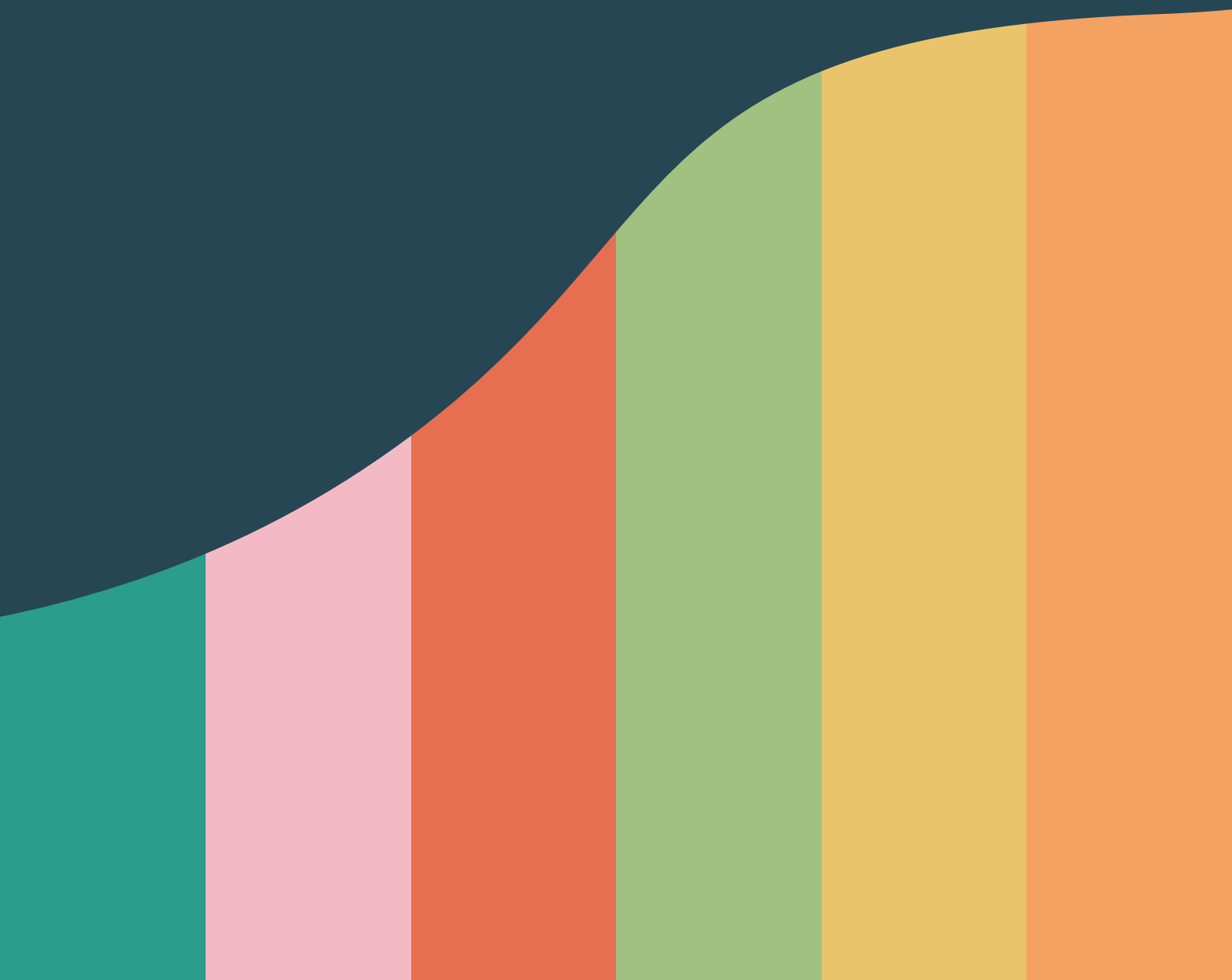


# Appendices

Parts One, Two & Three

The Whithorn Place Plan



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# **Part One**

## **Chapter 1**

### **Policy Context**

# The Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal: Place Programme Guidance

The Borderlands Partnership strives for sustainable economic growth in the South of Scotland and North of England. The Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal secures up to £452 million in new investment for the region, backed by ministers from the UK and Scottish Governments, and representatives of the five Borderlands councils. This Place Plan is prepared with the support of the Borderlands Partnership, and as one of its flagship projects: part of The Borderlands Place Programme.

Four investment themes underpin the Partnership deal generally:

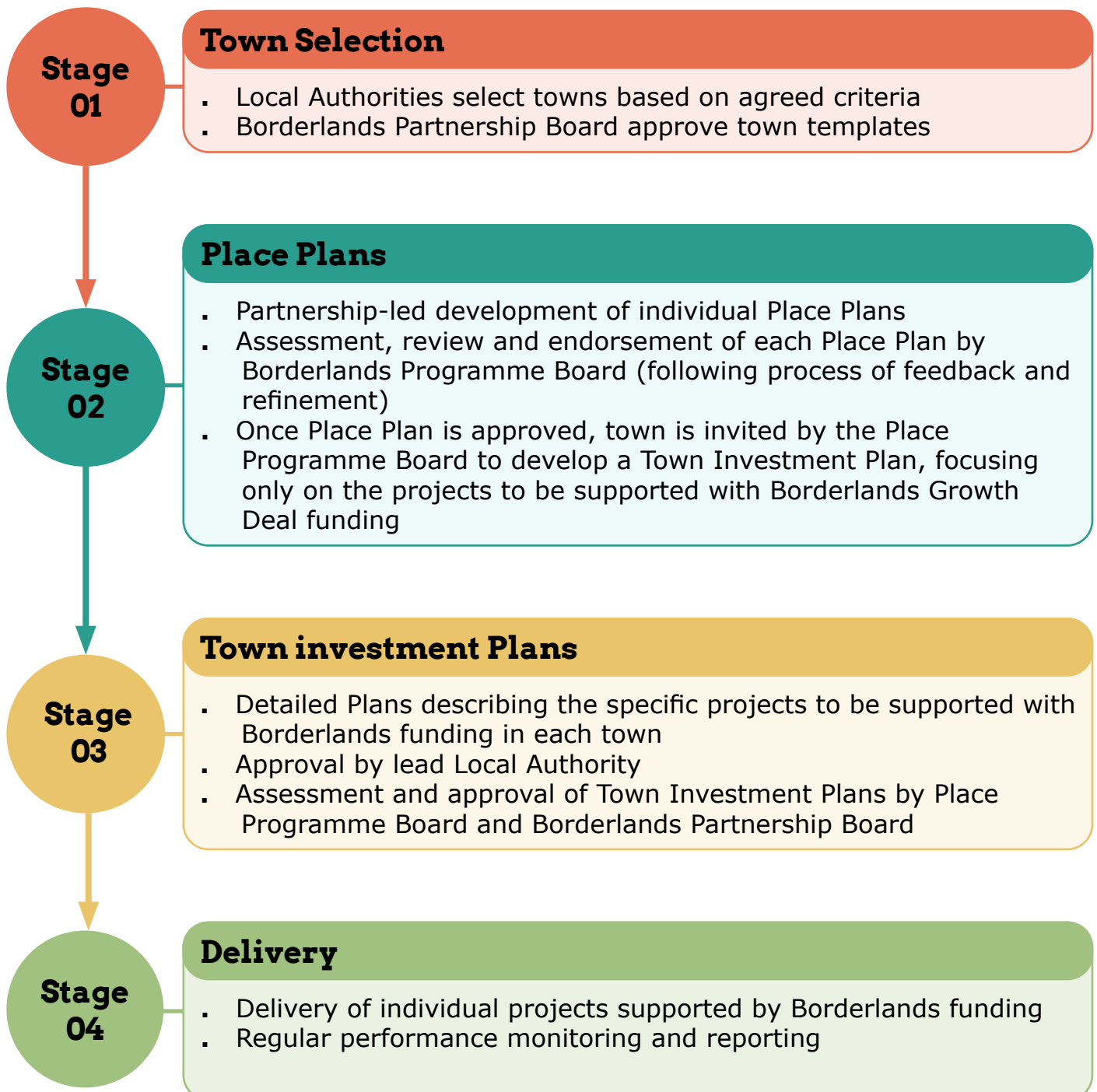
1. Enabling infrastructure, which in Whithorn might mean:
    - Coverage of digital and mobile infrastructure to enable businesses and residents to be connected in a digital world.
  2. Improving places, which might include, which might include:
    - Investing in smaller market towns to reinvigorate and repurpose towns to support thriving and sustainable communities;
    - Capitalising on our heritage, cultural and recreational assets to promote the region as a destination to visit and as a place to live and work.
  3. Supporting business, innovation and skills, which might include:
    - Stimulating business growth to create a more diverse regional economy;
  4. Encouraging green growth, which might include:
    - Capitalising on our green credentials, decarbonisation and high value job creation to support low carbon energy generation and decarbonisation.
- The Place Programme scheme aims for all our towns and their centres to be economically vibrant and resilient to change.
  - Places where people of working age choose to live
  - Places that are attractive for enterprise and business
  - Places that appeal to visitors as a destination
  - Places that are recognised for their quality

With the objectives to attract new businesses to our towns and town centres:

- Increase and retain our working age population
- Raise the standard of the physical environment in our towns and town centres
- Increase the number of people living in our towns and town centres
- Deliver new jobs and opportunities for economic and social participation
- Increase the number of visitors who spend time and money in our towns and town centres.



# Overview of the Place Programme Process



# Local Development Plan 2

## Introduction

Local Development Plan 2 sets out a vision for what Dumfries and Galloway will look like 20 years in the future. Overall, it aims for:

### **A viable rural economy and community characterised by:**

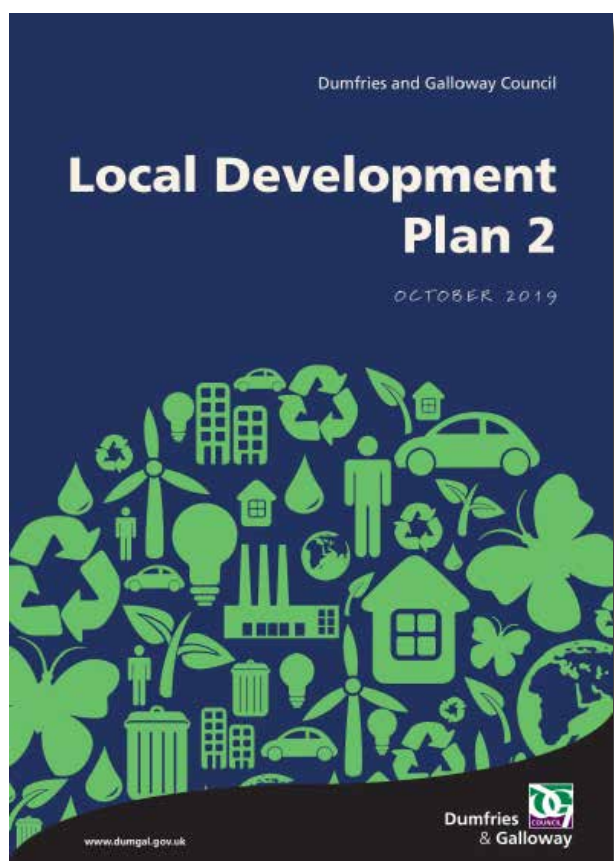
- More rural businesses
- More houses in small groups
- More recreational activity
- more woodlands
- High quality distinctive landscapes
- High quality accessible viewpoints, paths and green networks
- A range of renewable energy developments
- A protected and enhanced natural and historic environment
- Access to sustainable transport
- Ready access to higher education and opportunities for knowledge transfer.

### **The plan seeks to create vibrant towns and villages, which are characterised by the following traits or provisions:**

- More businesses and people working from home.
- More opportunities to meet locally arising affordable housing needs with high quality, affordable housing.
- Developments served by district heating systems.
- Developments of a scale and character appropriate to their location that incorporate open space and green networks, with sustainable features such as SuDS, access to allotments, waste recycling, energy generation, all based around sustainable transport modes.
- A range of services and facilities that help support the local community, such as sport, recreation and leisure.
- Enhanced historic environment, streetscape and open spaces.
- A distinctive landscape setting or sense of place.
- More green networks providing a range of environmental, social and economic benefits.

