

WELCOME

Introduction

Welcome to the engagement process for the Newtownards Masterplan Review.

Ards and North Down Borough Council is embarking on a process to undertake a review of the Newtownards Town Centre Masterplan which was commissioned by the Department for Social Development (now DfC) in 2010. The Masterplan is a non-statutory document which provides the framework for the promotion, implementation and timing of urban regeneration, recreation, tourism, and leisure initiatives.

Taking on board your comments from the drop-in sessions and on-line survey at the end of last year we have developed a series of proposed priorities for the town centre. These seek to address Newtownard's present day challenges and opportunities, aligning them with mechanisms for funding and delivery.

We invite you to take a look and let us know what you think.

The engagement process is open from:
Monday 13th March to Friday 31st March 2023

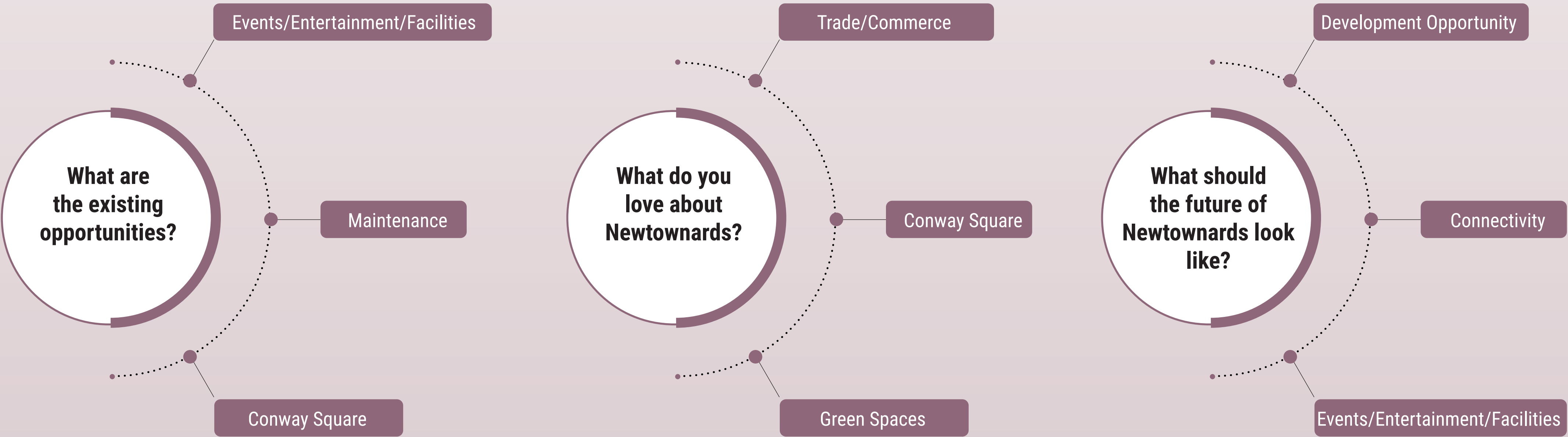
Complete the short on-line survey at:
www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/masterplans

Newtownards

1. Your Feedback

YOUR FEEDBACK

A series of conversations have taken place through the public consultation exercise the Council carried out in September 2022. There were over 70 comments received from the drop-in event and 8 on-line responses, summarised here.



Why live in Newtownards?

