

BALLYMONEY Town Centre Masterplan



The Brief

In October 2012, URS were commissioned by the Department for Social Development (DSD) to undertake a Town Centre Masterplan for Ballymoney. The aim of the commission was to prepare a Masterplan which would set out the practical steps that need to be undertaken to ensure the future prosperity of Ballymoney Town Centre.

The Brief highlighted that the Masterplan must:

Be Distinctive

If Ballymoney town centre is to continue to grow and prosper it needs to be distinctive and differentiate itself from other towns in Northern Ireland. It needs to ensure that the strong presence of independent retailers is maintained and enhanced and that Ballymoney continues to offer that 'Unique Shopping Experience'.

Be Inspirational

The Masterplan will need to articulate a compelling and inspirational vision of Ballymoney town centre and make reference to examples of best practice on an international stage as well as raising the ambitions for the town and achieving wholehearted buy-in from stakeholders.

Define the Timescale and Resources Required for the Delivery Processes

The timescale will be important in shaping the policies of the Council, funding partners and associated agencies over the length of time that they will need to commit resources to Ballymoney town centre and the delivery of the Masterplan. It is important that this timetable sets out targets that can be achieved along the way and performance indicators that can be used to measure success and progress towards the eventual goal.

Bring Originality of Thinking, Insight, Flair, Judgement and Synthesis to the Process

A substantial body of data and analysis has been prepared. The requirement is not only to understand these previous studies; but to bring an additional dimension to the quality of thinking, to seamlessly integrate the social, environmental, economic and physical and create an inspirational 'Masterplan' which is more than the sum of its parts and will deliver sustainable development for the town centre.