There are a number of aims and messages of support contained within the overarching policies of LDP2 which any new development must meet, and which are relevant to Whithorn:

- Be compatible with the character and amenity of the area and protect and/or enhance the character, appearance and setting of the region's rich historic environment; respect, protect and/or enhance the region's rich and distinct biodiversity; and minimise the need for travel by car and encourage active and other more sustainable forms of travel (OP1).
- Expand existing businesses or create new ones in the rural area, subject to other policies in the Plan. There is a preference that this will generally be within or adjacent to existing settlements (ED2).
- Support for the designation and aims of the Biosphere and encouragement for development that demonstrates innovative approaches to sustainable communities and the economy (ED10).
- Housing in accordance with the designated Housing Sites.
- Support for development within or adjacent to a conservation area that preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the area and is consistent with any relevant conservation area appraisal and management plan (HE2).
- Support for the protection of significant archaeological and historic assets, and the wider historic environment from adverse effects (HE3).
- Support for proposals that provide new or enhanced community facilities. New community facilities should be located so they can be integrated with public transport and path and cycle routes (CF1).
- Support for development of facilities for cyclists and pedestrians (T1).



# National Planning Framework 4

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) was adopted in Feb 2023. Decisions on planning will be made in accordance with NPF4 and Dumfries and Galloway Council's current Local Development Plan 2, with NPF4 taking precedence in instances where the two are not aligned on policy.

The Framework presents a National Spatial Strategy for Scotland 2045, which has six overarching spacial principles: just transition; conserving and recycling assets; local living; compact urban growth; rebalanced development; and rural revitalisation. Not all are relevant to Whithorn, but of those that are:

- **Just transition** - *We will empower people to shape their places and ensure the transition to net zero is fair and inclusive.*
- **Conserving and recycling assets** - *We will make productive use of existing buildings, places, infrastructure and services, locking in carbon, minimising waste, and building a circular economy.*
- **Local living** - *We will support local liveability and improve community health and wellbeing by ensuring people can easily access services, greenspace, learning, work and leisure locally.*
- **Rebalanced development** - *We will target development to create opportunities for communities and investment in areas of past decline, and manage development sustainably in areas of high demand.*
- **Rural revitalisation** - *We will encourage sustainable development in rural areas, recognising the need to grow and support urban and rural communities together.*

33 policies are set out in NPF4, under the 3 headings of creating more:

1. Sustainable Places, which for Whithorn might mean:

1. being net zero;
2. nature-positive places that are designed to reduce emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change;
3. and have development that is accessible by sustainable travel.

2. Liveable Places, which might mean:

1. being inclusive, empowered, resilient, safe and providing opportunities for learning;
2. having quality homes, with land allocations to meet current and future aspirations;
3. Using buildings and other physical assets can also support activities based on intangible cultural assets;
4. and improving green infrastructure to bring nature into our places, connecting people with nature

3. and Productive Places, which might mean:

1. having a wellbeing economy that benefits everyone;
2. Having digital connectivity, which will be critical to their continued success;

3. And through Rural revitalisation, achieved by distributing development, investment and infrastructure strategically and by actively enabling rural development

There are a number of aims contained within the policies of NPF4 which any new development must meet, and which are relevant to Whithorn:

- Minimise or avoid greenhouse gas emissions (2)
- Promote nature recovery and nature restoration (3)
- Protect locally, regionally, nationally and internationally important natural assets, on land and along coasts (4)
- Support the sustainable management of the historic environment (7)
- Set out opportunities for the sustainable reuse of brownfield land including vacant and derelict land and empty buildings (9)
- Seek to realise their area's full potential for electricity and heat from renewable, low carbon and zero emission sources (11)
- Prioritise locations for future development that can be accessed by sustainable modes. (13)
- Support local living, including 20 minute neighbourhoods within settlements (15)
- Set out tailored approaches to rural housing (17)
- Be informed by relevant, up-to date audits and/or strategies, covering the multiple functions and benefits of blue and green infrastructure.
- Safeguard access rights and core paths, including active travel routes, and encourage new and enhanced opportunities for access linked to wider networks. (20)
- Identify sites for sports, play and outdoor recreation for people of all ages (21)
- Strengthen community resilience to the current and future impacts of climate change (22)
- Support the delivery of digital infrastructure, including fixed line and mobile connectivity (24)
- Spatial strategies should address community wealth building priorities (25)
- Allocate sufficient land for business and industry (26)
- Identify the characteristics of rural areas within the plan area, including the existing pattern of development, pressures, environmental assets, community priorities and economic needs of each area. The spatial strategy should set out an appropriate approach to development in rural areas which reflects the identified characteristics. (29)
- Support the recovery, growth and long-term resilience of the tourism sector (30)
- Recognise and support opportunities for jobs and investment in the creative sector, culture, heritage and the arts (31)

Whithorn falls under 'The South' within NPF4, which has its own regional priorities. The South is noted in NPF4 for its strategic importance, "with a strong sense of identity centred on networks of towns and villages, supported by distinctive landscapes and coasts", and "exceptional environmental assets and natural resources, such as the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere and Galloway Forest Dark Sky Park". Its priorities include:

- Develop and increase recognition of it as a place to live, work and visit.
- Protect environmental assets and stimulate investment in natural and

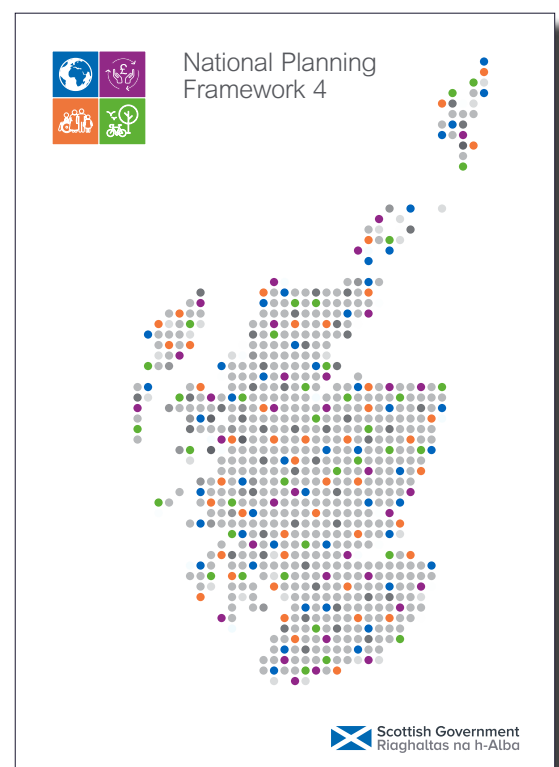
engineered solutions to climate change and nature restoration, whilst decarbonising transport and building resilient physical and digital connections.

- Increase the population by improving local liveability, creating a low carbon network of towns and supporting sustainable rural development.
- Support local economic development whilst making sustainable use of the area's world class environmental assets to innovate and lead greener growth.

On The South, the Plan highlights:

- Emissions in this area are moderate, with transport and industry emissions being partly offset by land use. The area has significant areas of woodland and peatland which act as a carbon sink and form the basis for future investment opportunities.
- Coastal erosion and flood risk is expected to be a significant challenge in the future, particularly where there is a risk of impacts on key transport corridors or settlements.
- Working with communities to find new ways of rural living that are consistent with climate change will be a challenge for this part of Scotland, given the relatively high levels of dependence on the car, limited public transport, housing affordability challenges and the dispersed population.
- Despite having high levels of wellbeing and quality of life, population decline is projected to continue in some regions to the west of the area, with fewer younger people and more retired people living in the area in the future. Economic diversification will help to address dependence on low wage and public sector employment.

One of the 6 national developments is the Stranraer Gateway, which acts as a hub for surrounding communities, and a key gateway to Northern Ireland for travel and commerce. Regeneration of Stranraer will help create a high quality, mixed use, locally liveable place, optimising the area as a national and international gateway.





# Chapter 2

## History



# 1. Historic Development



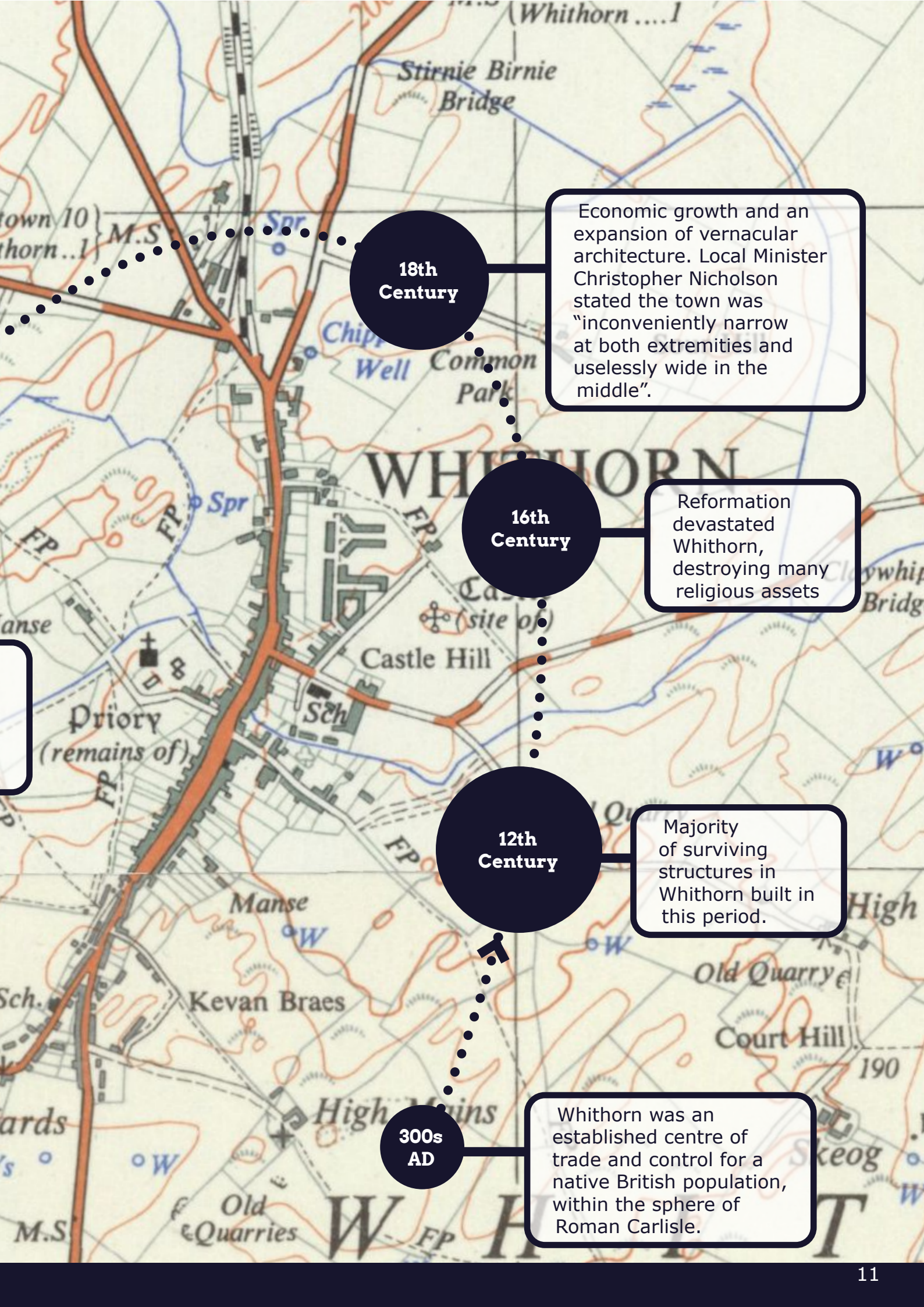
**20th  
Century**

A new focus on understanding and preserving historic assets during this period.

**Current  
Considerations**

Few modern developments, with balance shifting towards preserving the historic fabric





**18th  
Century**

Economic growth and an expansion of vernacular architecture. Local Minister Christopher Nicholson stated the town was "inconveniently narrow at both extremities and uselessly wide in the middle".

**16th  
Century**

Reformation devastated Whithorn, destroying many religious assets

**12th  
Century**

Majority of surviving structures in Whithorn built in this period.

**300s  
AD**

Whithorn was an established centre of trade and control for a native British population, within the sphere of Roman Carlisle.

## 2. Key Findings

In the 300s AD: Whithorn was an established centre of trade and control for a native British population, within the sphere of Roman Carlisle.

1. Early Ecclesiastical Structures (5th Century onwards): The town's earliest buildings were ecclesiastical in nature, associated with the establishment of St. Ninian's Candida Casa. These early structures would have been simple and focused on religious functions.

2. Premonstratensian Period and Monastic Buildings: Archaeology shows that new churches are constantly being built and altered in Whithorn. Most surviving structures at Whithorn were built during this period. By the 12th century a huge cathedral was on the hillside with a thriving town around it. Monastic buildings associated with the cathedral complex would have also been constructed.