- Commerce/Trade
- Blue / Green Spaces
- Heritage

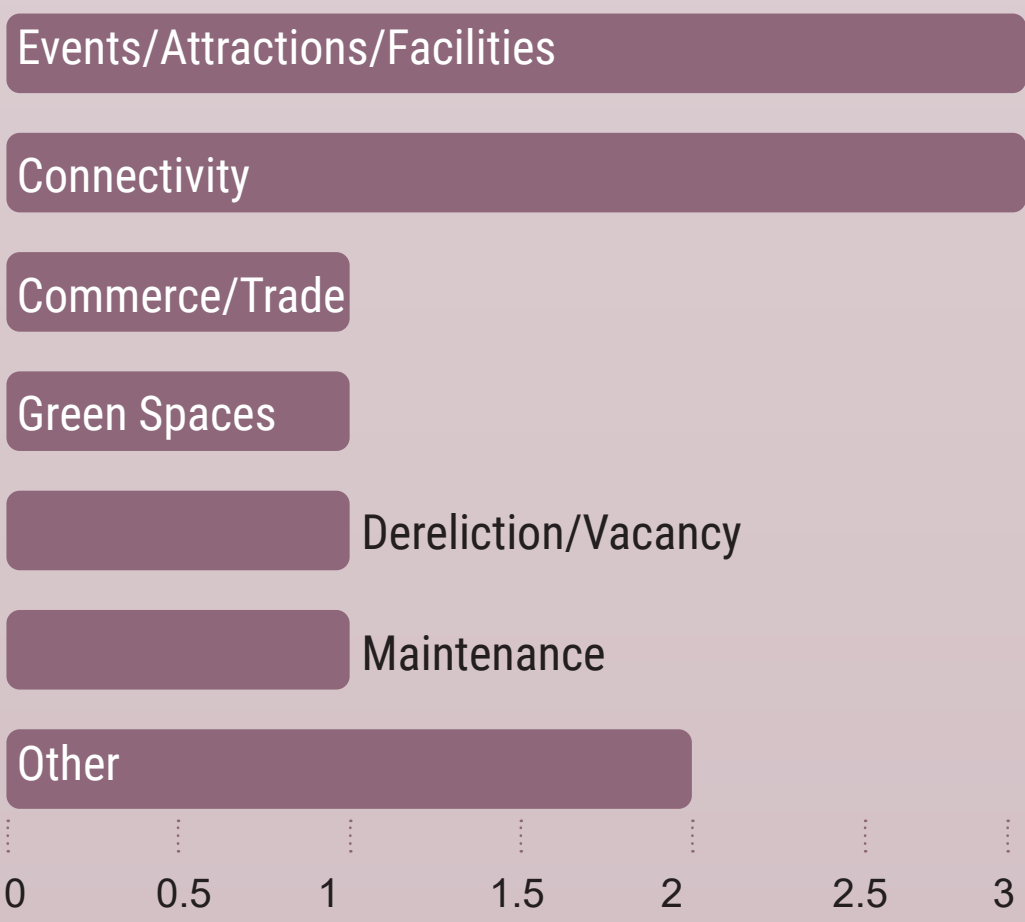
What are the undesirables about Newtownards?

- Connectivity
- Maintenance

What is a disadvantage for businesses in Newtownards?

- Connectivity Issues
- Investment

Areas for Improvement



The Future of Newtownards



CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIIES

- S

 - Historic grid iron street pattern to the town centre
 - Consistent 2 & 3 storey built form and massing
 - Independent and successful retail offer within the town centre
 - Conway Square is a thriving space evidenced by footfall and uptake in units
- W

 - Car dominated town centre
 - Strangford Lough is disconnected from the town with the road and airport acting as a barrier
- O

 - More ways are needed to activate and animate both the town centre and square, driving footfall
 - Town centre is flat, very accessible with a walkable compact form
- T

 - Underdeveloped land south of town centre - masterplanning needed for its future
 - Concentration of derelict buildings on Court Street
 - Climate and Biodiversity Crisis

MASTERPLAN PROS & CONS

- +

 - Clear vision and coordinated spatial plan
 - Place-based tool to address multiple challenges
 - Means to attract funding and guide investment
 - Shared vision between organisations
- - Limited delivery of actions
 - Lack of widespread plan use and buy in
 - Inflexibility of plan to adapt to a changing economic and political landscape