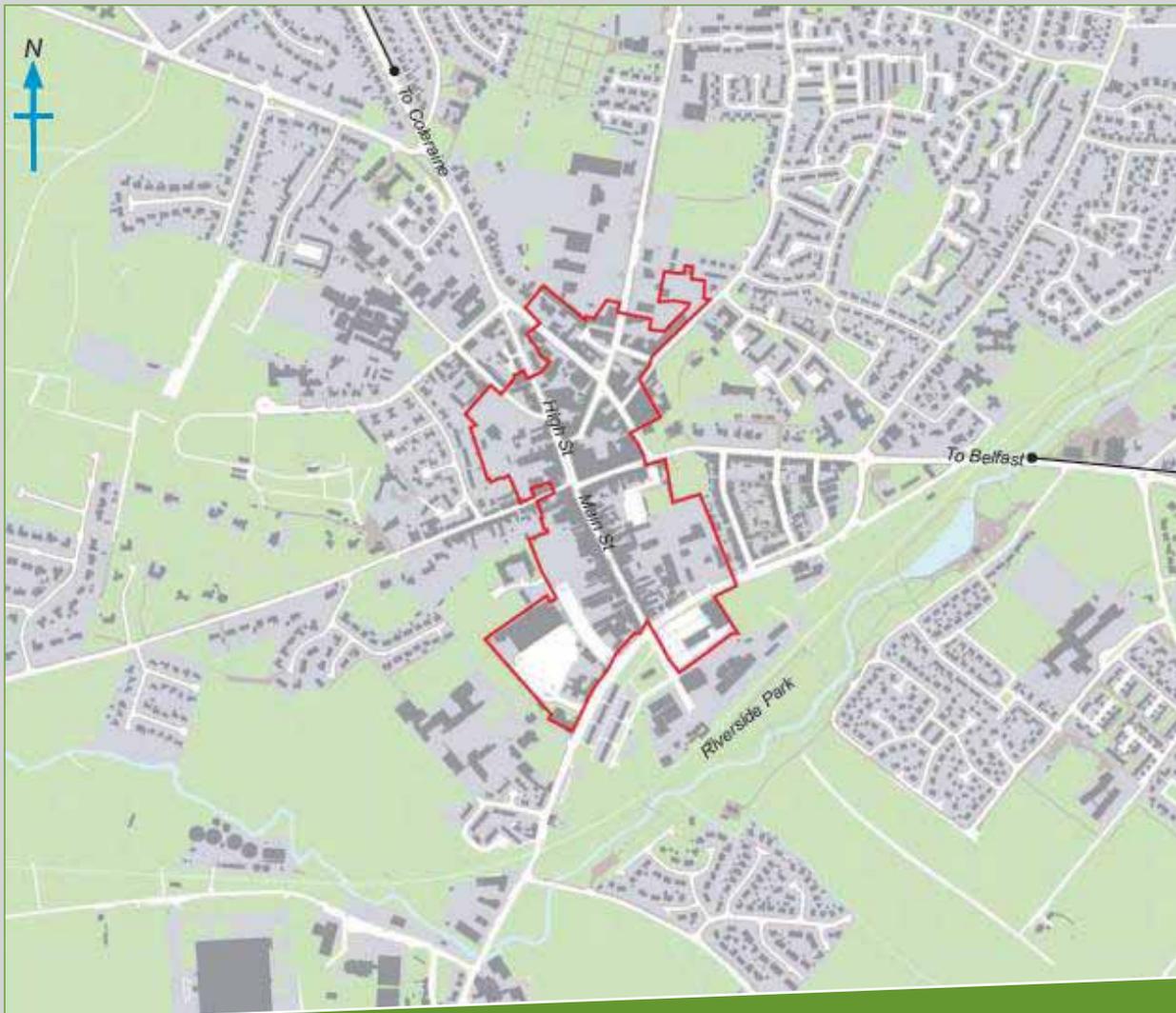
Be Realistic, Credible and Deliverable

There is a danger that the Masterplan could become hugely aspirational in tone and therefore require too big a leap for Ballymoney. If this were to occur, the strategy and vision could become less believable, targets may not be achievable and as a result, confidence both within and outside the town could decline. The real skill will be to balance the vision with reality.

Vision Statement

'Ballymoney will be a welcoming and competitive town that will capitalise on its strong geographical location, rich cultural and historical heritage and distinctive architecture. The town centre will evolve to provide a contemporary mix of uses to enhance the shopping experience, create civic space and encourage a thriving evening economy'

