial. Views to and from the Castle must be considered within this context, but avoiding overly low density development.

All buildings in the town centre should be built to the front of plots, with active frontages of doors and windows facing onto public areas.

Private outdoor space of gardens and service yards should be located to the rear of properties, well away from public areas.

Building materials should consist predominantly of painted render and in places, exposed brick or natural stone. Colours should be carefully selected to complement surrounding buildings.

Rooflines should be pitched and slated, with landmark buildings the only exception.

Windows should be based on the traditional style and proportions of sash windows. These and other features such as drainage pipes and doors, should be made of historically appropriate materials, avoiding the use of PVC.

Forboding security shutters should be replaced with reinforced glass and shutters behind shop displays. This will encourage window shopping and contribute more positively to the street environment.



## 5.4 Public Realm

Public Realm is a term used to describe publicly accessible outdoor areas, such as streets, squares, parks and car parks. The way in which the public realm is designed and managed makes a major contribution to successful places. Conversely, poor public realm can greatly affect the use and appearance of a place, impacting upon the economic viability and safety of adjacent areas.

Carrickfergus has a mixed quality of public realm, with its town centre streets in particular need of urgent improvement. As experienced elsewhere, its 1980s concrete pavers have failed to stand the test of time and now look particularly tired and shabby.

Public realm must be seen as a long term investment in a place and not a quick fix. Older towns and cities such as Edinburgh, Dublin and Bath have examples of stone paving that has been in situ for hundreds of years and there is no reason why Carrickfergus should be any different.

Successful public realm requires good quality materials, design, workmanship and maintenance.

Materials should be of good quality and specified to complement surrounding spaces and buildings. Town centre footpaths and narrow streets should be paved using natural stone, such as yorkstone, caithness flags and granite setts. Roads, large areas of car park and footpaths outside of the town centre should be uniformly surfaced with the same specification of asphalt and / or tarmacadam.

Street furniture, such as benches, bollards, bins and lighting, must also be of a high quality and coordinated across the town centre. Mock heritage styles should be avoided in lieu of simple, yet contemporary designs that will not become outdated quickly. Bespoke designed street furniture, as opposed to 'off the shelf' products will help to reinforce the unique identity of the town.

Trees and other plants must also be of the highest quality, sourced from respected nurseries. In Carrickfergus, plants must be suited to its maritime climate.

For consistency, a palette of town centre public realm materials should be established, defining appropriate colour combinations.

The design of public realm should be undertaken by professionally qualified landscape architects, who input at all stages of development. The design of public realm must consider the range of potential uses of a space and be designed with flexibility and ease of management in mind. Seating areas must be carefully located with respect to sunlight and adjacent uses.

Public realm should be implemented to the highest industry standards, using specialist landscape contractors. A commitment to sufficient maintenance levels must be established at the planning stage.

## 5.5 Signage and Interpretation

Signage is an important means by which the town centre can communicate with local people and visitors. It must be easy to understand and contribute positively to the wider urban environment.

In Carrickfergus, signage needs to perform several different functions. Orientational signage will help people to navigate their way around the town centre. Advertising signage will inform potential customers of retail produce. Interpretative signage should communicate the history and culture of the town, used in association with public art and other interpretative measures.

Care must be taken to coordinate the provision of signage across Carrickfergus Town Centre. Several plans are currently in place by different organisations. These must be integrated with one another, so to contribute positively to the town centre as a whole.





## 5.6 Lighting

Lighting presents Carrickfergus with an exciting opportunity. If planned and designed correctly, it should add to the safety of outdoor areas and highlight the town's many landmarks and historic features.

Lighting quality will be critical to the success of Carrickfergus Town Centre. It will significantly contribute to real and perceived levels of safety and extend times of economic activity into the evenings and winter afternoons.

Light levels, colours and fittings should be specified by professional lighting designers and coordinated throughout the town centre.

Lighting could also be used as a form of entertainment in Carrickfergus. Son et Lumiere shows such as those seen in French medieval towns, can be used to share the history and culture of the town, attracting high numbers of visitors in the process.

## 5.7 Promotional Marketing and Branding

Promotional Marketing has a vital role to play in achieving the Shared Vision for Carrickfergus Town Centre. It must therefore be developed in parallel with other improvements as outlined by the Masterplan.