3. Reformation Changes (16th Century): The 1560 Protestant Reformation devastated Whithorn. The church and monastery were suppressed, St Ninian's shrine destroyed, and the cathedral stripped of its wealth and estates. By the late 1500s, the church lay in ruins.

4. 18th Century and Vernacular Architecture: As Whithorn experienced economic growth in the 18th century, there was an expansion of vernacular architecture. Houses and buildings from this period reflect the architectural styles and materials typical of the time. The form of the town was commented on by the eighteenth-century minister, Christopher Nicholson, as "inconveniently narrow at both extremities and uselessly wide in the middle".

5. 19th Century Industrialisation and Transportation: Influx of people after the railway was established in 1877 to connect harbours to the rich agricultural land. This led to increase in accommodation and facilities. This was exacerbated following the wars which caused shifts in population as people moved for employment opportunities or were evacuated. Social housing was erected to cope with the influx. This coincides with changes in building materials and styles as a result of increased accessibility and economic shifts. A memorial was erected to honour those who served and lost their lives during the wars from the town. This memorial stands on the main street.

6. 20th Century Preservation and Heritage Conservation: There was a focus on preserving historic buildings during this period. Efforts to conserve and protect Whithorn's architectural heritage have influenced the development, with an emphasis on maintaining the authenticity of the town's historic structures.

7. Contemporary Considerations (21st Century): There have been few modern developments, with balance shifting towards preserving the historic fabric, adapting them to meet contemporary needs.

The town has put in place preservation efforts to maintain its unique character, such as the scheduled monument zone and conservation area status. Whithorn's buildings and street typology evolved over time in response to religious, economic, and societal changes, creating an unusually well preserved landscape that reflects the town's history.





**George Street,  
early 1900s**



**Railway line  
established in the 1870s**

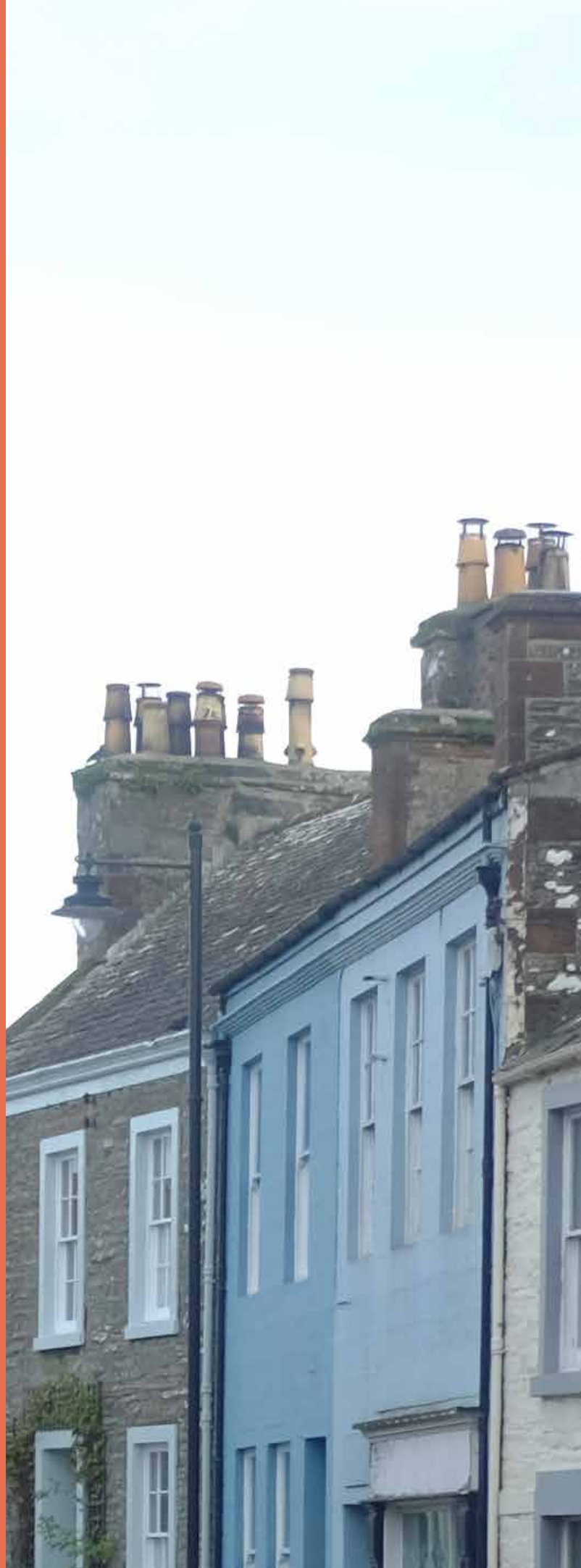


**Social housing erected  
following the 2nd World War**

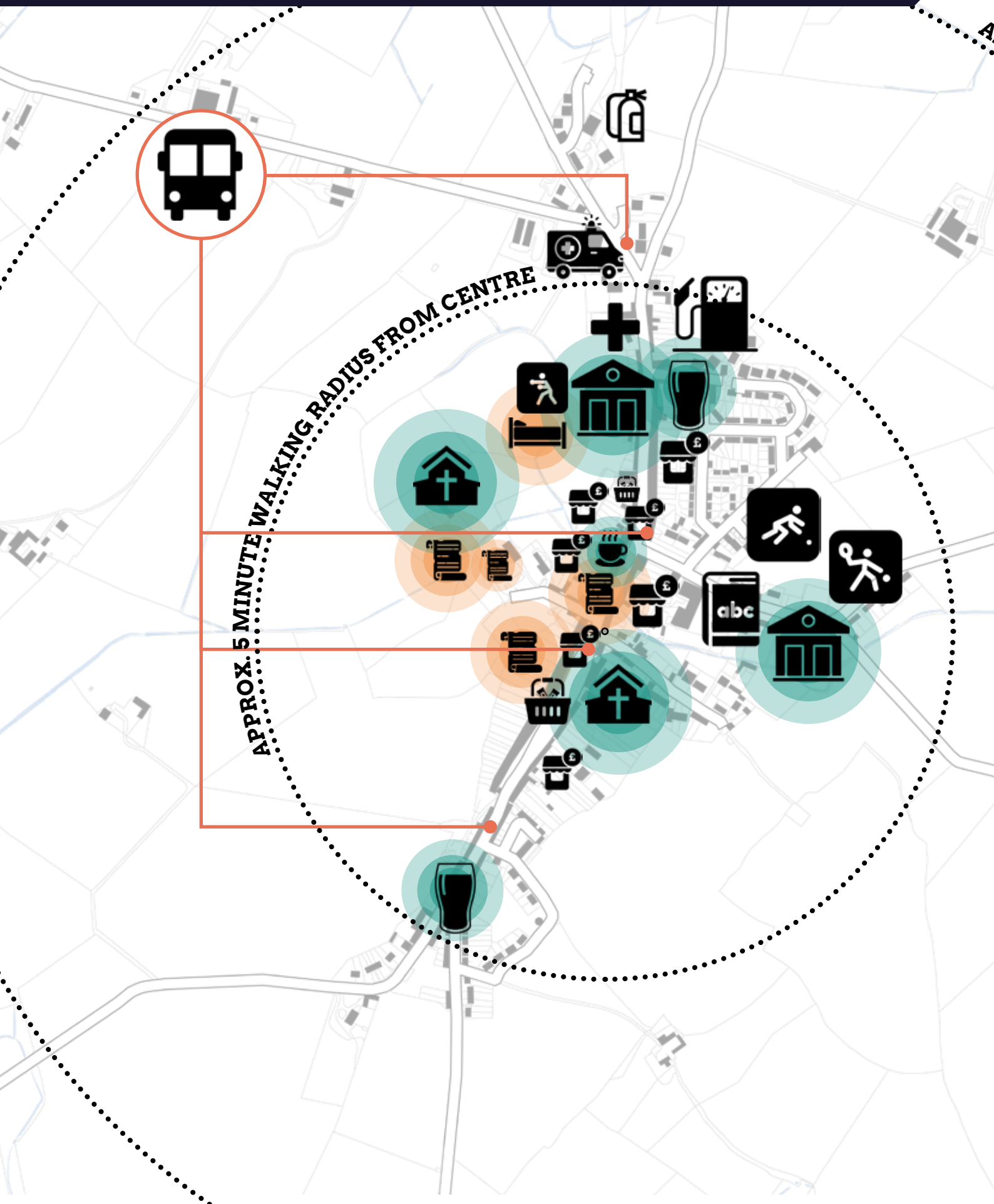


# Chapter 3

## Spatial Analysis

















## Whithorn Today







### Key

-  Local Groceries
-  Local business
-  Civic Building
-  Primary School
-  Cafe
-  Pub / restaurant
-  Church
-  Group accommodation
-  Health
-  Ambulance Station
-  Fire Brigade
-  Historical Feature
-  Tourism Magnet
-  Local Magnet

# Key Findings

- Whithorn has a number of facilities within the town, a provision which includes a Community Centre, Town Hall, churches, a few shops, cafés, and pubs. All are located within a 5 minute walk of the town centre.
- The town has a school for primary-age children.
- The New Town Hall and South Machars Community Centre between them offer internal facilities, including a gym, boxing gym, conference facilities, catering, training kitchen, re-use shop, and community fridge.
- The facilities and events programmes offered by the Town Hall and Community Centre attract visitors from a wider regional catchment.
- Facilities for exercise and health include tennis courts, a bowling club, boxing gym, and multi-purpose gym.
- The town also has a concentration of historical sites near the centre, including the ruins of Whithorn Priory.

## Opportunities

Borderlands Place Programme	NPF4	LDP2
	<p>The 'Local Living' spatial principle seeks to "ensure people can easily access services, greenspace, learning, work and leisure locally". There is a challenge by the remoteness of Whithorn from the nearest high school, and further understanding of work patterns is needed from consultation. Furthermore, it falls deficient as one of NPF4 'Liveable Places', which are defined as "providing opportunities for learning".</p> <p>The existing provision within Whithorn aligns it reasonably well to Policy 15, of supporting "local living, including 20 minute neighbourhoods within settlements".</p>	<p>LDP2's 20 year aim for vibrant towns includes: "a range of services and facilities that help support the local community". The current provision is broadly aligned to policy, albeit with previously identified gaps. The public consultation will assist in determining what additional services the community needs.</p> <p>The policies within LDP2 are generally supportive of the expansion of "existing businesses or [creation of] new ones in the rural area, subject to other policies in the Plan".</p> <p>The policies are also supportive of "proposals that provide new or enhanced community facilities. New community facilities should be located so they can be integrated with public transport and path and cycle routes."</p>