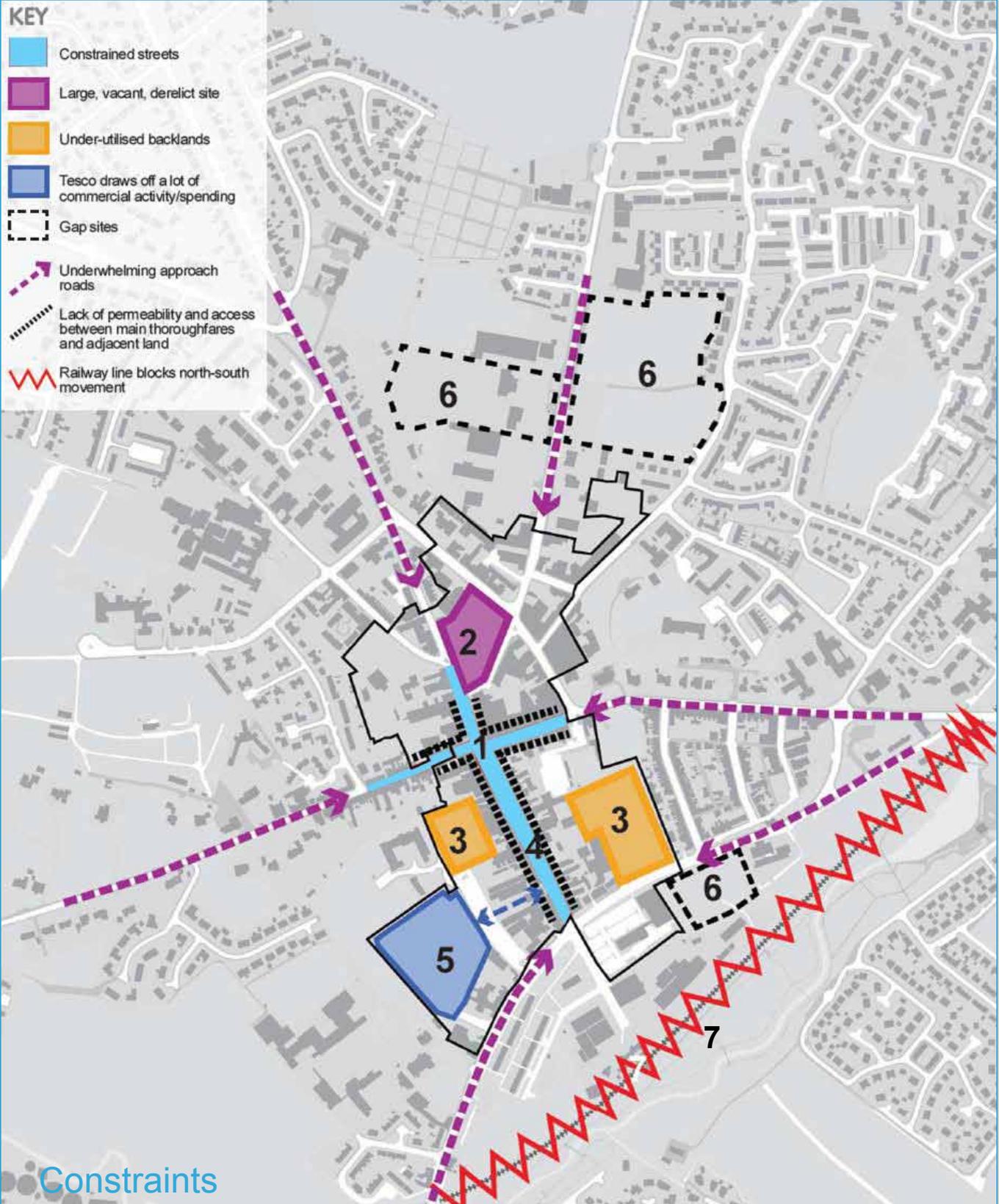
The Study Area



Regeneration Objectives

In order to achieve the Vision it is important to set out the core objectives which can act as targets to measure success over the next decade. The core regeneration objectives which were identified are highlighted below and form the basis of the Masterplan:

1. Provide better connections to and within the town centre to enhance pedestrian and vehicle movement
2. Develop key Opportunity Sites which will encourage a range of uses to improve town centre vitality
3. Provide vital services for the tourist and capitalise on its proximity to the Causeway Coast
4. Preserve the historic townscape character while encouraging high class modern development and award winning civic spaces
5. Maximise the Promotion and Marketing of the Town