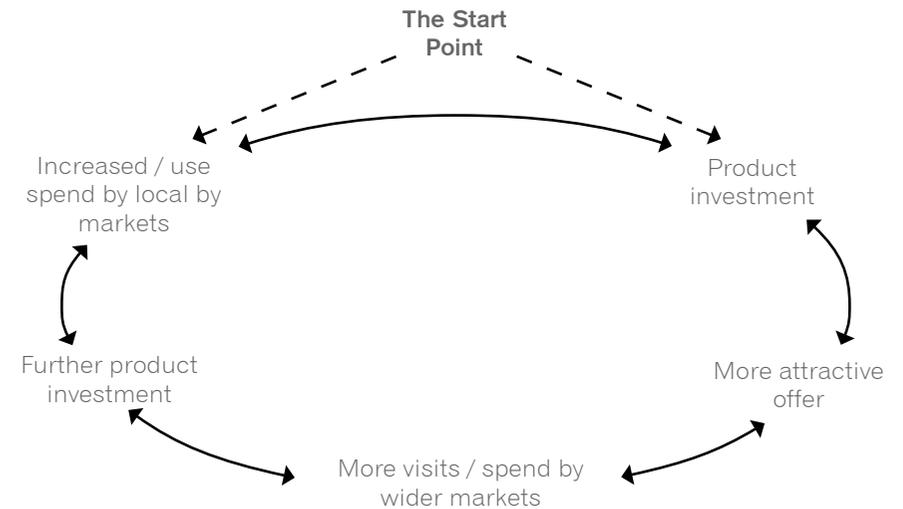
A Promotional Plan has been developed to accompany the Masterplan and is concerned with the development of the visitor economy in Carrickfergus. In this context the definition of a visitor is far wider than that of a traditional tourist and covers a range of different groups using the town centre – the essential element is that the visit is discretionary – i.e. the visitor is choosing to visit Carrickfergus, as opposed to somewhere else.

The aims of the promotional plan are to:

1. Attract and retain visits and spend – directly from the target audience.
2. Improve perceptions of the area.
3. Develop pride in Carrickfergus among residents and, through increased knowledge and usage of the assets, contribute to improving the quality of life of residents of the town.

Underpinning these aims is effectively the creation of a virtuous circle that will ultimately drive the creation of a visitor economy and create real economic additionality (see virtuous circle above)

Understanding potential markets and meeting their needs is a key aspect of promotional activity. In relation to Carrickfergus, these can be categorised as Locals, Day Visitors, Leisure Tourists and Business and Event Visitors. The full Promotional Plan and a more detailed analysis of markets is located in Appendix D - Promotional Marketing Plan\*.



The Promotional Plan proposes a number of activities, including a Discover your Doorstep campaign, encouraging local people to use the town centre more often, and a Tourism Campaign, continuing promotional work with Belfast Visitor Convention Bureau, the Causeway Coast and Glens Tourism Partnership and the NITB Coast and Causeway Route programme. Enhancing the online presence of Carrickfergus will be another important element.

The development of an instantly recognisable brand for Carrickfergus is another key feature. Developed and tested professionally, this must reflect the unique characteristics of the town and be used consistently throughout the town and on all publicity.

\* [www.dsdni.gov.uk](http://www.dsdni.gov.uk) / [www.carrickfergus.org](http://www.carrickfergus.org)



## 5.8 Festivals, Events and Activities

Carrickfergus has considerable potential to build upon its existing programme of events and activities, therefore bringing increased vibrancy and economic benefit to the town centre. Through the Masterplan, a comprehensive enhancement of indoor and outdoor events facilities is proposed, including a new landmark Arts and Visitor Centre and a range of flexible civic spaces, including the Esplanade, Marine Gardens and Market Square. Together, these present a diverse range of spaces suited to a variety of events. Large concerts, festivals and sporting competitions should be complemented by smaller events and activities, helping to ensure that activity is spread to all parts of the town centre.

If developed correctly, a rich and varied calendar of town centre events can make a significant economic contribution to Carrickfergus Town Centre. A close working relationship with local businesses must be established to fully realise this potential.

For example, local hotels stand to benefit from major events spanning a weekend or longer, whilst cafes, bars and restaurants could benefit from street theatre or guided tours. Continued opportunities for private sponsorship by local businesses should also be pursued.

Consideration should be given to the development of an annual festival which is unique to Carrickfergus. This should be carefully planned to avoid competing with other large events in surrounding areas. A theme should be based on the unique attributes of Carrickfergus, such as its medieval or maritime heritage.

At present, a weekly market takes place at the Marine Gardens. This has potential to be developed as a greater attraction to locals and visitors alike. Consideration should be given to a programme of differently themed markets located around the town centre.

Farmer's Markets, Antiques Fairs etc could also take place at a newly designed Market Square, along the High Street or at the Castle Esplanade.

Like many towns in Northern Ireland, Carrickfergus commemorates the Battle of the Boyne on the 12th of July each year. Efforts must continue to ensure that this is an inclusive event, suited to young families and welcoming of all sections of the community. This should include a coherent strategy on the use of flags, agreed with all major stakeholders in the town centre.

Essential to a successful programme of events will be the coordination and partnership of different organisations in the town, including Carrickfergus Borough Council, Carrickfergus Chamber of Commerce and Trade and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board. Organisation, programming and promotion must be jointly coordinated to maximise the benefit for the town as a whole.