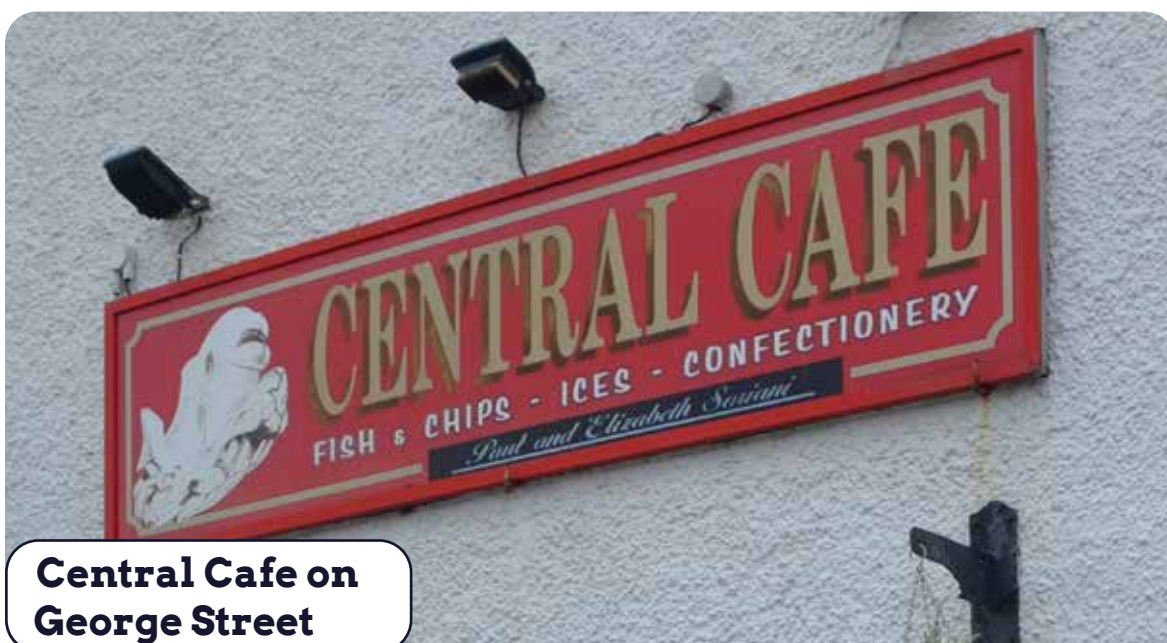




**Bravehearts Boxing Club,  
located in The New Town Hall**



**South Machars  
Community Centre**

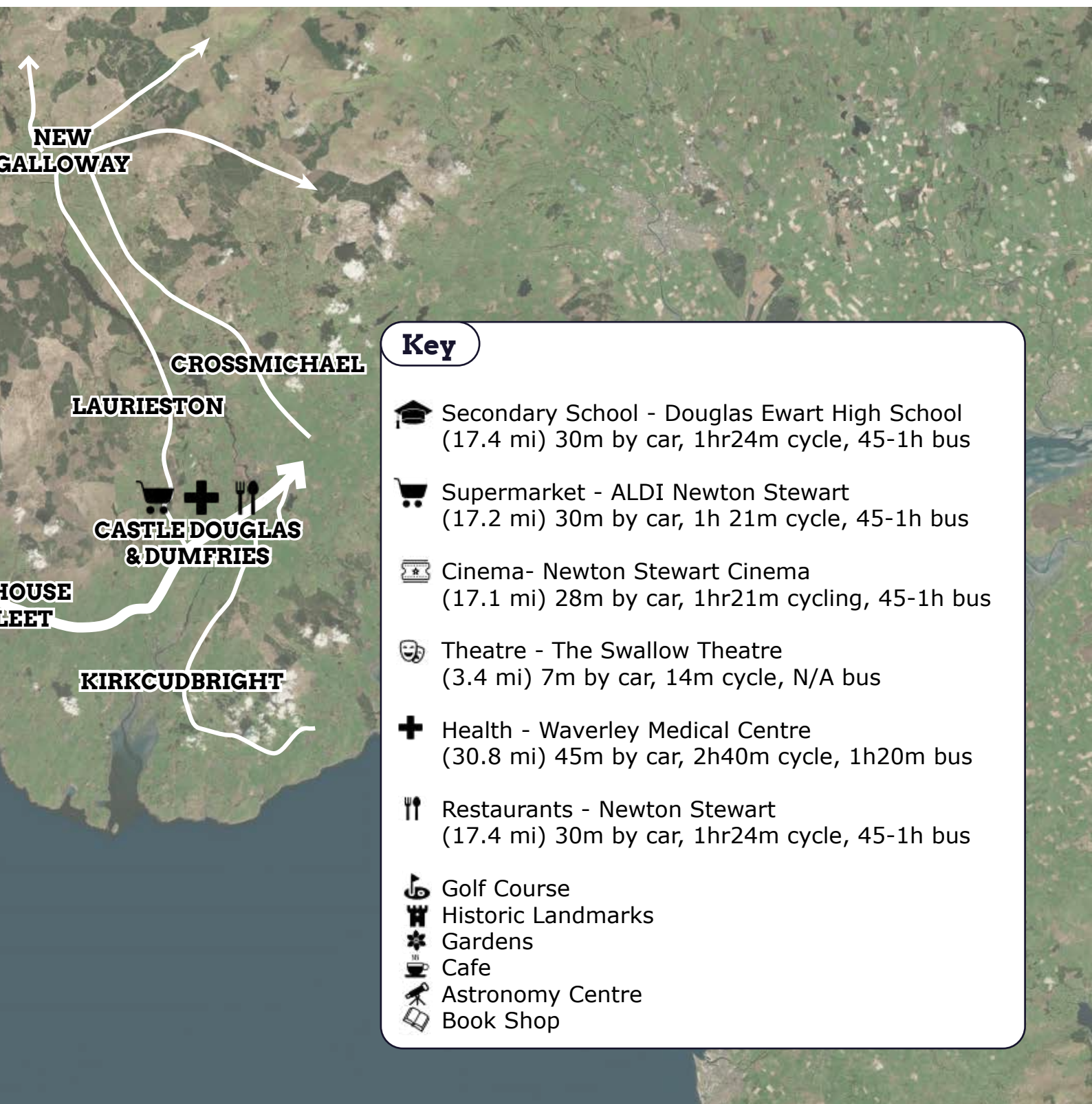


**Central Cafe on  
George Street**













# Whithorn in a Rural Context





### Key

-  Secondary School - Douglas Ewart High School  
(17.4 mi) 30m by car, 1hr24m cycle, 45-1h bus
-  Supermarket - ALDI Newton Stewart  
(17.2 mi) 30m by car, 1h 21m cycle, 45-1h bus
-  Cinema- Newton Stewart Cinema  
(17.1 mi) 28m by car, 1hr21m cycling, 45-1h bus
-  Theatre - The Swallow Theatre  
(3.4 mi) 7m by car, 14m cycle, N/A bus
-  Health - Waverley Medical Centre  
(30.8 mi) 45m by car, 2h40m cycle, 1h20m bus
-  Restaurants - Newton Stewart  
(17.4 mi) 30m by car, 1hr24m cycle, 45-1h bus
-  Golf Course
-  Historic Landmarks
-  Gardens
-  Cafe
-  Astronomy Centre
-  Book Shop



# Key Findings

- Whithorn is located at the south tip of a peninsula, resulting in longer journey times to easterly settlements. To reach Dumfries, travelling round the peninsula, takes one hour and thirty minutes.
- Ayr (location of the nearest airport) can be reached in 1h 45mins by car, and Glasgow (the nearest city) in 2h 30mins by car.
- Stranraer, a 45 minute drive away, offers ferry connections to Belfast in N.I.
- The main essential services located out-with Whithorn are the supermarket and high school. Both are located most closely in Newton Stewart, a thirty minute drive.
- The region offers some unique visitor experiences including: historic landmarks; the Galloway Dark Skies Forest Park, St Ninian's Cave, Woodfall Gardens, and the nearby town of Wigtown, Scotland's National Book Town.

## Opportunities

Borderlands Place Programme	NPF4	LDP2
The aim of the BPP to "stimulate business growth and create a more diverse rural economy" potentially increases the opportunities for regional employment.	<p>Whithorn is located in an area with a varied tourism offer. Policy 30 supports "the recovery, growth and long-term resilience of the tourism sector".</p> <p>Proposed investment in Stranraer as a 'national development' and hub for the surrounding communities could create trickle-down positive benefit and investment opportunities for Whithorn, and see an increase in provision in the surrounding settlements.</p>	The policies within LDP2 are supportive of "the designation and aims of the Biosphere and encouragement for development that demonstrates innovative approaches to sustainable communities and the economy."



### **St Ninian's Cave**

(Image credit: [historicensevironment.scot](http://historicensevironment.scot))



### **Woodfall Gardens, known as 'Galloway's Secret Garden'**

(Image credit: [scotlandsgardens.org](http://scotlandsgardens.org))



### **Isle of Whithorn Lighthouse**

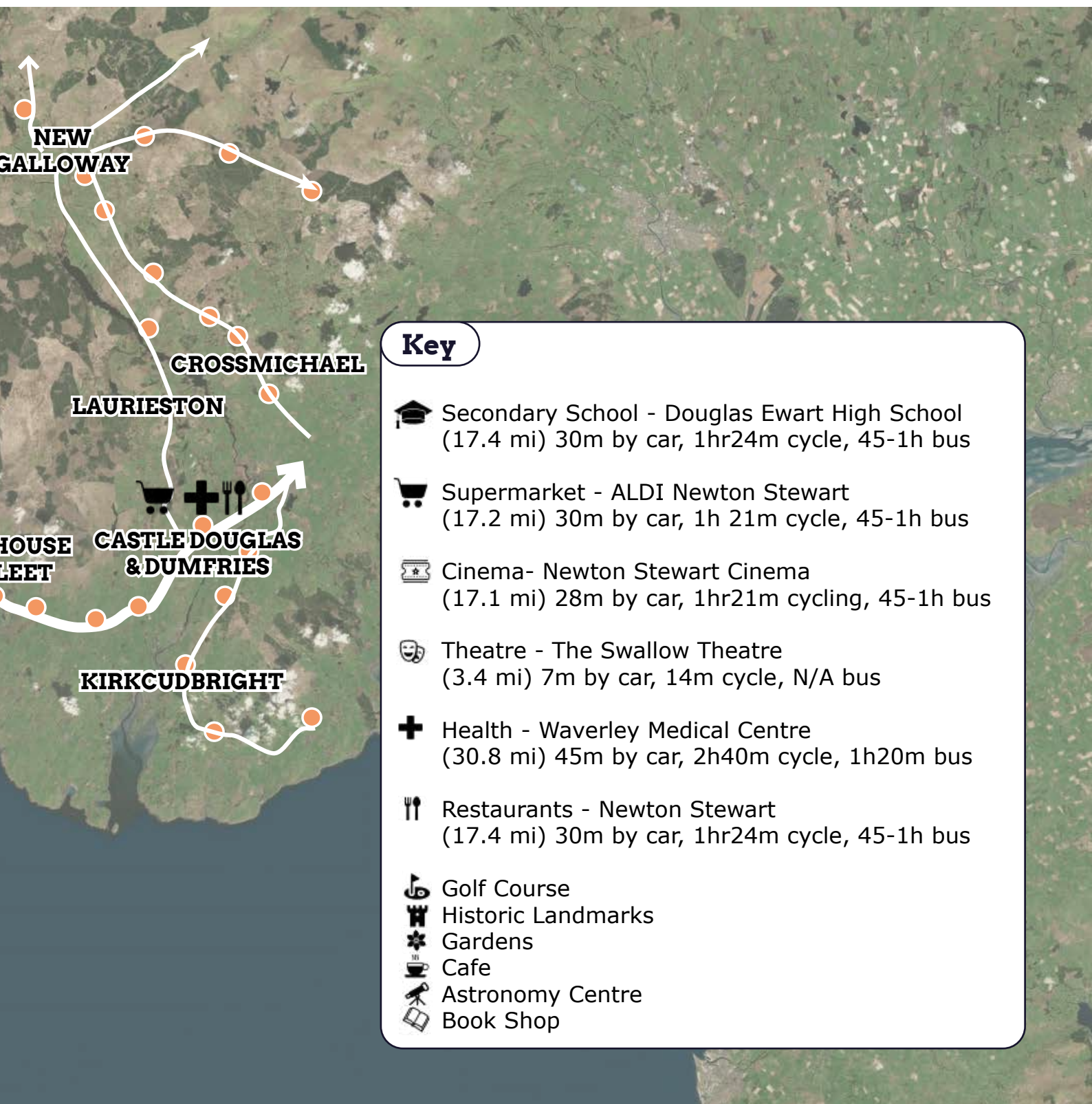
(Image credit: [lighthouseaccommodation.co.uk](http://lighthouseaccommodation.co.uk))



# Public Transport Infrastructure







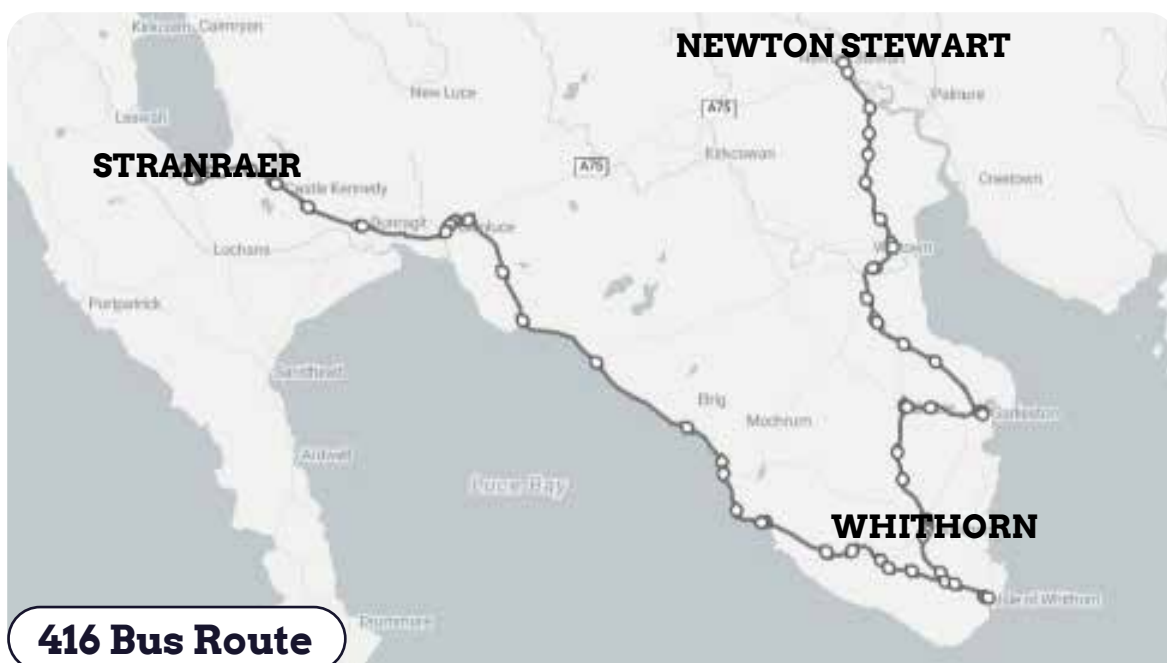
# Key Findings

- There are 5 bus stops located within Whithorn, at: Castlewigg, the Bus Depot, St John Street, The Grapes, and the Post Office.
- The 415 (blue line) and 416 (yellow line) provide a hourly service through Whithorn Mon-Sat, and 4no. services on a Sunday. They connect Whithorn with Newton Stewart, Wigtown, and Stranraer.
- The 359 from Girvan to the Isle of Whithorn provides a return service from Whithorn to Girvan, departing 06:40 and returning to Whithorn at 19:32.
- Onward connections link Whithorn to the wider bus network, with stops denoted across in orange.
- The only regional train connection is at Stranraer. 5no. trains daily operate to Ayr, with 1no. continuing direct to Glasgow (note: an emergency timetable is in operation as of 2023 due to the Ayr Station fire).