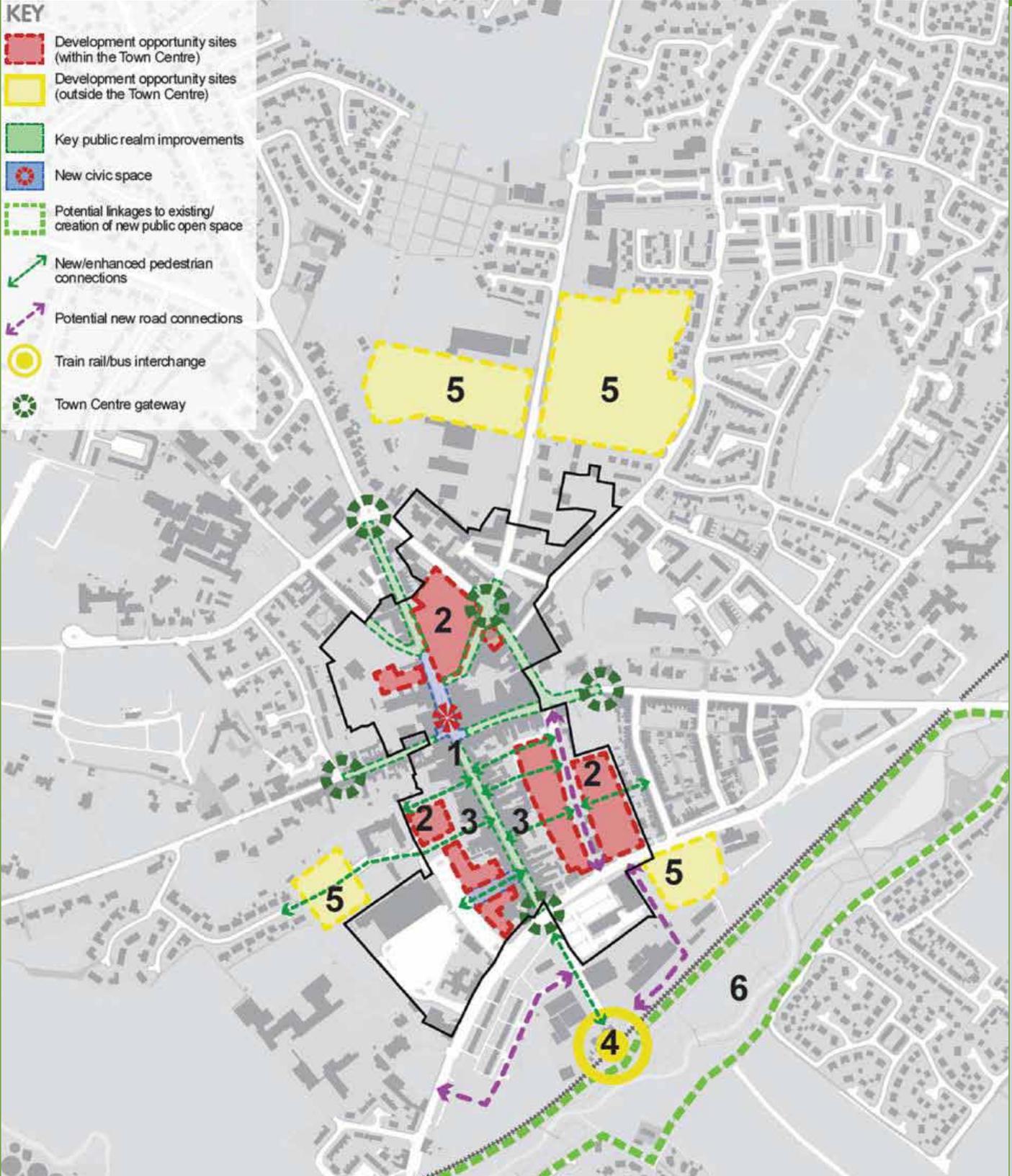


Constraints

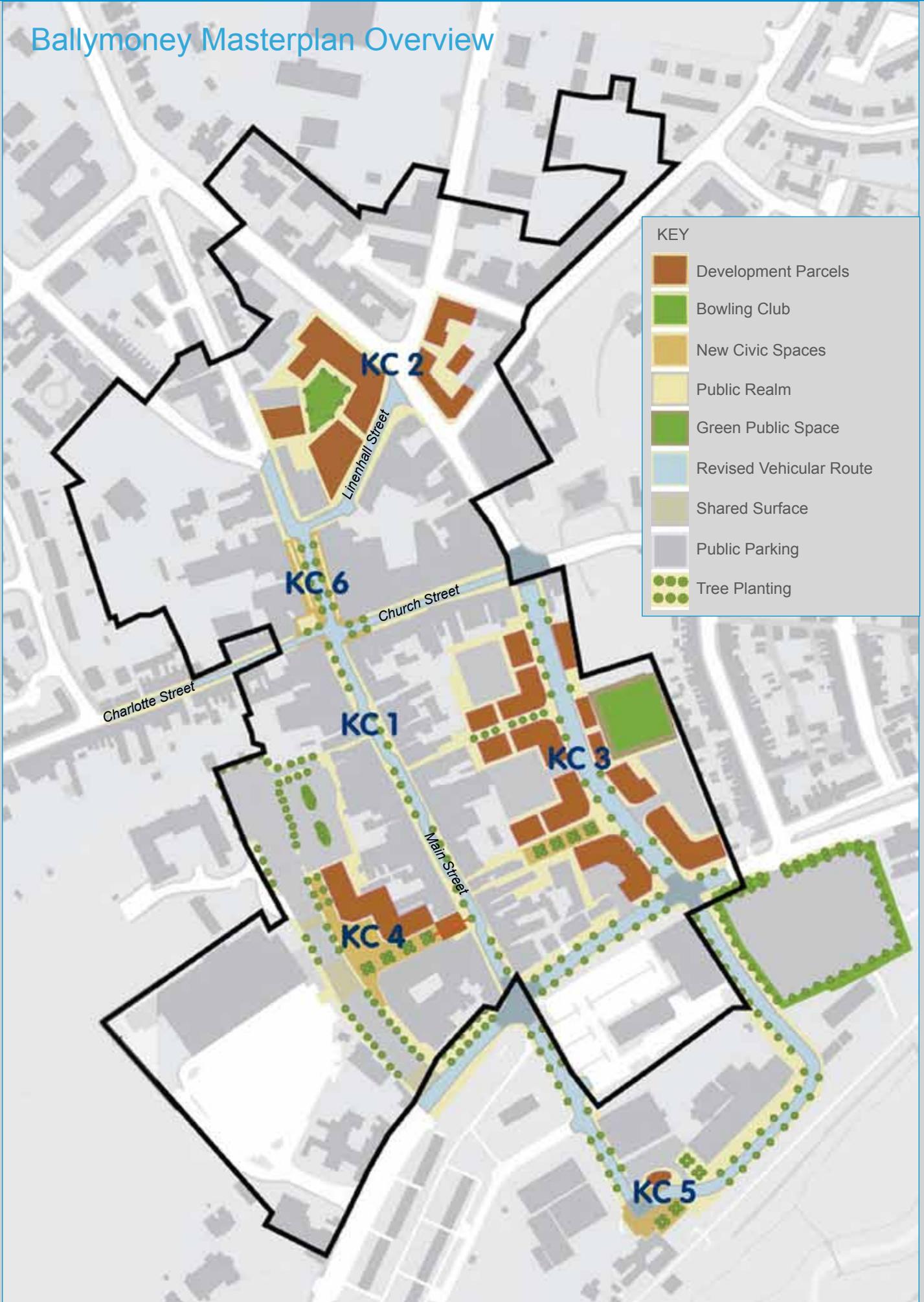
- 1** There are a number of streets where the current arrangements constrain both traffic and pedestrians (Main St, High St, Church St and Charlotte St, among others).
- 2** Linenhall Street is a major constraint as it affects both the image of the Town Centre and its capacity to function.
- 3** The backlands to either side of Main Street are an underutilised resource.
- 4** The current property arrangement along Main Street prevents convenient and direct east-west connections.
- 5** Tesco draws a lot of people away from the Town Centre core, and is not adequately connected to Main Street.
- 6** There are a number of gap sites, outside the Town Centre, which detract from the quality of the experience on entering the town.
- 7** The railway line is a block to easy connections between the Town Centre and the park/residential areas to the south.

- 1 There are opportunities to make improvements to the streets for both traffic and pedestrians.
- 2 Many of the vacant, derelict sites within the Town Centre might be brought forward as development sites.
- 3 There are a number of opportunities to create new east-west connections to open up the land either side of Main Street.
- 4 There is scope to enhance the public transport provision within the town by creating a new rail/bus interchange, focused on the existing railway station.