## 5.9 Transportation

### 5.9.1 Introduction

The ability of people to access Carrickfergus Town Centre easily is an important aspect of its functioning, both now and in the future. To realise the Shared Vision, this need must be provided for in the context of the historic character of the town and quality of its environment, the majority of which is experienced on foot. Key to this will be achieving a balanced transport provision, involving walking, cycling, public transport and motorised transport.

This section summarises transportation proposals, further detail of which can be found in Appendix C.



### 5.9.2 Active Travel (Walking and Cycling)

Providing greater opportunities for the people of Carrickfergus to walk and cycle to the town centre is a significant contribution towards providing a stronger and more dynamic town centre. Key linkages include access from the Irish Quarter, Carrickfergus Rail Station and from the residential areas to the north of the town centre. The Masterplan also proposes linear parks or greenways, linking in Shaftsbury Park and the harbour area.



### 5.9.3 Public Transport

Carrickfergus benefits from good rail links and high quality bus links to Belfast. The Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan identifies a number of significant enhancements which are included in the masterplan including improved inter-urban rail service, better integration between bus and rail, development of a Quality Bus Corridor to Belfast.

The masterplan recommends a number of further localised transport improvements which include a local shuttle bus between the town centre and residential areas, improved facilities at the rail station and increased park and ride facilities for commuters.



### 5.9.4 Motorised Transport

Traffic volumes on the approaches to Carrickfergus are high and significant investment is being provided to upgrade the A2 in the vicinity of Greenisland to provide a continuous 4 lane provision to Carrickfergus. On the approaches to Carrickfergus these traffic volumes start to dissipate through leaving the A2 to access a range of alternative routes serving the main residential areas to the north of the town.

The Irish Gate roundabout is a significant traffic junction which measured for the purposes of the Masterplan, operates at or around capacity for a significant proportion of the day. However, traffic flows on the Marine Highway east of Irish Gate roundabout are significantly reduced.

This therefore provides the opportunity to reduce the Marine Highway in width at key sections to reduce the impact of this road on the surrounding walled town, castle and Marine Gardens. A technical assessment of the impact of the proposed reduction indicated that:

- The reduced road width could comfortably accommodate current traffic flows;
- The reduced road width would reduce pedestrian crossing times and any associated impact on traffic
- The Irish Street junction would be unaffected by the proposed narrowing.

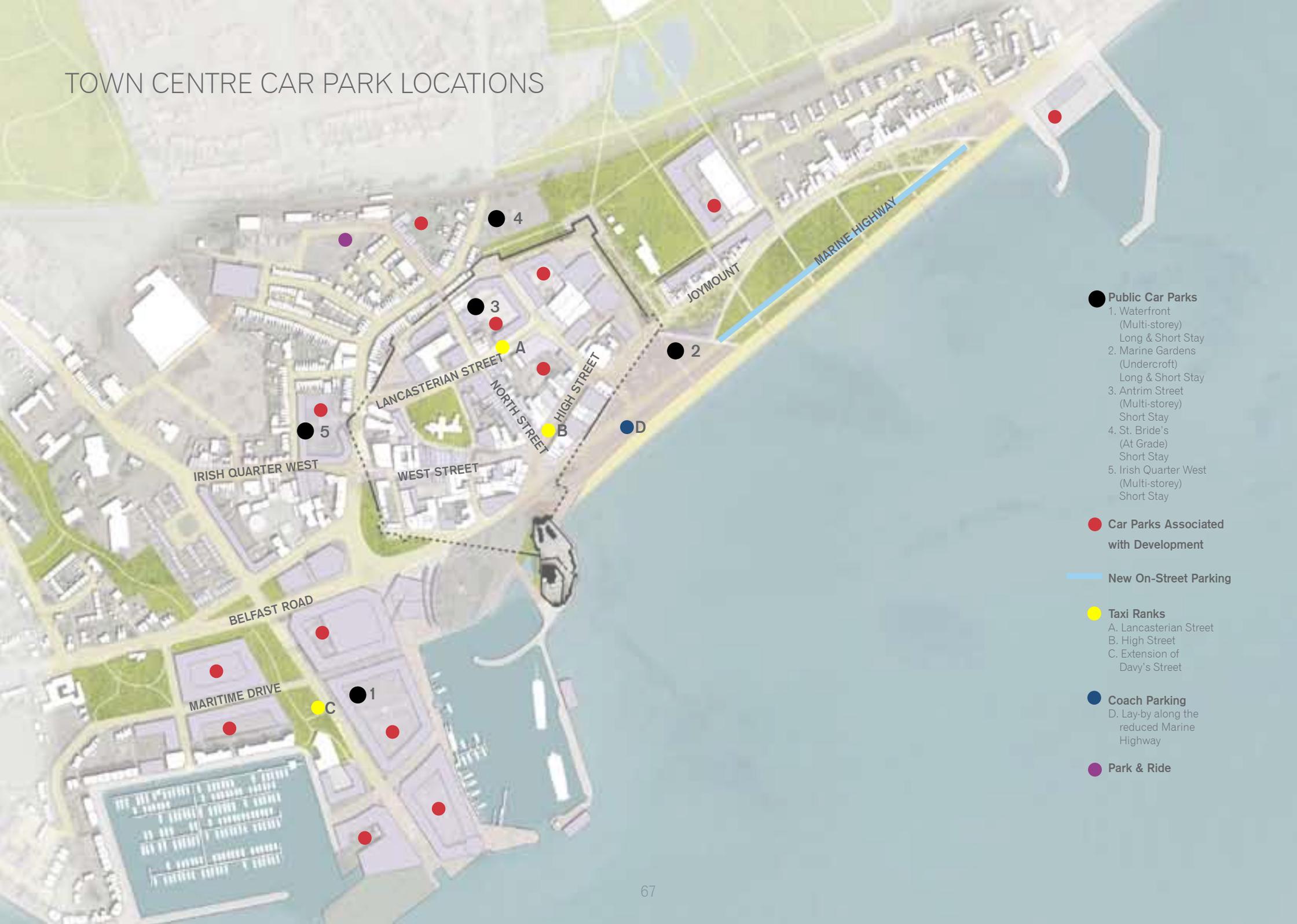
Other key transport measures within the masterplan include:

- Strong support for the delivery of the Carrickfergus Spine Road to further reduce the significance and severance of traffic on the Marine Highway;
- A reduction of speed limit on the Marine Highway to 30mph to reflect the urban nature of the route;
- Narrowing of the Marine Highway to two through lanes from the Victoria Road junction to north and east of Carrickfergus Castle;
- Maintenance of 4 lanes on the approach to the Irish Street junction;

And longer term proposals to:

- Replace the Irish Street Roundabout with a traffic signal junction and pedestrian crossing and removal of access to the Harbour area.
- Provide new access road into the Harbour area at Davy's Street forming a traffic signal junction
- Install traffic signal control at Marine Highway / Rogers Quay junction (inc. full pedestrian crossing facilities)

# TOWN CENTRE CAR PARK LOCATIONS



- Public Car Parks**
  1. Waterfront (Multi-storey) Long & Short Stay
  2. Marine Gardens (Undercroft) Long & Short Stay
  3. Antrim Street (Multi-storey) Short Stay
  4. St. Bride's (At Grade) Short Stay
  5. Irish Quarter West (Multi-storey) Short Stay
  
- Car Parks Associated with Development**
  
- New On-Street Parking**
  
- Taxi Ranks**
  - A. Lancasterian Street
  - B. High Street
  - C. Extension of Davy's Street
  
- Coach Parking**
  - D. Lay-by along the reduced Marine Highway
  
- Park & Ride**

## 5.10 Car Parking Strategy

Another key component of access to Carrickfergus Town Centre is the provision of car parking, an issue that residents in Carrickfergus feel strongly about. The masterplan reflects the need to provide an appropriate level of parking but to seek to reduce the physical impact of parking on sensitive areas.

This is achieved through the application of a parking management strategy which seeks to reduce long term parking within the town centre, particularly within the castle walls and displace long term parking within a close walking distance at the edge of the town centre. Short term parking would be maintained to improve and contribute to the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre.

Within the town centre, reduced parking standards for residential development can be achieved giving the high accessibility of the area. The key benefit is to reduce the impact of parking provision in the Walled Town, consistent with the principles of PPS3 - Access and Parking.

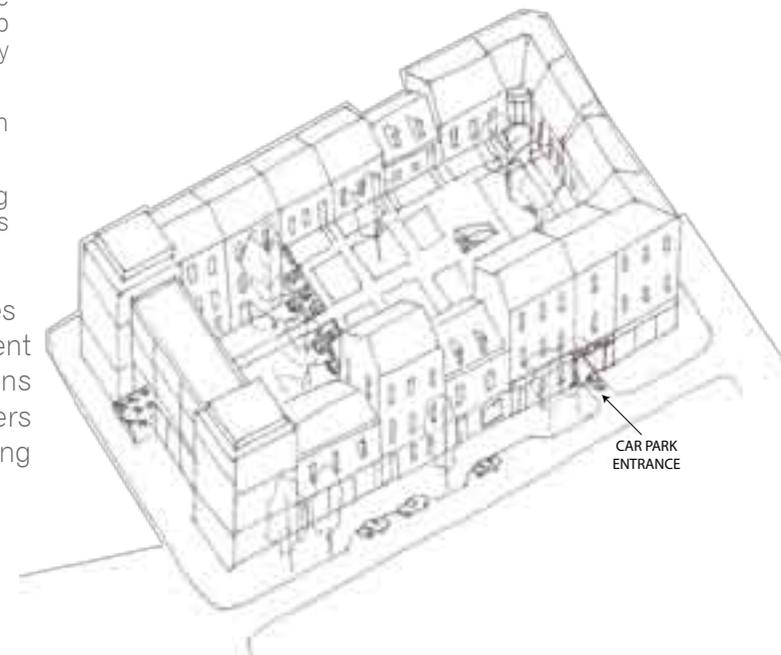
Key parking measures within the masterplan include:

- The replacement of lost parking and provision of appropriate parking (to Roads Service requirements) for new land uses, resulting in an overall uplift of parking serving Carrickfergus;
- The displacement of long term parking to the edges of the town centre;
- The provision of a number of large public car parks, sensitively designed in wrap round building form and where necessary with a multi-storey aspect (right);
- Improved signing to car parking areas on the approaches to the city;
- The maintenance of a parking management strategy which ensures that short stay parking is not abused.

In its entirety, around 3200 parking spaces are required to support new development proposals. These are shown at the locations on the adjacent plan, the detailed numbers for which are provided in the Car Parking Strategy located in Appendix C.



Appropriate servicing facilities are required in association with new development and existing facilities, which must be maintained or enhanced. The need for one or more taxi stands at key areas of the town has also been recognised. The appropriate locations for these elements should be identified through stakeholder consultation, as part of a comprehensive public realm scheme.



# 6

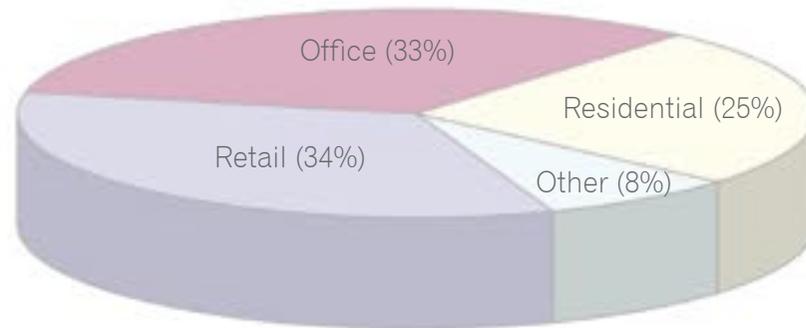
## Delivering the Masterplan

## 6.1 Introduction

The Carrickfergus Town Centre Masterplan sets out a bold vision for the future of Carrickfergus. The plan is ambitious, reflective of the town's existent potential, the issues it currently faces and the ambitions of its various stakeholders. However, the Masterplan will only be of use if its proposals become more than ideas and translate to live projects on the ground.

Delivery of this Masterplan will be challenging, requiring significant resources and a high level of coordination between organisations from the public and private sector.

At the time of writing, the United Kingdom and Ireland were in the early stages of recovery from the deepest economic recession in recent history. This inevitably, will affect the speed with which the proposals contained within this plan can be delivered. However, it is vital that Carrickfergus drives its regeneration agenda forward, to address key issues and attract future investment as economic conditions improve.



138,500 m<sup>2</sup> - Total Area of Proposed Development

£228.64m - Total Cost of Proposed Development



## 6.2 Action Plan for Delivery

The Action Plan for Delivery (see right) organises Masterplan proposals as described in Chapters 4 and 5, into specific regeneration initiatives. The Action Plan identifies the Priority of each project in relation to its regenerative value, a timeframe projected for delivery, an approximate cost of the works and the Delivery Agents and Stakeholders who require to be involved.

This Action Plan provides the basis for managing delivery of the masterplan. It must be viewed as a 'live document' and be constantly updated to reflect progress and other changes in circumstance.

### Key to Abbreviations

CBC	Carrickfergus Borough Council
CDC	Carrickfergus Development Company
DCAL	Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure
DENI	Department of Education
DSHSSPNI	Department of Health
DRD	Department of Regional Development (inc Roads)
DSD	Department for Social Development
HC	The Heritage Council
NIEA	Northern Ireland Environment Agency (DOE)
NIFRS	Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service
Priv	Private Sector
PS	Planning Service (DOE)