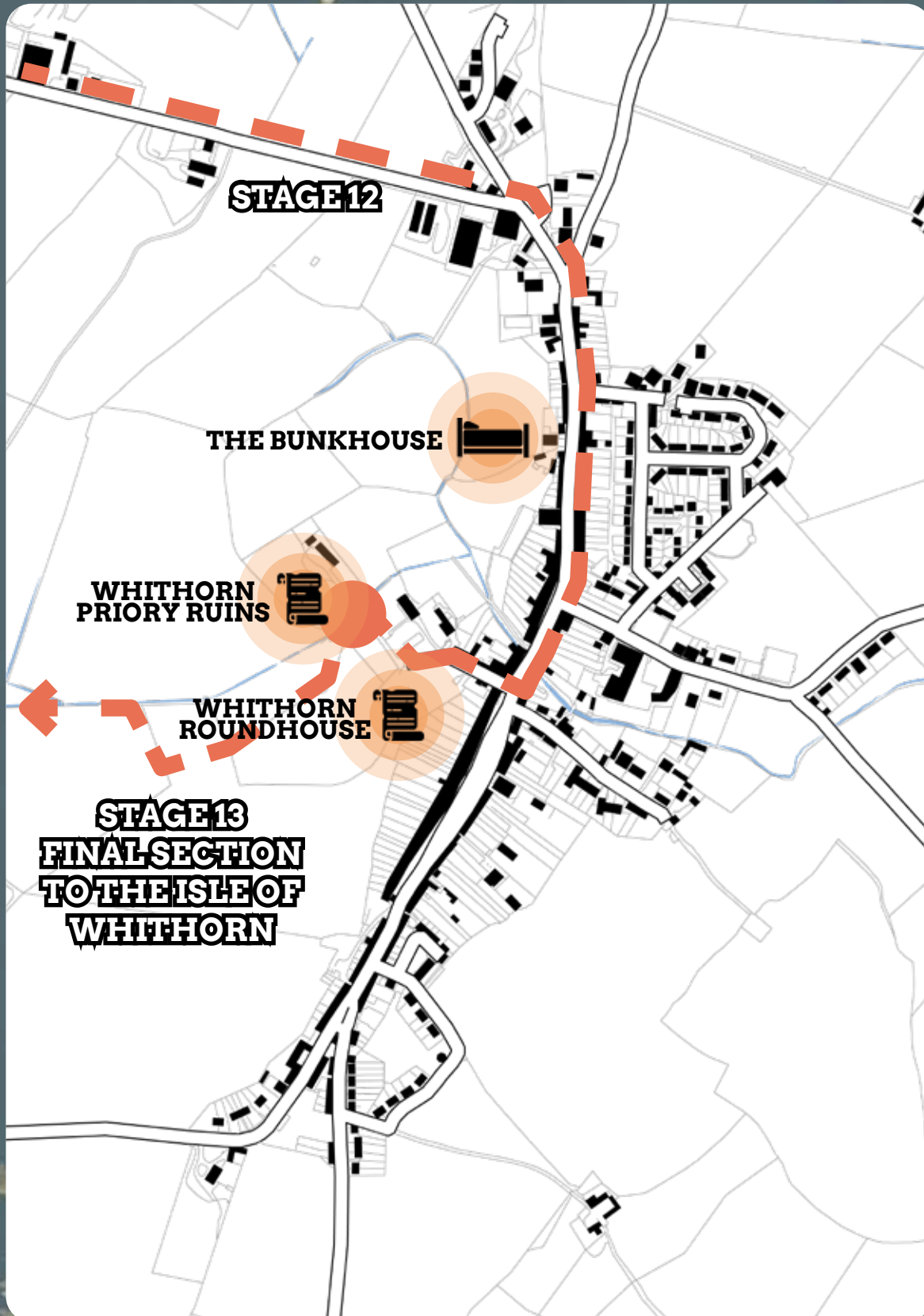
## Opportunities

Borderlands Place Programme	NPF4	LDP2
	<p>Whithorn is poorly accessed by sustainable travel, particularly from the central belt of Scotland, falling short of NPF4's definition of a 'Sustainable Place'.</p> <p>It also poses a challenge to any new development, which policy 13 specifies will be prioritised where it "can be accessed by sustainable modes".</p>	<p>LDP2's 20 year aim for a vibrant rural economy includes "access to sustainable transport".</p>





# Whithorn as a Walking Destination







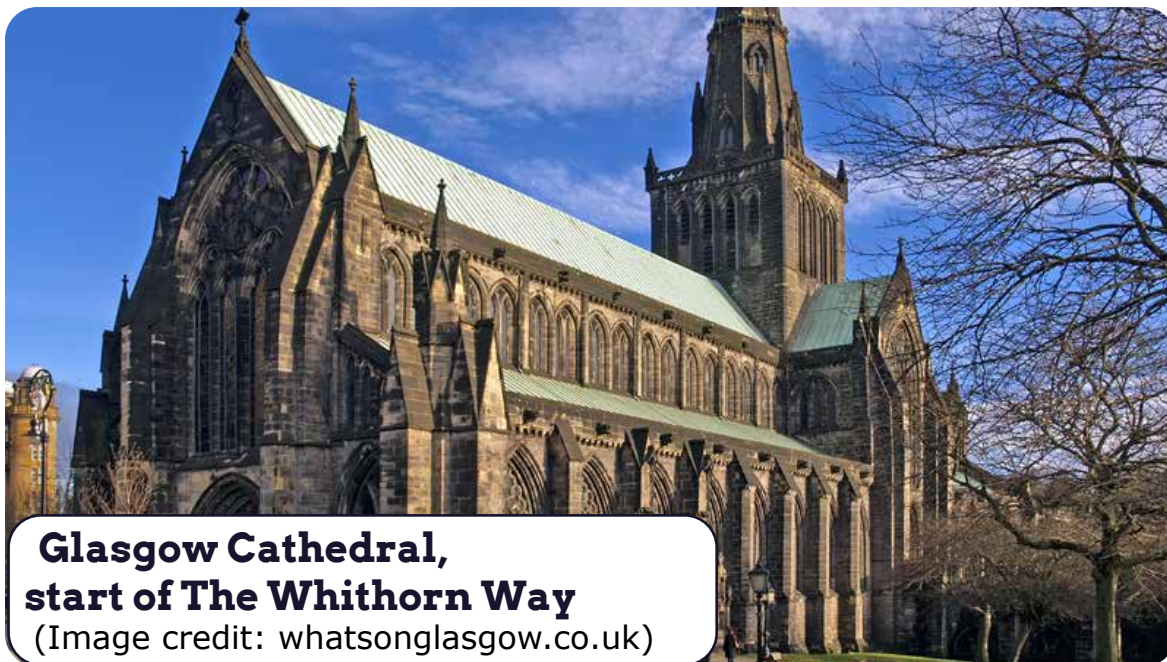
# Key Findings

- The Whithorn Way has recently been established as a long-distance walking and cycling route, with Whithorn to the Isle of Whithorn forming its final leg.
- The route begins in Glasgow, and passes through Renfrewshire and Ayrshire, before entering Dumfries and Galloway. The route is 143 miles long.
- The identity of the route is anchored around the pilgrim's route to Whithorn, a journey made for over 1000 years, and capitalising on Whithorn and the Machars peninsula's rich history of early Christianity in Scotland.
- The route adds to the already booming industry of walking tourism in Scotland. Scotland's most famous long-distance walk, the West Highland Way, sets a national benchmark for the visitor and economic potential of the industry, with 120k walkers per annum bringing £4.8m to the economy.

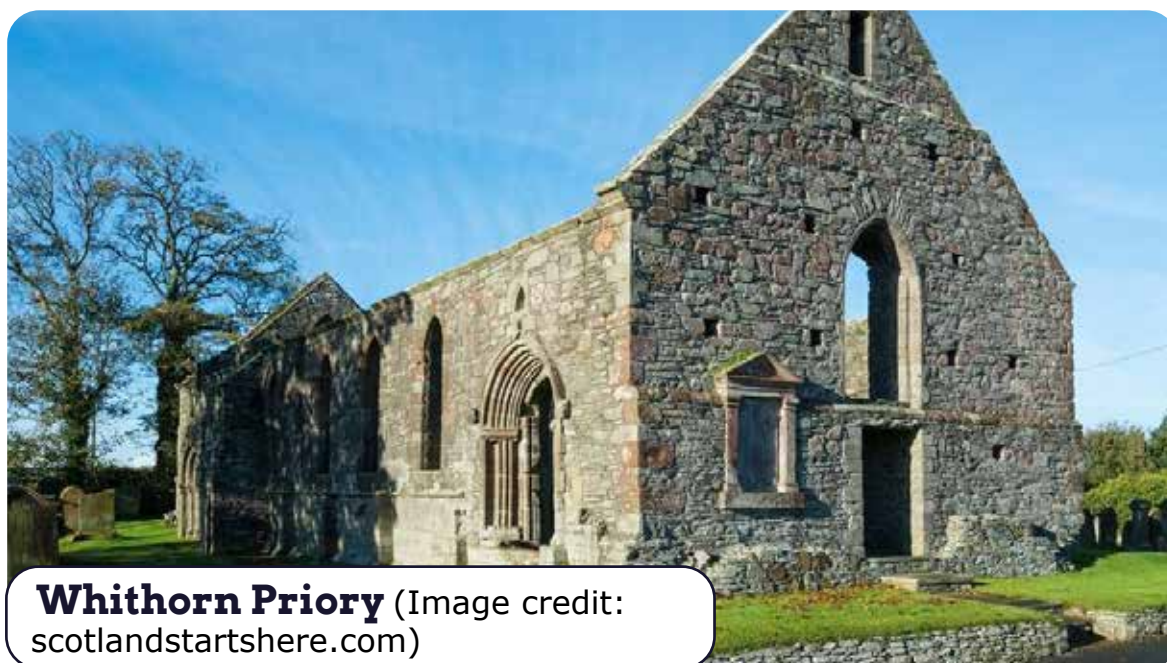
## Opportunities

Borderlands Place Programme	NPF4	LDP2
An objective of the BPP is to make "places that appeal to visitors as a destination". The Whithorn Way and monument sites around the Priory are a strong tourism offer aligning with the policy.	<p>The Whithorn Way is a useful opportunity to bring nature into our places, connecting people with nature", an aim of NPF4's 'Liveable Places'.</p> <p>It also aligns well with policy 20, which promotes to "Safeguard access rights and core paths, including active travel routes, and encourage new and enhanced opportunities for access linked to wider networks".</p>	The policies within LDP2 are supportive of "development of facilities for cyclists and pedestrians".