- 5 The gap sites beyond the town centre might also be brought forward as development sites, outside of the current Masterplan.
- 6 The existing open spaces might be better connected to the town centre, while new ones might be created closer to population centres to complement the mix of amenities and facilities located in the Town Centre.



Ballymoney Masterplan Overview



Key Component 1

“Streetscape improvements and re-configuration of the road space”

The town’s network of streets and spaces reflects its historic origins and is an important asset. However, there are locations where the design or use of the space is creating problems or, at the very least, is less efficient than it might be in terms of providing the best environment for residents and visitors.

Key Component 2

“Finding a long-term development solution for the Linenhall Quarter opportunity site”

Linenhall Street is currently not operating to its full potential and is a great opportunity for Ballymoney Town Centre. Given its unique size and location, the site would be capable of accommodating a wide range of uses and activities that could be of great benefit to Ballymoney and the wider area.

Key Component 3

“Identifying acceptable and viable proposals for the backlands”

The backlands to the east of Main Street are also a major development opportunity, with potential benefits in terms of traffic movements, retail and commercial space and improved service access. This solution shows the bowling club in a new location, thus facilitating a direct route between Victoria Street and Meeting House Street, providing the best environment for residents and visitors.

Key Component 4

“Testing current assumptions and devising a ‘best-fit’ scheme for Castlecroft”

Castlecroft Square is an important linking space between Main Street and the land to the west (including Tesco). There is also a lot of development potential in the surrounding area, which is relatively under-developed. Ballymoney Borough Council has already identified a potential development scheme to improve this space and create better linkages.

Key Component 5

“The development of a new transport interchange (all modes, but focused on bus and train)”

The train station is a major asset for Ballymoney, as it provides connections to the wider region that benefit almost all sectors, especially commercial, retail and residential. There is scope to improve the public transport network by creating a transport hub with a new bus depot complementing the existing railway station.

Key Component 6

“The creation of a new civic space on High Street”

High Street is the functional and structural core of the Town Centre. With its townscape quality and highly accessible location, High Street is an obvious location for a new civic space, with the capacity to accommodate public events and celebrations at specific times of the year, while still allowing traffic and pedestrians to use a more efficient and attractive space across the rest of the year.

Action Plan

The overall timescale to develop the 'vision', encapsulated within the Masterplan, will extend over a number of years. Some elements of the Plan will be more suited to meet short and medium term goals, while other areas may be more appropriate for development in the longer term. Indeed, in addition to the specific proposals contained within the Masterplan, a number of areas are identified as having longer term development potential.

The detailed phasing of the development proposals needs to be examined further as there will, for example, be issues relating to disturbance of existing occupiers, temporary arrangements during the construction phase, access to existing properties, parking provision, traffic flow etc, as well as provision of construction compounds.

The action plan within the next chapter sets out the key projects and proposals identified through the masterplan process, followed by the priority level and timescales for delivery. These actions will provide a baseline by which the delivery of the masterplan can be monitored. The action plan is a working document and should be updated on a regular basis to reflect progress and developments within the town centre.

Delivery Agents

*The delivery responsibility shall be managed by the Ballymoney Plan Team, which is to be established by Ballymoney Borough Council upon adoption of the masterplan. This team would consist of various representatives - to include statutory bodies.

Timescale

*The timescale provided under each proposal is designed to indicate the period when each project should commence within and not necessarily a deadline for completion.