## Carrickfergus Town Centre Masterplan: Action Plan for Delivery

Regeneration Initiative		Description	Priority	Timeframe	Cost (£)	Delivery Agent	Stakeholders
A	Walled Town Property Redevelopment	Appropriate redevelopment of vacant and derelict town centre properties, introducing new town centre uses.	H	M	22m	Priv	CDC, CBC, DOE, NIEA,
B	Walled Town Public Realm	Comprehensive upgrade of public realm, using high quality materials and craftsmanship	H	S	7.7m	DSD	CBC, CDC,DRD, Priv, NIEA,
C	DeCourcy Centre / Library Redevelopment	Reshaping of the De Courcy Shopping Centre to establish retail via covered streets and spaces	M	L	15.8m	Priv	CBC, CDC, NIEA, DSHSSPNI, NIFRS
D	Town Wall Conservation	Conservation of the Town Walls, coupled with improved access and historic interpretation	H	S	-	NIEA	CBC, NITB, Priv, HC
E	Shaftsbury Park & Environs	Strengthened connection of Shaftsbury Park with adjacent spaces and buildings	M	S	13m	CBC	CDC, DSD, Priv, NIEA
F	Marine Gardens	Redesign of Marine Gardens and beach to become a public park of national significance	H	S	4.7m	CBC	CDC, Priv,
G	Fishermans Quay	Restoration of Fisherman's Quay with new facilities for water sports and fishing	H	M	4.7m	CBC	CDC, NIEA, Priv
H	Irish Quarter West	Regeneration of Irish Quarter West, including infill development and public realm	H	M	31.5m	CBC	CDC, DENI, Priv
I	Marine Highway Public Realm	Reduction of the Marine Highway in width to create a street	H	S	2.4m	DRD	CBC, CDC, DSD, NIEA
J	Castle Access Projects	Improved access arrangements to, from and within the Castle	M	M	-	NIEA	CBC, CDC, NITB
K	Arts & Visitor Centre	Landmark Arts and Visitor Centre, supporting the Castle and local artists	M	L	20m	CBC	CDC, NIEA
L	Esplanade	Major new 'Esplanade' civic space to create an improved setting to the castle and venue for large events	M	L	10.8m	CBC	CDC, NIEA
M	Waterfront Redevelopment	Extension of Davy Street to introduce a new waterfront environment of streets and spaces	M	L	58.5m	CBC	CDC, DSD, Priv
N	Harbour Regeneration	Restoration and enhancement of the Harbour, to create a vibrant urban waterfront	M	L	6.7m	CBC	CDC, DSD, Priv
O	Sailing Centre & Boatyard	A State of the Art Centre for Sailing Excellence, supported by a modernised Boat Yard facility.	H	S	23m	CBC	CDC, DCAL, DSD, Priv
P	Parking Strategy Implementation	Reorganisation of parking provision across the centre	H	S	7.5m	DRD	CBC, CDC, DSD, Priv
Q	Walled Town Design Guide	Architectural design guidance for all new development	H	S	-	CDC	CBC, DSD, NIEA, Priv
R	Waterfront Development Plan	Detailed plan of waterfront area	H	S	-	DSD	CBC, CDC, Priv,
S	Masterplan Promotion (inc 3D model)	Continued consultation and promotion of the plan	H	S	-	CDC	CBC, DSD,
T	Lighting Plan	Specialist plan detailing location and spec of lighting	M	M	-	CBC	CDC, DRD, DSD, NIEA, Priv

Key: Priority H = High, M = Medium, L = Low. Timescale S= Short (1 - 5 yrs), M = Medium (5 - 10 yrs), L = Long (10 - 15 yrs). All costs approximate, rounded and based on 2010 prices

## 6.3 Prioritisation & Phasing

The Masterplan presents a suite of regeneration projects for delivery over the next 15 - 20 years. Prioritisation and the phasing of their delivery is a critical aspect for a number of reasons.

Firstly some projects will deliver more immediate regeneration benefits than others and should therefore be prioritised accordingly. For example, high profile derelict buildings and public realm in the Walled Town were repeatedly cited as important projects through the course of the masterplan. Efforts must therefore be focussed on delivering such projects expeditiously.

Once delivered, these and other projects can have a catalytic effect on regeneration of the town centre. If carried out to a high quality, they can become symbols of the town's intent, thus giving confidence to others who wish to invest in the centre.

Phasing must also relate to the property market, particularly regarding large projects such as those proposed at the waterfront. The timing of such projects and in particular, their release to the market, needs to be carefully planned to increase the likelihood of commercial viability. Critically for Carrickfergus, preliminary work on large and complex projects should be started early, so that they can be taken forward quickly once the time is right.

As noted earlier in this document, the Masterplan should not be regarded as a fixed blueprint for development. Within the next 10 - 15 years it is inevitable that unforeseen opportunities for investment and regeneration will arise. This could lead to a reprioritisation of projects and the addition of new ones. The need to move quickly in response to opportunities must not, however, result in a departure from the core principles of the Masterplan.

### Potential Catalyst Projects

- Redevelopment of prominent derelict buildings
- Delivery of high quality public realm, including paving, street furniture and lighting
- Conservation of the town wall, including improved access and circulation
- Landmark Arts and Visitor Centre, with adjacent civic space
- Sailing Centre of Excellence and Boatyard

## 6.4 Funding

The approximate cost of delivering the Carrickfergus Town Centre Masterplan has been calculated as £228m. This figure is broken down to a range of projects varying in scale and complexity, to be delivered by the public, private and community sectors.