**Glasgow Cathedral,**  
**start of The Whithorn Way**  
(Image credit: [whatsonglasgow.co.uk](http://whatsonglasgow.co.uk))

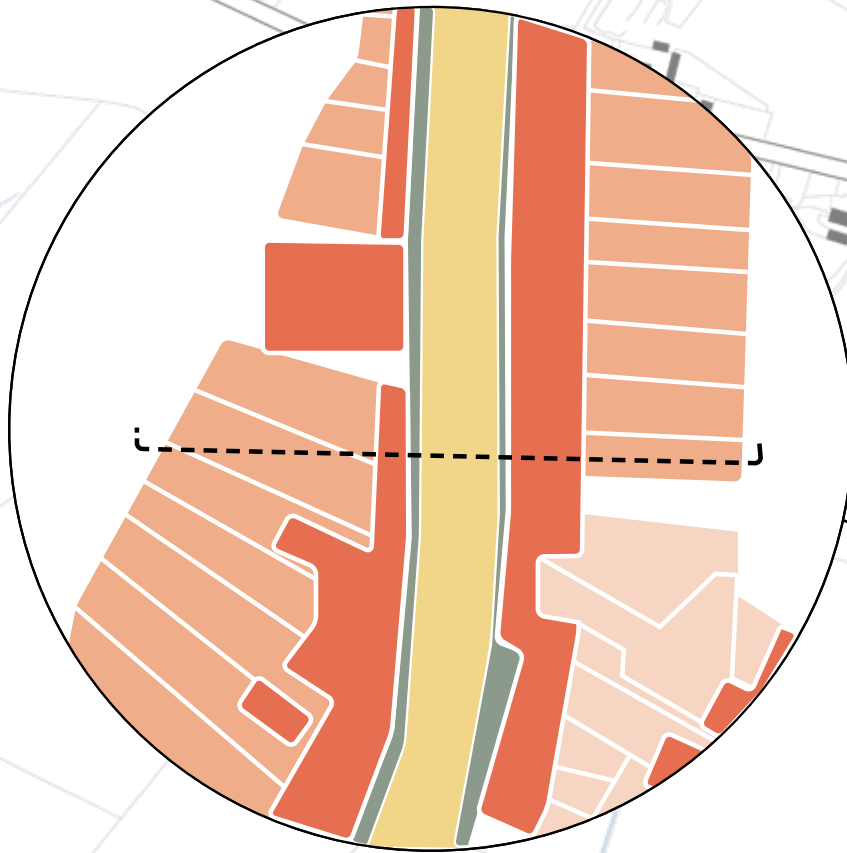


**Whithorn Priory** (Image credit:  
[scotlandstartshere.com](http://scotlandstartshere.com))



**The Bunkhouse at New Town Hall, offering**  
**18 bedspaces for walkers and cyclists**

# Town Centre Character



*"inconveniently narrow at both extremities  
and uselessly wide in the middle"*

Local Minister Christopher Nicholson, 1700s

## Key

- Residential / Retail
- Private Garden / Land
- Pavements
- Road Surface

*"It is George Street that gives Whithorn its unique character of a town based on one street which is closed at either end by "cross" buildings and widens in the centre to almost a "place"*

Architects Richard and Betty Moira in Whithorn Comprehensive Development Area Report, 1950s





# Key Findings

## Town Layout:

- Whithorn is laid out along a north-south axis, with an open link to the countryside behind the plots.
- Buildings in the town are mostly for residential use, with some shops concentrated at ground floor in specific areas.

## Historical Roots:

- The town plan dates back to the 13th century, following a planned medieval pattern of front-facing buildings, though there is earlier evidence of a settlement associated with the Priory.
- The continuous row of terraced houses creates a strong sense of enclosure, and movement is primarily along this central axis.

## Traffic and Parking:

- George Street has some wider spaces for parking, including a central parking area, splitting the road. This formalization of roadways and parking areas has altered the historic informal simplicity of the large public open space in George Street. LDP2 identifies “a return to this straightforward definition of space” as a future aim for the public realm.

## Commercial Areas:

- Commercial activity is centred in the southern end of St John Street and the northern end of George Street.
- This concentration leads to congestion from parked vehicles.

## Natural Elements:

- Trees are not prevalent in the central area, except for mature beech trees behind the Old Town Hall near the Priory.

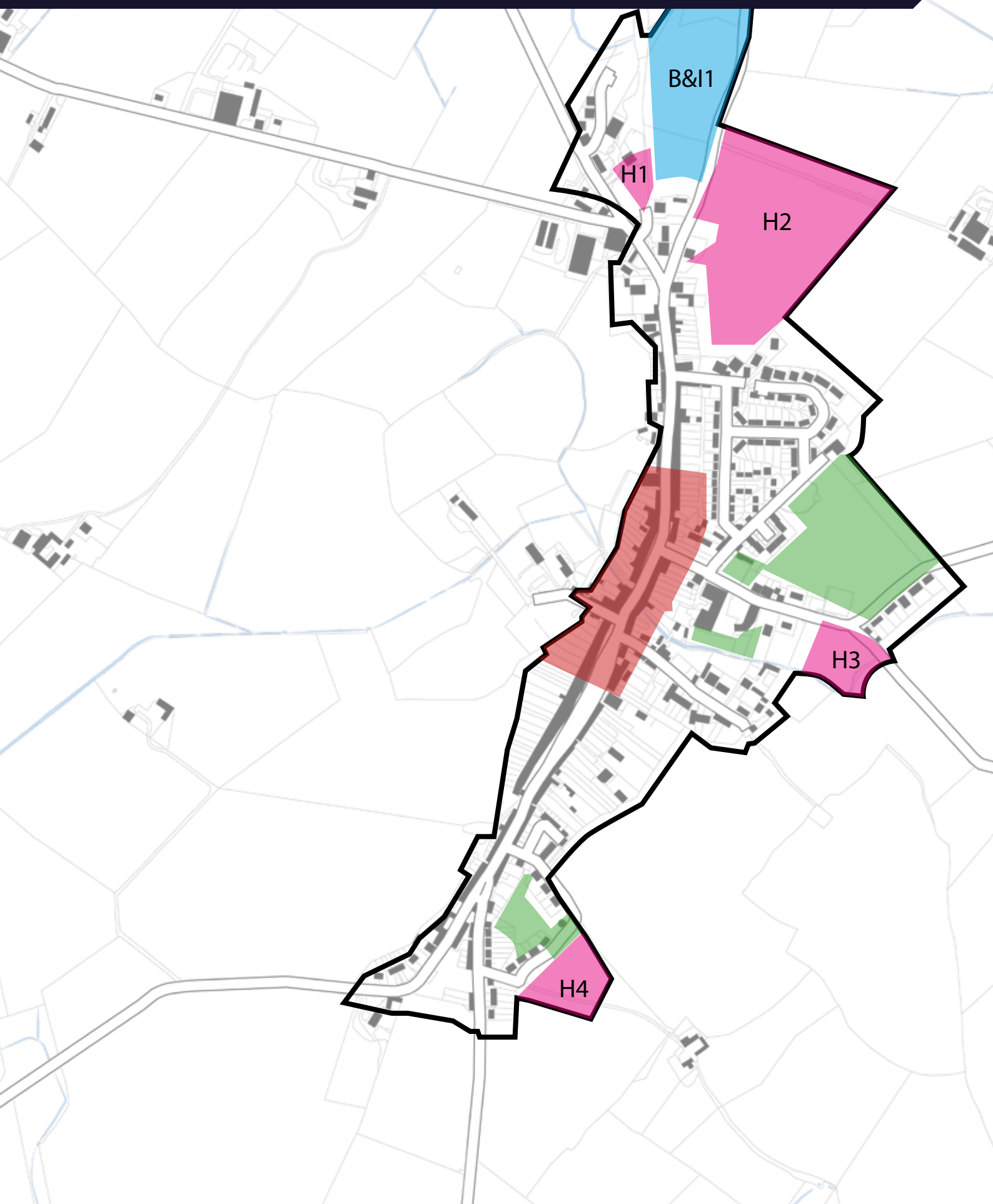
# Opportunities

Borderlands Place Programme	NPF4	LDP2
An objective of the BPP is to “raise the standard of the physical environment in our towns and town centres”, and so there is the potential for projects to positively align with this.	NPF4 places the character of its places as key to rural development, “including the existing pattern of development, pressures, environmental assets, community priorities and economic needs of each area. The spatial strategy should set out an appropriate approach to development in rural areas which reflects the identified characteristics”.	LDP2 identifies “a return to a straightforward definition of space” as a future aim for the public realm in Whithorn.  The policies within LDP2 are supportive of “development within or adjacent to a conservation area that preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the area and is consistent with any relevant conservation area appraisal and management plan”.





# Local Development Plan 2 Areas





### Key



Settlement Boundary



Allocated Housing Site



Protected Area of Open Space



Town Centre Boundary



Allocated Business and Industry Site

# Key Findings

Whithorn is identified as a District Centre in the Mid Galloway Housing Market Area.

## Whithorn Site Allocations

### **WTH.H1 Station Road (6 units allocated up to 2029)**

The site forms part of a former rail terminus and would require a Contaminated Land Investigation to be carried out. Site occupies a prominent position on the northern boundary of the settlement which future development should take into account.

### **WTH.H2 Common Park (76 units allocated up to 2029)**

The site requires two access points from the B7004 with a loop road layout within the site. Development should incorporate an access point into the adjoining eastern field so as not to prejudice potential future development. Pedestrian and cycle links should be provided to link the site with the town centre and local facilities. The historical maps record several quarried areas on this site and therefore a Ground Investigation report of the site will be required to ensure they have not been filled with contaminated material. There is a possible flood risk associated with this site and a Drainage Impact Assessment is required. Development should retain trees and existing boundaries, including the dry stone dyke, where possible. Archaeological Mitigation may be required due to a municipal boundary marker stone in the boundary dyke and possible rock carvings on bedrock outcrops.

### **WTH.H3 Ladycroft (5 units allocated up to 2029)**

The site is best suited to frontage development as it would reflect the existing pattern of development in the area. Castlehill will need to be widened and a footpath provided. There is a possible flood risk associated with this site and a Flood Risk Assessment is required.

### **WTH.H4 Greencroft (8 units allocated up to 2029)**

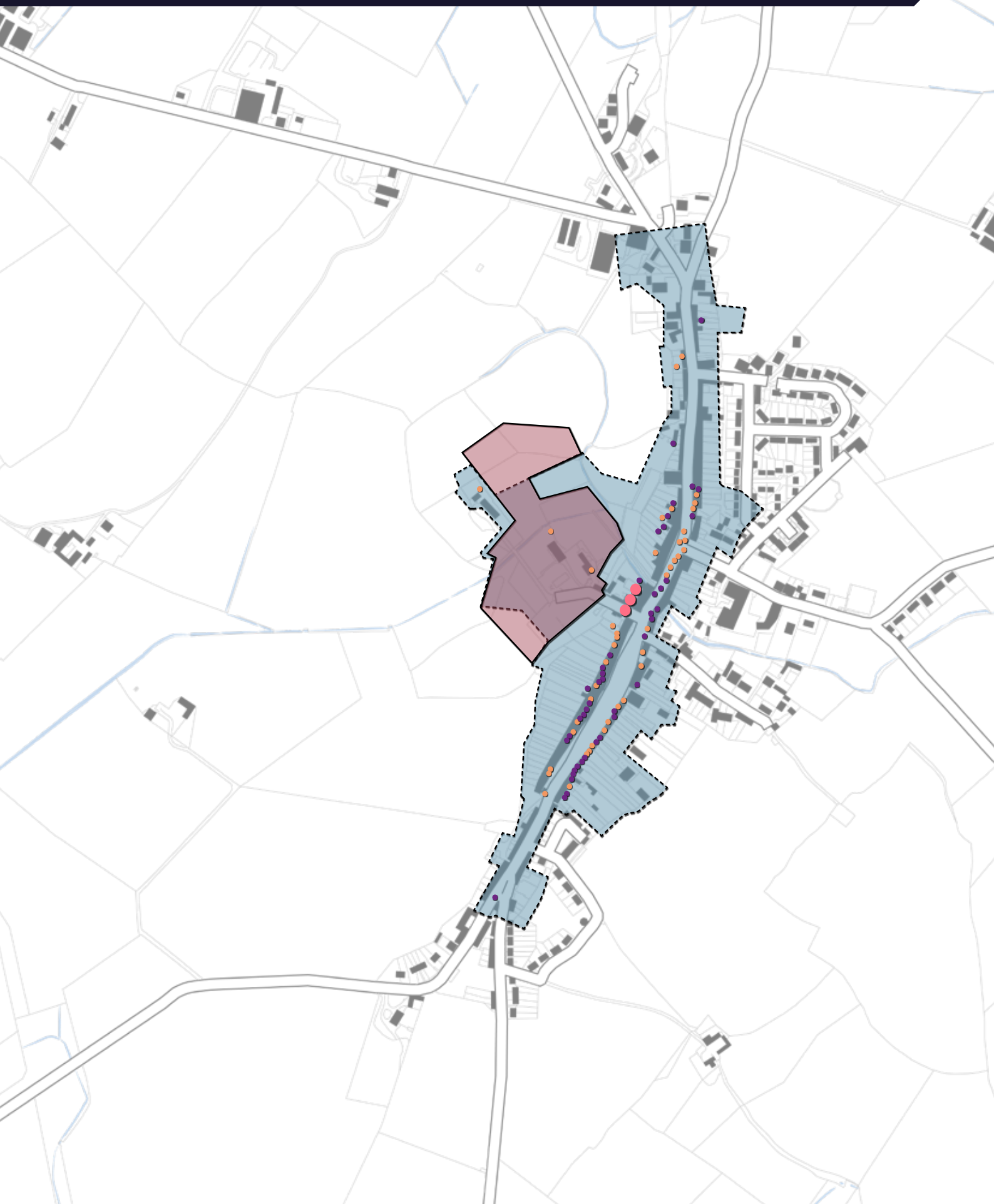
Careful and sensitive design is required as the site is located on a hill top and visible from the south and east. Dry stone dykes and gorse thickets are characteristic of the area and should be retained where possible. The layout of the site should ensure that the development does not intrude into open countryside. Pedestrian and cycle links should be provided to link the site with the town centre and local facilities.