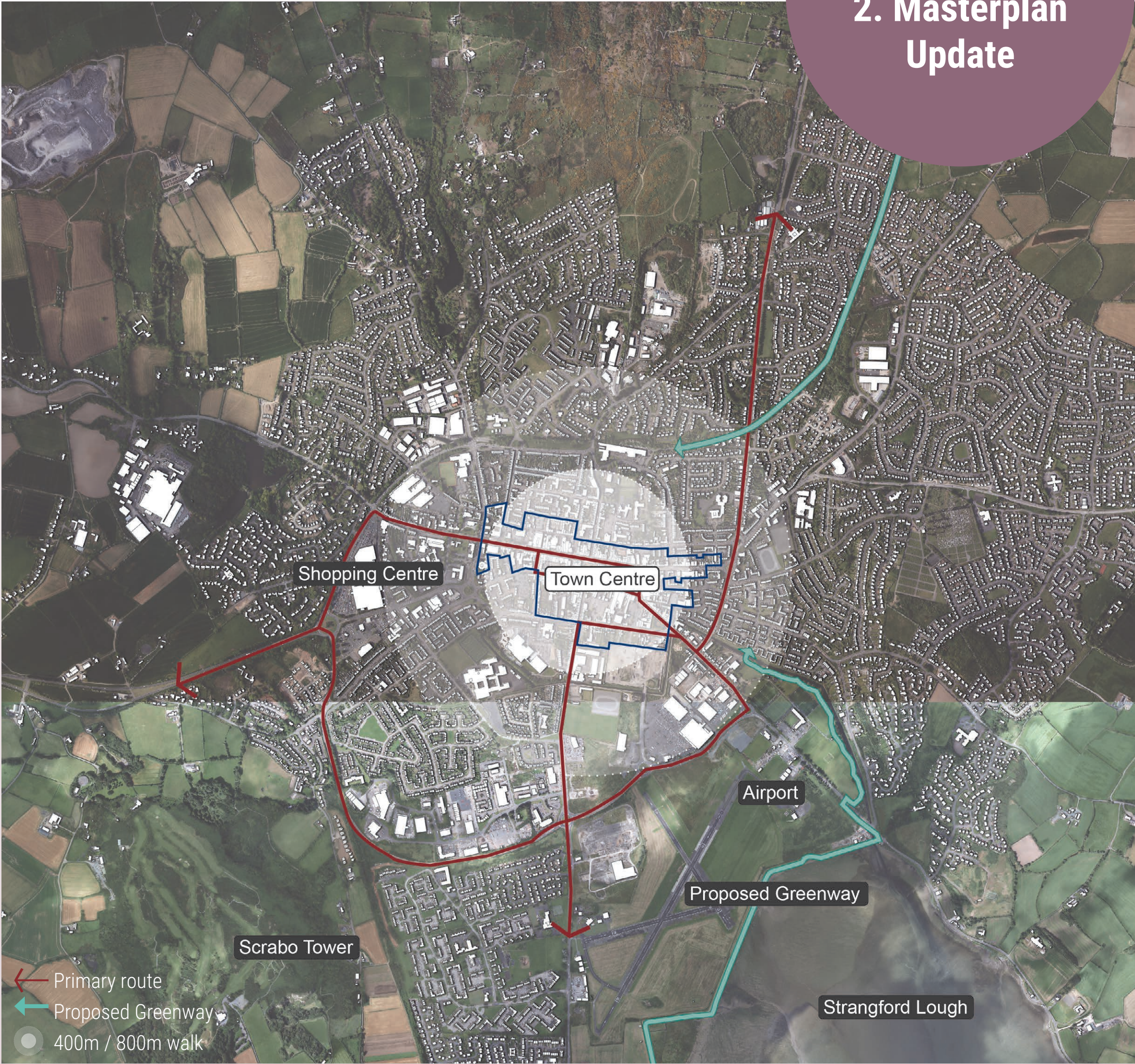
SUCCESS SINCE THE MASTERPLAN

Since the Masterplan was completed in 2010 there have been several projects that have already successfully taken place, including:

- Public art such as the mural on Meetinghouse Lane
- The on-going work of the canal path project
- The Live Here Love Here civic pride programme
- The continued success of Conway Square evidenced by users enjoying the cafe culture and spending time sitting within the square



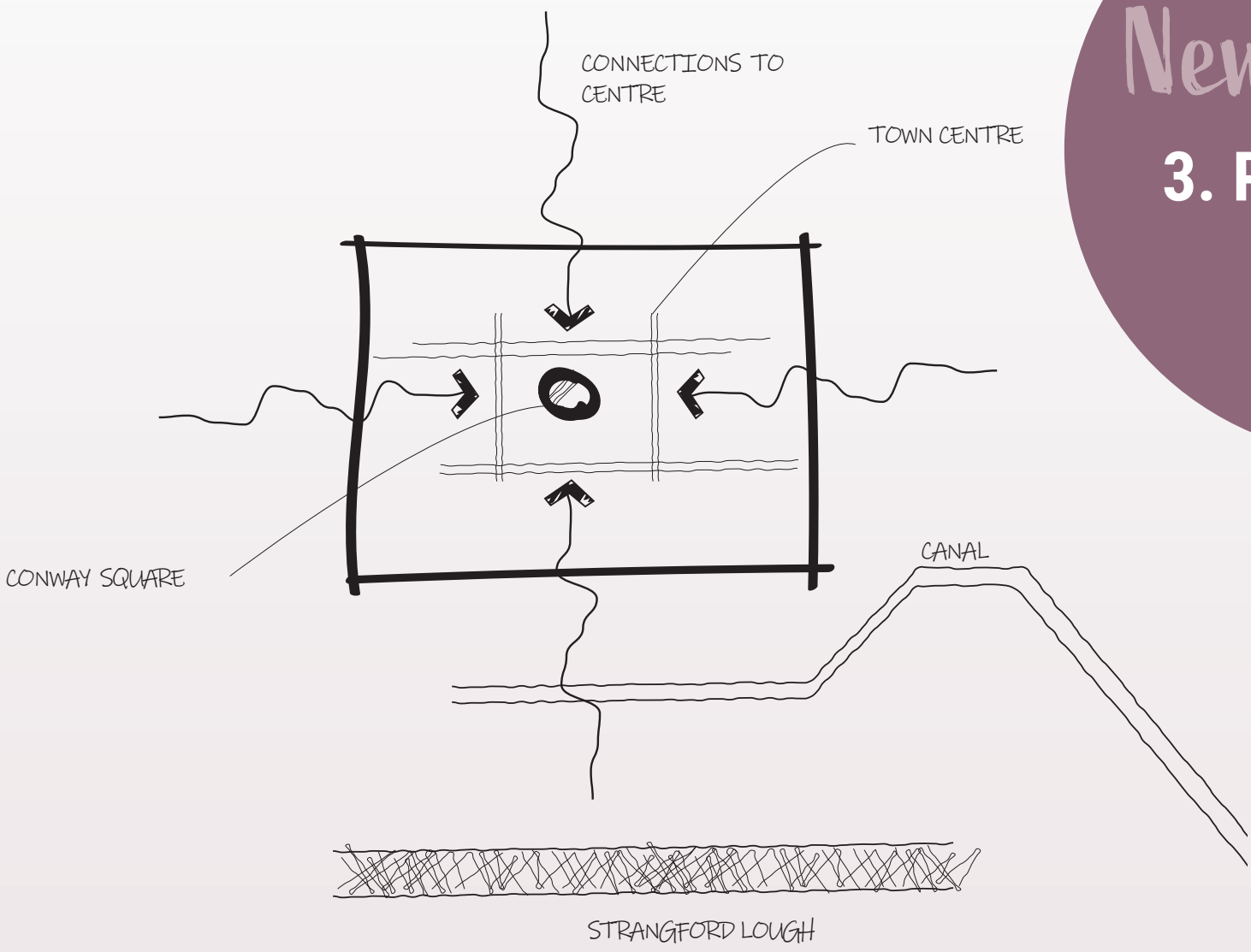
Historic Street Pattern



MASTERPLAN VISION

“A vibrant and distinctive market town, Newtownards is a destination of choice complementing the wider tourism offer in the Borough. The local people are proud of their town and regularly visit the centre to enjoy the wide range of shops, services, cafés, restaurants and leisure facilities provided in a high quality, attractive and user-friendly environment. In particular, the Town Centre is well known for its selection of local and independent retailers, many of which are found only in Newtownards. It has a reputation for being a welcoming and friendly town, providing customers with a retail-leisure experience that is second to none.”

Newtownards Town Centre Masterplan, 2010



Newtownards 3. Priorities for the Town

PROPOSED PRIORITIES

Based on analysis and engagement the following proposed priorities have been identified for Newtownards Town Centre.

A Grow the influence of the Square