Public sector organisations including DSD and the Council, as well as others less directly involved with the Masterplan process, must be encouraged to routinely consult the Action Plan when making funding decisions. This will enable opportunities for collaboration on joint or complementary projects to be fully realised. Grant applications from organisations such as the National Lottery are also likely to play an important role in taking the Masterplan forward.

Despite this, much of the Masterplan will be reliant of private sector funding. Efforts must therefore be made to identify and assist potential investors, with the public sector helping to reduce risks where feasible.

## 6.5 Delivery Mechanisms

As masterplan proposals relate to land in public and private ownership, they will require a number of different delivery mechanisms to suit the requirements of each project and their respective stakeholders.

A high number of proposed projects relate to land under one ownership, making the delivery process relatively straight forward. However, it is essential that related projects are coordinated with one another so that wider regeneration benefits can be fully realised. The proposed Design Guide will assist in this process. However, where several landowners have an interest in one area, they must be actively encouraged to collaborate in the production of a detailed development plan. This will provide a mechanism for balancing their requirements and maximising regenerative and commercial benefits.

All sites in Carrickfergus should be taken forward through the use of a development brief.

This will enable key masterplan principles to be developed in greater detail. For privately owned land, this will facilitate the instruction of architects and other consultants. For publicly owned land earmarked for disposal, it will provide the means by which regeneration requirements can be established and tender returns assessed.

Delivery of Masterplan components such as public realm, can also be achieved through development or planning gain. This involves requiring developers to contribute to infrastructure or other projects of community benefit as a condition of planning approval. Similarly, the public sector could utilise a Forward Funding process to take forward infrastructure works that unlock further development. Revenue is then used to retrospectively fund initial works.

Finally, the use of Compulsory Acquisition powers should be introduced for important projects that are unable to package land through purchase or negotiation.

## 6.6 Management of the Masterplan

The effective coordination of the Carrickfergus Town Centre Masterplan will be critical to its success in bringing about regeneration and realising the Vision for the Future, as outlined in Chapter 3. While this document is intended to be as thorough and self explanatory as possible, delivery of its proposals will require more detailed management, planning, design and consultation on a project by project basis.

The scale and extent of Masterplan proposals will necessitate a close partnership to be formed between organisations of the public, private and community sectors. It is therefore proposed that a Masterplan Implementation Board be established, involving representatives from the following organisations:

- Carrickfergus Borough Council
- Carrickfergus Development Company
- Carrickfergus Chamber of Commerce & Trade
- Carrickfergus Enterprise
- Carrickfergus Community Forum
- Department for Social Development (DSD)
- Planning Service (DOE)
- Roads Service (DRD)
- Northern Ireland Environment Agency (DOE)

Continuing with the spirit of cooperation established through the production of this report, this grouping must meet regularly to monitor and steer progress of the Masterplan delivery. Transparency and the accountability of its operation and decision making process will be critical to ensure confidence of the public and other stakeholders with a vested interest in successful regeneration of the town centre.

Working to the Board, a series of specialist working groups must also be established to take forward specific projects. These groups should be comprised of key stakeholders (such as landowners and relevant officials) as well as individuals with specific skills and interests of value to the project. They will also form the principle point of contact for private consultants commissioned during the course of the plan.

Continuity of this structure must be secured through the life of the Masterplan, particularly with the Review of Public Administration (RPA) set to greatly change the responsibilities of public sector bodies.

Administrative support and funding must also be a long term commitment, with the recruitment of designated personnel a likely requirement.

## 6.7 Use of the Masterplan

As a non statutory plan, use of the Carrickfergus Town Centre Masterplan and realisation of its vision will be reliant on the commitment of its commissioning organisations and members of the Implementation Board.

While considerable efforts have been made to involve a wide range of organisations and individuals through development of the plan, the process of 'winning friends' must continue throughout its lifespan. An over reliance on a small group of individuals must also be avoided, so to maintain consistency should they move away from the masterplan process.

Continued and meaningful dialogue with the people of Carrickfergus will also be a essential element of the plan. This should involve regular updating on progress and the active seeking of further input in relation to specific proposals. A good working relationship with community groups, local media outlets and elected representatives must therefore be maintained.

A number of communication tools should be employed to assist in the process of updating and engaging with people about the Masterplan. The use of television, radio, newspapers / letters and websites will be required. Consideration should also be given to the creation of a three dimensional computer generated model of the Masterplan. This would provide a tool by which its proposals can be explained and the detailed design of projects taken forward in relation to the wider context.

Recognising and celebrating progress of the Masterplan should be another core objective. This will include baseline studies against which economic and other benefits can be calculated and events organised to celebrate key milestones in project delivery.

Updating of the Masterplan and in particular, the Action Plan for Delivery, must take place to ensure its relevance over the 15 - 20 year period. An agreed format and timetable for this process should be established early.