**WTH.B&I1 Stirnie Birnie Bridge (2.78 hectares)**

Site offers suitable business and industry land for one of the region's most rural towns. The site requires two access points from the B7004 and would require road widening and a pedestrian footway. There is a possible flood risk associated with this site and a Flood Risk Assessment is required. Development of the site must include screening from the adjacent housing areas to the west. An investigation into potential contaminated land will be required.



# Heritage





### Key

- Category A
- Category B
- Category C
- Conservation Area
- Scheduled Monument



# Key Findings

- Whithorn has a significant number of listed buildings, including 3no. Category A listed buildings, at 53, 55 and 57 George Street, either side of the pend. Above the pend is a heraldic panel showing the Royal Arms of Scotland.
- Whithorn is largely a Conservation Area in Local Development Plan 2. This means that in addition to planning consent required in normal circumstances, consent is also required for changes such as stone cleaning, painting buildings, and changing windows.
- A 2005 Building Condition Survey by Solway Heritage
- Whithorn Priory is designated as a Scheduled Monument, of national importance, for its contribution to our understanding of early monastic settlements and medieval centres of pilgrimage. Its designation acknowledges that only a small part of the site is yet fully investigated.

## Opportunities

Borderlands Place Programme	NPF4	LDP2
The aim of the BPP to “improve places”, includes: “capitalising on our heritage, cultural and recreational assets to promote the region as a destination to visit”.	<p>Reuse of existing heritage buildings aligns to the spatial principle of conserving and recycling assets.</p> <p>The museum offer in the town aligns partly to the definition of a ‘Liveable Place’, “using buildings and other physical assets can also support activities based on intangible cultural assets”, the cultural asset in this case being its history – both visible and invisible.</p> <p>The ongoing conservation of Whithorn’s cultural assets is aligned to Policy 7, to “Support the sustainable management of the historic environment”.</p>	<p>LDP2’s 20 year aim for vibrant towns includes: “enhanced historic environment, streetscape and open spaces”. The work in Whithorn to safeguard the historic environment aligns to this policy point.</p> <p>The policies within LDP2 are supportive of “the protection of significant archaeological and historic assets”.</p>



**Category A listed buildings  
at 53-57 George Street**



**Excavation of the Priory West  
Range in the 1970s**  
(image credit: scotlandstartshere.com)



**Ongoing building  
restoration within Whithorn**

# Demographic





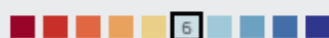
## Dumfries & Galloway - Machars South (part)

Local Authority: Dumfries & Galloway

Population			
Total	Working Age	Income Deprived	Employ Deprived
698	406	65	35

Decile 6, Quintile 3

Overall rank: 3721



Income domain rank: 3715



Employment domain rank: 4279



Health domain rank: 5619



Education/skills domain rank: 3815



Housing domain rank: 3307



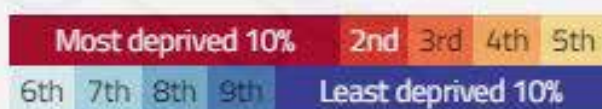
Geographic access domain rank: 310



Crime rank: 6191



## All Deciles



# Key Findings

- Whithorn has a total population of approximately 700, with approx 400 of working age. As of 2021, there are 421 dwellings in Whithorn.
- School attendance rate in the Machars South 06 area (in the 2016/17 period) was 91.7%, slightly lower than the local authority area average of 94.2%.
- The mean house price (in 2018) was £74k, lower than the local authority area average of £147k.
- In the 2017-19 period, the % of women recorded as smokers at ante-natal bookings was 41%, almost 3 times the national average (14%).
- According to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020 (across), whithorn is in the least deprived 10% nationally in terms of crime, but in the most deprived 10% for geographic access to services.

## Opportunities

Borderlands Place Programme	NPF4	LDP2
An objective of the BPP is to "increase and retain the working age population", a change which brings further benefits such as more families, increased school roll, etc.	<p>Identified principle under Rural Revitalisation of growing rural communities. This increase in population is an aim in 'The South' regional priorities, to be achieved by improving local liveability.</p> <p>A better understanding of local work patterns and aspirations will determine the appetite for increased self employment, new ventures, and business opportunities. Relevant to this are policies 24 supporting "the delivery of digital infrastructure" and 26 promoting the allocation of "sufficient land for business and industry".</p>	LDP2's 20 year aim for vibrant towns includes: "more businesses and people working from home", and "more opportunities to meet locally arising affordable housing needs", in addition to "high quality, affordable housing".





**Gym facility at  
New Town Hall**



**Looking South up George Street**





# **Chapter 4**

## **Key Stakeholder Engagement & Place Standard Tool Audit**





# Overview

To ensure that recommendations within the place plan considers existing work done in and by the local community, New Practice has undertaken direct engagement with key stakeholders from the inception of the project and continuing throughout its three stages. This consideration of existing efforts by local groups and stakeholders is to sit alongside the recommendations of the place plan, rather than directly including them within proposed projects, in an effort to maintain an impartial approach which draws its conclusions from the wider consultation of the entire community. As such, the place plan seeks to accent and support existing plans via holistic net benefits.

While New Practice and Page\ Park's location in Glasgow afforded an objective separateness in the development of the place plan, key stakeholder engagement was considered crucial in work to understand the town of Whithorn, its residents, and the best way to engage with the local population. Direct conversation with key stakeholders helped to inform the development of a bespoke engagement strategy for the project, which took into account considerations of digital and physical accessibility, past engagement experiences and local context.

Key stakeholder engagement took the form of informal meetings throughout the town, introduced by members of the Dumfries & Galloway Council client team, and in more traditional meetings with identified key groups.

As part of this process, New Practice was provided the following documents for wider context:

- 10,000 Voices Report, Youth Work at Dumfries and Galloway Council
- Whithorn Bus Shelter Survey, Dumfries and Galloway Council with Swestrans

In addition to this, meetings were held with the following key parties to provide information on wider initiatives in the area:

- 20th December, Swestrans
- 10th January, Housing and Regeneration at Dumfries and Galloway Council
- 10th January, GSA Biosphere
- 16th January, Youth Work at Dumfries and Galloway Council

# Inception Day Meetings

On the 18th October 2023, New Practice and Page\Park travelled to Whithorn for a focussed day of inception activities to the project. As part of these, the first meetings with key stakeholders were facilitated through in person introductions by Dumfries & Galloway Council.

The stakeholders met during this initial visit to the town included:

- All Roads Lead to Whithorn
- The Whithorn Trust
- Re-Build
- South Machars Community Centre
- Whithorn Playpark Project

During these meetings, New Practice and Page\Park were introduced, before outlining the project, our intended programme, and offering the invitation for more developed conversations in the future.

Discussions which took place centred on understanding existing development plans in the town, as well as past consultation programmes delivered in the town, focussing on their respective projects, engagement rates, successes and reflections for potential improvement. Documents regarding these past consultations were sourced to not only help inform the wider place plan recommendations, but to also ensure that questions asked in future engagement were meaningful and devised in a manner to avoid abortive consultation or local consultation fatigue.

The outcomes of these first meetings

were incorporated into initial developments for an engagement strategy, considering assumptions to test through future key stakeholder engagement in its refining.

# South Machars Community Centre

On the 8th November, New Practice spoke over the phone with a representative of South Machars Community Centre.

We discussed with them our initial thoughts regarding engagement, while seeking advice on the best way to reach people of the town and any events which may be suitable for speaking with locals informally.

It was suggested that dropping in to existing events would be a successful form of engagement, as participants may be more inclined to give feedback if we were there in-person to talk to them. She outlined a number of events in the town's calendar which could be suitable, across a number of locations as well as the Community Centre itself.

She advised that if we were to engage at the Community Centre, then Tuesday's would be successful, as it is their busiest day with events and footfall.

It was discussed that some locals may be hesitant to engage, based on past experience with consultations. In particular, it was guessed that many thought the topics of consultation were not 'for them' - as such, reaching people directly and providing clear information on the place plan and the need for everyone's thoughts (and how they would be used) was important in the process.

They suggested that the Community Centre could be one of many locations where a drop-off point for paper surveys could be hosted.





# The Whithorn Trust

On the 13th November, New Practice met digitally with a representative of The Whithorn Trust.

They described the unique archaeological history and opportunities of Whithorn. While the town itself is picturesque and has character for touristic appeal, the archaeological and historical assets of Whithorn are superb, and with proper development could create significant wider draw for the local economy, employment opportunities and local skills development.

It was discussed how there has been success in a number of funding venture across the town with different groups, indicating that there is wider support for developing the area and the unique appeal of the projects possible in Whithorn.

In discussing the place plan itself, New Practice described our approach, which will propose projects that most directly meet criteria, based on wider engagement. In considering these engagement methods, it was agreed that discussions in the town need to be analytical and within this criteria, rather than opening a blank canvas, to ensure that outcomes are realistic and expectations of all are managed.

It was advised that it was important that during engagement it is clearly presented to the public what the funding was for, what it could do and the future process for gaining it after the place plan development was complete.



# Second Town Visit

On the 29th November, New Practice travelled to Whithorn for our second in-person visit to the town. This was to both gather additional information for the continuing analysis of the area in person, and undertake further engagement and introductions with key stakeholders, again facilitated by the Dumfries & Galloway Council client team.

During this visit, New Practice had brief introductions to the following stakeholders:

- G & C Galloway Grocers
- Whithorn Newsagent and Post Office
- Whithorn Pharmacy
- Costcutter Convenience Store
- The Jolly Laundry Room
- Southern Machars NHS Practice
- The Priory Veterinary Centre
- The Railway Inn
- Whithorn Primary School Head Teacher

We engaged in brief conversation with all stakeholders met, introducing our own team, the project and its purpose, and discussing their own thoughts on the best way to engage with the local population, particularly drawing on their own experience as local business owners or community members in regular contact with a wide pool of residents.

Our main conclusions from this visit were that a diverse range of engagement styles would be required to ensure that residents were given multiple opportunities to provide their thoughts, which would help to mitigate

issues not only in physical and digital connectivity, but also in allowing those to choose the opportunities, activities and spaces which felt most comfortable for them to provide honest feedback.

All businesses engaged confirmed they'd be happy to act as a drop-off point for any surveys or self-directed engagement materials circulated by New Practice, and to assist in promotion via any posters or flyers which may be distributed in advance of the consultation period.

# Interviews with Elected Members

During the consultation period, New Practice engage with the four local councillors representing Whithorn:

- Cllr. Katie Hagmann
- Cllr. Jackie McCamon
- Cllr. David Inglis
- Cllr. Richard Marsh.

The purpose of these meetings to generally hear the thoughts and desires they've come to understand through their work.

It was discussed that one of the hurdles that the project may encounter is getting the whole community involved and to work together. It's important for the consultation to engage with as many people in Whithorn as possible, to hear the underheard voices of the community, as well as those already passionate and very engaged with developing the town. Hearing from this wide range of people will help the process be impartial and democratic, and show a consensus of the whole town, which everyone can get behind.

It's important to engage with young people, to understand their needs and to incorporate their creative ideas and agency into the town, both for their own needs and those of future generations. Whithorn has a problem of young people leaving the town after school and not coming back; "some want to study and travel, and that's understandable, but how can we help to make lives for those that would stay, or how can we encourage some to come back as young adults?"