Use the success of the Square to influence the quality of the surrounding streets and their public realm. Further enhance the vibrancy of the town heart by growing it as a destination emanating from Conway Square.



B Tackle hotspots

Short to medium term interventions to tackle dereliction including building on the success of public art within the town centre.



C A connected Town

Go for it! Capitalise on the flat nature of the town and look at pedestrian and cycle infrastructure, wayfinding, pop-up cycle lanes, mapping, creating links to the canal and Lough.



D Streets for All

Community led placemaking initiatives, creating open streets to temporarily change the town. Welcoming community groups that are active elsewhere in the town to take the opportunity to transform the streets ranging from play, recreation, food, culture and arts.



E Town Centre Community Hub

The development of a community led facility in the heart of the town, providing space for community events, meetings and services.



MAKING IT HAPPEN

Through this masterplan review a series of priorities will be identified for the next 8 years, guided by 4 year action plans.

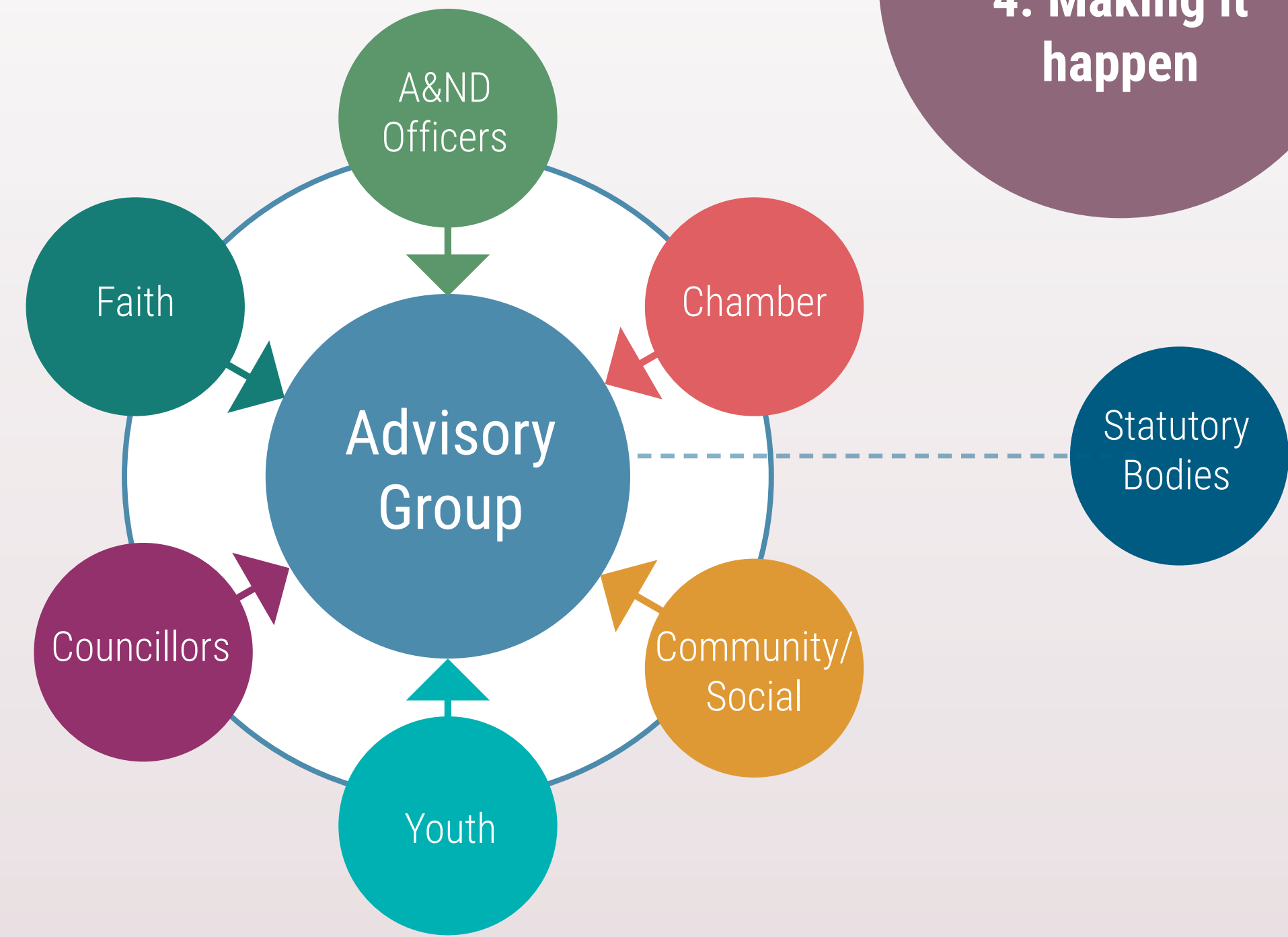
The Town and City Advisory Groups (TAG/CAG) were established in relation to Ards and North Down Borough Council developing a local approach to masterplanning, community planning, placemaking and other localised issues.