# 7

## Conclusions



## 7 Conclusion

This document represents a collective vision for the future of Carrickfergus. Like most plans, it has involved the input of public officials, private developers and a team of consultants. Unlike many plans however, it has also involved the extensive input of local people, be they residents or business owners, young or old.

Town centres are of course complicated, about much more than buildings, but the lives and activities of those who use them. Detailed consensus on a future is therefore impossible. Yet by following an open process of public debate and discussion, the Carrickfergus Town Centre Masterplan seeks to represent the hopes and aspirations of many.

“Carrickfergus Town Centre will be an attractive, healthy, relaxed and safe place to work, live and visit, welcoming to all, including families and young people. Its reputation for excellence and high quality will focus on history and heritage, culture and the arts, leisure, niche retailing and maritime activities. Carrickfergus will be a distinctive town with a unique blend of both ancient and modern, including state-of-the-art infrastructure, public realm and lively streets.”

In this document a 15-20 year plan for Carrickfergus Town Centre is illustrated. It is deliberately ambitious, setting in place high expectations of planning, design and development. This is based on analysis of the town that identifies problems to be addressed and opportunities to be embraced. But importantly, this plan is also pragmatic, culminating in an Action Plan of projects for delivery and an indication of how they can be realised.

Carrickfergus Town Centre is now at an exciting point in its long history. A real opportunity now exists to comprehensively transform the town centre to bring a wide range of physical, social and economic benefits to its residents and businesses.

The challenge now falls to everyone in Carrickfergus. How can you play your part in delivering this vision?

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## Appendices

## 8 Appendices

This masterplan document serves to summarise the findings of an extensive one year process. The following Appendices provide more detailed information on key aspects of the plan.

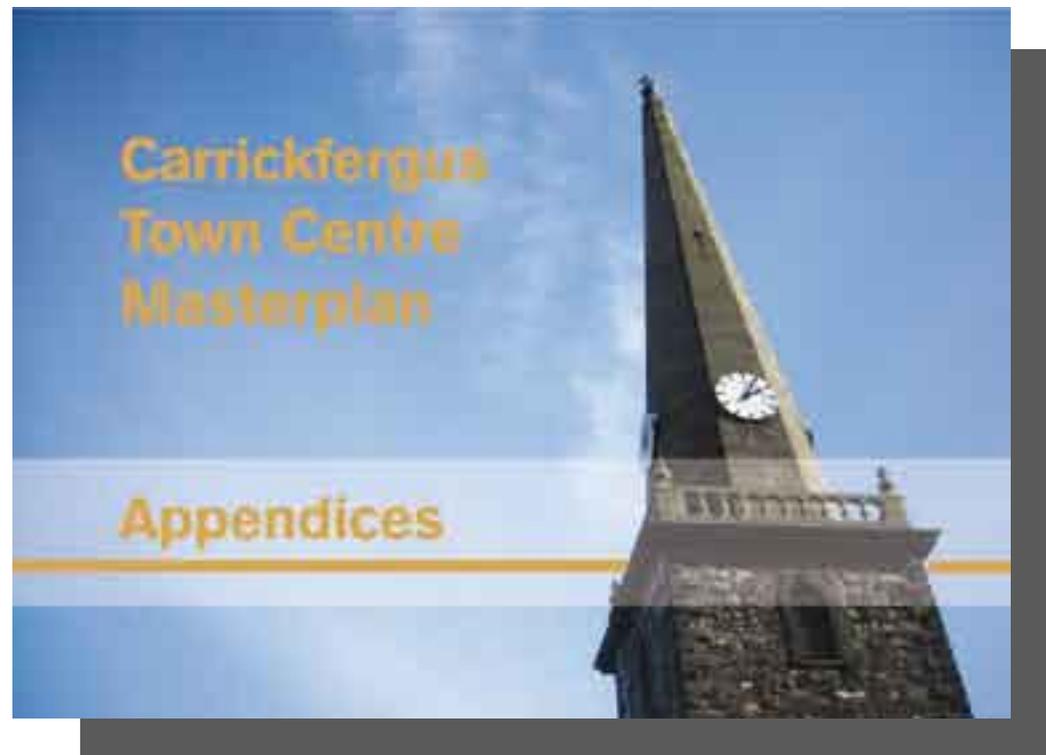
A - Baseline Studies - A series of analysis reports on the themes of Urban Design, Planning, Property, Economics and Transportation.

B - Consultation Report - An overview of the consultation process and a breakdown of its findings.

C - Transport Plan - A detailed report on transport proposals contained with the Masterplan, including the Parking Strategy

D - Promotional Marketing Plan - A detailed proposal document on how Carrickfergus Town Centre should be promoted alongside the Masterplan.

E - Cost Report - A breakdown of costs associated with the masterplan



Appendices can be downloaded at:

[www.dsdni.gov.uk](http://www.dsdni.gov.uk) or [www.carrickfergus.org](http://www.carrickfergus.org)



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