		Proposal	Description	Priority	Timescale
KC1	1a	Loading and servicing areas along Main Street	Reducing servicing arrangement by utilising space behind properties	HIGH	0-5 YEARS
	1b	Public realm improvements to Main Street	Parking relocated to the rear, create a pedestrian friendly environment	HIGH	0-10 YEARS
	1c	Improve the quality of townscape - THI Schemes	Enhance the character of the conservation area and quality of shop frontages - Town Centre Revitalisation Scheme	HIGH	0-5 YEARS
KC2	2a	Encourage the full redevelopment of the Linenhall Quarter development opportunity site	Option 1 - Mixed Use -Residential with ground floor commercial, Option 2 - Commercial - Commercial leisure and cultural uses, Option 3 - Public Park - New park with a performance space and civic gardens	HIGH	0-15 YEARS
	2b	Linenhall Street to become one-way	Inbound traffic to the town centre to become one-way	MEDIUM	0-5 YEARS
	2c	Public realm improvements to Linenhall Street	Create a pedestrian friendly environment and consider the connectivity to the proposed Linenhall Quarter development opportunity site	MEDIUM	5-10 YEARS
KC3	3a	New Street	Option 1 - New connection between Victoria Street and Meeting House Street. Option 2 - Consider the redevelopment of the site whilst retaining the current location of the bowling green	MEDIUM	10-15 YEARS
	3b	Encourage full redevelopment of the Eastern Quarter development opportunity site	To include: new civic space, mixed use development lands and pedestrian connections to Main Street	MEDIUM	10-15 YEARS
KC4	4a	Encourage full redevelopment of the Western Quarter development opportunity site	To include: improved civic space, pedestrian connections to Main Street and additional car parking and reconfigured service access for properties on Main Street	HIGH	0-5 YEARS
KC5	5a	New transport hub for rail, bus and private cars	New Interchange to include: bus depot with ticketing facilities, information stands, passenger facilities, park and ride facilities and relocation of the bus garage to enable the provision of a new link road	HIGH	5-10 YEARS
	5b	Seymour Street to become one-way	Traffic travelling away from the junction to become one-way	MEDIUM	5-10 YEARS
KC6	6a	Create new civic/performance space	Provide space for outdoor performance/civic area	HIGH	0-10 YEARS
	6b	Public realm improvements to High Street	The creation of a pedestrian friendly environment whilst considering linkages to the potential Linenhall Street development	HIGH	0-10 YEARS
	6c	Charlotte Street to become one-way	Outbound traffic between High Street and Eastermeade Gardens to become one-way	HIGH	0-10 YEARS
	6d	Southern section of High Street to become one-way	Traffic travelling towards Main Street to become one-way	HIGH	0-10 YEARS
	6e	Bus pick up/drop off point	Improvements to be made to the current provision on High Street	HIGH	0-10 YEARS
	6f	Encourage cafe culture	Creating a high quality, attractive environment that will help promote a cafe culture	MEDIUM	0-10 YEARS
Town Wide Strategies	7a	Transport Assessment	Carry out detailed transport assessment for all transport proposals	HIGH	0-5 YEARS
	7b	Public Realm Strategy	To be carried out on commencement of the design process	HIGH	0-5 YEARS
	7c	Provide an opportunity for hotel development	To help enable integration with the wider Causeway Coast and Glens tourism offer	MEDIUM	0-10 YEARS
	7d	Improve Ballymoney's Image	Take advantage of the towns strategic location, within close proximity to the Causeway Coast and Glens and other associated attractions	HIGH	0-15 YEARS
	7e	Promote and conserve the strong cultural heritage of Ballymoney	Ulster-Scots, agricultural, motorcycling and conservation heritage	HIGH	0-15 YEARS
	7f	Improve the range and quality of shops	Promotion of local shopping events, fairs and mixed use development	HIGH	0-15 YEARS
	7g	Deliver an attractive shopping environment	Implementation of a Ballymoney Business Improvement District (BID)	HIGH	0-15 YEARS
	7h	Improve upon the existing evening economy, hospitality and leisure offer	Creation of an events strategy and implementation of the masterplan	MEDIUM	0-10 YEARS
	7i	Building brand and PR identity	Implement and monitor marketing initiatives and social media	HIGH	0-15 YEARS
	7j	Improve telecommunications provision	Aim to have world class telecommunications infrastructure and potentially implement a town centre Wifi network	MEDIUM	0-15 YEARS



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