Along with the Council and Executive Departments, the advisory groups will help drive forward regeneration for Newtownards Town Centre, collaborating, sharing responsibilities and playing to strengths. A key function of the masterplan's new priorities will be attract funding from various sources, including:

Examples of Funding Opportunities

- Community Ownership Fund
- Levelling Up (future rounds)
- Shared Prosperity
- Peace Plus
- Shared Island Funding
- National Lottery (Heritage Fund)
- Ulster Garden Villages
- Groundworks
- Social Finance (e.g. Community Finance Ireland, NESTA)

Newtownards 4. Making it happen



Case Study: Ru Pare, Amsterdam

What they did

Once a primary school the building now forms a community space for dozens of organisations and initiatives while creating a living room for the neighbourhood. A social experiment to turn around a challenging neighbourhood the project has led to a successful neighbourhood enterprise where everyone who uses the amenities and facilities also gives something back to the community.

What impact did it have

- Community center offering education and training, such as in computing or language classes, to residents who perform communal services in return
- Former gym hall is now a friendly public living room and the former school-yard a public garden
- Includes start-up companies who rent small scale units contributing to the building's upkeep



Case Study: Mini Holland, Outer London

What they did

The Mini-Holland scheme was part of the London Mayor's Healthy Streets Approach aimed at outer London boroughs where residents are more car dependent than inner London. The aim was to boost cycling and walking through:

- segregated cycle lanes
- measures to calm traffic
- redesign of town centres
- cycle hubs
- a range of behaviour changing measures including community bike rides
- new pedestrian crossings at key locations
- creation of new public spaces with seating and planting

What impact did it have

Within the first year the interventions were having a positive impact on active travel behaviour and local perceptions. It was found that people were 24% more likely to have cycled and were spending 41minutes more walking or cycling that those in areas where improvements were not made.

source: www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/london-mini-hollands



How to give your feedback

Complete the short on-line survey at:
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