There is a desire to see a really vibrant and creative, ambitious place plan, to really seize the potential of this work. Whithorn needs some more life and vibrancy injected into it.

Religious history and tourism is core to the town and its identity; there's great work being done around this. However, people need more reasons to come to the town, and they should be integrated into wider themes of identity and community agency. "Could Whithorn connect to wider elements such as agriculture, nature, the biosphere, and the potential of new national parks to capitalise on this capacity?"

The creative arts sector should be supported more, and more visible in the town, as there is some great talent and potential for it to be used as a form of skill-learning across generations. There should be support for this generally, in addition to some way for its yield to be accessed by visitors.

The place plan needs to acknowledge the isolation of Whithorn, and try and make it a more liveable place for people in what ways it can. "Beyond the positive discussions around sustainable energy and building reuse, could there be more greenery for wellbeing or allotments?"

Two vibrancy generally is crucial; the high street used to have such life. A market is a good idea, or something that generally can act simultaneously to engage locals, bring events to the town and act as a wider draw



for visitors - this would be a great initiative.

The centre of the town lends itself to some form of more accessible, human-scaled creative space for gathering and public use. "Is there a portion of the town that we could indicate for a more optimised car parking space, to make the central portion of George Street more practical for creative resident use?"

Generally, all the example projects that are being used as a springboard for discussions with residents are good ideas for Whithorn, to varying degrees, and should bring positive, creative ideas forward.

# Historic Environment Scotland

On the 16th July, New Practice met digitally with Historic Environment Scotland's District Manager for Dumfries and Galloway.

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) own and manage the Whithorn Priory and Museum, and lease their land to The Whithorn Trust. Their Skills Development Team have worked in close collaboration with Whithorn Rebuild on community projects.

It was highlighted that HES would like to see investment channelled to make improvements to transport and tourist infrastructure, to maximise the ease and enjoyment of visitor travel and experience.

HES expressed their desire to see the Place Plan bring focus and care to the unique and world-class heritage at Whithorn, and made mention of a number of engaged locals and passionate groups working already in Whithorn. They indicated their desire to be a collaborator and to have involvement with any outcomes and future projects in the Place Plan, and are happy to assist wherever possible.



**Whithorn Priory**

(image credit:  
historicenvironment.scot)

# Place Standard Tool Audit

At the beginning of the project, New Practice was provided the results from the survey used (facilitated by Dumfries & Galloway Council) in the past efforts to create the place plan, as an additional 'extra step' for context and research.

The Place Standard Tool survey results show and aid facilitation of conversation about a place. In this particular survey, it helped us to identify what the people of Whithorn believe is 'missing' from the town, and what the town is already doing well / achieving.

These survey results were important to gauge the themes for the projects of the Whithorn Place Plan, in order to effectively carry out consultation and public engagement. It is also an important tool, to provide information for future considerations, when looking at developments the town needs, in order to accommodate the needs of the population.

## **Moving Around**

The results show that peoples' main concerns surround accessibility, whether that is access on pavements/ along the street or access to public transport. There are clear issues surrounding street accessibility, due to obstructions or not enough provision for those with accessibility issues. These issues are sometimes heightened by traffic or speeding vehicles, to which there has been a suggestion for traffic control.

On the other hand, people enjoy the provision of footpaths through

the town, which make access to the Whithorn Way easy, and enable a fast connection to nearby countryside.

## **Public Transport**

It is clear from the results in the survey, that often choosing the car as a mode of transport is prioritised, due to the inefficient bus service. People have commented on the infrequency of bus services, and lack of bus shelters and timetables. Another point that comes up through this theme is the concern of rising prices, and the hope for public transport fares to stay low.

## **Traffic and Parking**

As has also been mentioned with the theme of moving around, people believe that traffic is sometimes an issue in the town, particularly along streets where there is no adequate car parking strategy. A revised car parking strategy may be needed, in order to help with some of these issues, however people's opinions are somewhat divided, as some believe that the parking is sufficient, and works well in the town.

Along the streets, there are some EV chargers for cars and bikes, and people are in support of this, and would like more of them.

## **Streets and Spaces**

It is evident that people in Whithorn appreciate the streetscape, and its unique identity due to the conservation area. The main concerns surrounding this theme, are the number of derelict buildings that need to be renovated / used, and

this should be done in a way that is respectful to the character of the town, and also helping to make the buildings more energy efficient.

People would like more street furniture, in particular, places to rest, which could be combined with the creation of bus shelters, as part of improving the accessibility of the streets.

### **Natural Space**

Whithorn is connected to the beautiful countryside and surroundings. People appreciate the green spaces and parks available to them, and the work that is being done to make these spaces better.

Accessibility to the Whithorn Way, and to other green spaces is an area of concern, as paths are not very accessible, and some are potentially dangerous, due to not being wide enough.

### **Play and Recreation**

People have commented on the need for the play parks to be upgraded and updated, especially to make them accessible for a range of youth ages.

### **Facilities and Services**

The town has welcomed the provision of new spaces which provide access to recreational activities, for all ages, with particular reference to the recent upgrade of the New Town Hall. People comment that there needs to be more spaces particularly for the younger generation.

With reference to specific services in the town, there is a concern raised over the lack of sufficient healthcare services, with people noting that often the local pharmacy is taking up the work of GPs in the local surgery. It is

also frequently made clear that the town needs more places such as cafes and restaurants, not just open during busy seasons, that create a space for people to socialise and sit and eat food.

### **Work and local economy**

An overarching theme within this category is that unemployment rates are high in the town, and that there is a lack of opportunity for people of all ages to learn skills, and get employed in the town. It is mentioned that some existing groups are helping to tackle this issue, by offering initiatives such as the 'Building Futures Galloway'. People welcome the idea of more businesses within the town, that also may help with derelict shops, and believe this would also increase the vibrancy of the town centre.

### **Housing and community**

It is clear that the overall standard and 'feel' of the streetscape is loved by many in Whithorn, due to the historical character of many houses. A concern is that many buildings are in disrepair, and need to be retrofitted, to match the town's character and to improve the energy efficiency. Another popular comment as part of this theme, is that there needs to be more housing, including provision for social, affordable and accessible housing.

### **Social Interaction**

People appreciate the community feeling in Whithorn, but concerns are mentioned over the impact of negative social media comments, and the effect this has on the town and different organisations.

### **Identity and Belonging**

In general, people have commented that Whithorn has a friendly and mostly welcoming community, towards



both locals and newcomers. Some people have concerns over newcomers not paying as much attention to the important history of Whithorn, as those who have always lived in the town. This causes tension between different groups in the town, and leads to some negativity, and splits amongst people.

### **Feeling Safe**

Overall, people in Whithorn feel safe, during the day and evening, as mentioned by some. People also commented that the crime level has gone down, despite some 'low-level' anti-social behaviour.

### **Care and Maintenance**

People in Whithorn believe the town is mostly well looked after, and cared for. Some comments were made over refuse provision, often blocking footpaths, and the need for an improved recycling system. A project that people welcome is the upgrade of the Old Town Hall.

### **Influence and Sense of Control**

People believe that there is a strong sense of leadership and control within the town, from some organisations, including the community council. There is however, divided opinion on the success of the community council, and whether everyone in the community's voice is being heard.

# **Part Two**

## **Chapter 5 Consultation Report**

# Consultation Process

Our engagement strategy was developed based on the findings of our initial discussions and previous consultation in the town, and drawing from our own past experience of working in rural locations and our work in the development and delivery of the first 'polycentric charette' for Place Plans in South West Angus. Core to this was an effort to try and move beyond the more present voices in the town, who we knew would be readily involved in our work, to capture the wider thoughts of the town and those sometimes 'underheard' in engagement processes.

For this process, it was important to offer a diverse range of engagement opportunities, recognising diverse accessibility concerns as a key barrier in rural areas. For instance, beyond physical accessibility to locations or spaces this included:

- Engagement for those with poor access to internet or online literacy;
- Potential discomfort in 'crossing the threshold' into an engagement space;
- Feeling that one can't speak their full opinion in a public forum setting;
- Geographic isolation or limits to the ability to take time away from work to attend events.

Alongside more traditional and formal engagement through public drop-in sessions at Whithorn Library, to respond to some of the aforementioned barriers, our team also positioned themselves to have more informal engagement in the town; this was in addition to remote forms of engagement such as a questionnaire postcard delivered to every address in the Whithorn Community Council boundary and a survey.

Our team stopped by at the beginning and end of a number of existing events at

key community spaces. This allowed for informal conversation in a trusted space, however was a way for specific groups to be engaged, across generations. Casual chats on the street and in shops during our visits were also important, and helped to build relationships locally and gain a first hand understanding of the personality of the community, highlighting opportunities or challenges that more traditional methods of data collection may have missed.

## Youth Engagement

Being provided with the findings from the 10,000 Voices consultation, delivered by Youth Work Dumfries & Galloway for Dumfries & Galloway Council, and learning that consultation work had recently been carried out for the local playpark initiative, it was decided that a workshop with specifically more mature youth voices would be a useful exercise. In our experience, this age group often also represents the harder youth voices to engage with, and those with important insight into youth agency in the area, especially regarding feelings on future skills, imminent needs for learning or employment, and leisure prospects in the area. The outcome of this was the workshop at Douglas Ewart High School in Newton Stewart, with students registered on the school roll from the Whithorn area.

## Discussing the Place Plan

We recognised that when initiating discussion on the Place Plan with people, presenting them with a limitless context would be difficult to engage with, and indicated little scope of what the Place Plan could include or the added complexity of the Borderlands funding criteria. In our early discussions in the town, we learned that giving people ideas and helping to describe the process and scope from the get go was important not only for building trust and transparency, but also to help people to understand what type of things they could be discussing with us. A wider context to the initiative and its possibilities also helped to build excitement about its prospects.

Based on this understanding, the spatial analysis research of Page\Park was combined with learnings from past consultation to develop a series of six themes which we thought were most applicable for framing discussion for the Place Plan. These represented what we anticipated would be the most common talking points, while still being loose enough for wider discussions. They were:



Within these themes, we developed a series of example initiatives. These were designed to help people understand the potential scope of what could be considered within the Place Plan, across different types of scale. This would allow people to either directly respond to and help us modify potential ideas, while also giving them creative leads to come up with their own.

Across the consultation, in addition to the general conversation that took place, people were invited to 'rate' the initiatives. This was to help us understand general consensus on the types of initiatives that would or wouldn't be appropriate for the area. Ratings of themes themselves were also invited to outline wider aspirations and priorities.

*Note: the full themes and example initiatives used for the consultation can be found in the Appendices.*



## Engagement Tools

### Promotional Tools

The consultation was promoted across both online and physical mediums. An online advertisement was posted via Meta (this is the platform that hosts Facebook, Instagram etc.), and was released a week before the consultation period began and ran throughout the consultation period; the advertisement was focussed to a 12km radius from the centre of Whithorn, and directed all to the initiative website. In addition to this, digital promotional materials were sent to key community groups and spaces to share with their wider networks. Physical promotion was implemented using posters in local high street businesses and key community spaces.

### Questionnaire Postcards

A promotional postcard was delivered to every address within the Whithorn Community Council boundary. These provided key information about the initiative, along with encouragement and details about opportunities to get involved. In the event that a recipient was hesitant or unable to take part, two key questions were asked to still gather their general views: what they thought the focus for Whithorn should be out of the six consultation themes, and what their top priority was for the future of the town. Recipients were able to drop their postcards at a number of key addresses across Whithorn to have their views registered. The postcard was an important form of outreach due to potential rural isolation of some residents, and to attempt to reach as many people across the area as possible in a democratic, equal opportunity manner to provide key feedback.

### Initiative Website

A bespoke website was developed to act as a 'hub' throughout the initiative. This provided key FAQs and context for the Place Plan process and its scope, information on the teams, and details about the different opportunities to get involved with the consultation and what to expect at any events.

### Online Survey

An online survey was developed to provide an accessible form of in-depth engagement, particularly with respect to potential rural accessibility barriers for residents across the area. While some demographic details were gathered in the survey for the purposes of understanding trends in responses, it also afforded an anonymous form of engagement for those not comfortable in expressing their views publicly. In the survey, people were invited to generally comment on what Whithorn's strengths were and where potential improvement was required. In addition to this, a series of ratings and ranking tools across the themes and initiatives, but frequently encouraged respondents to give their own ideas; each theme had a 'goal' which was used to consider the effectiveness of any respective initiative.

### Engagement Booklets

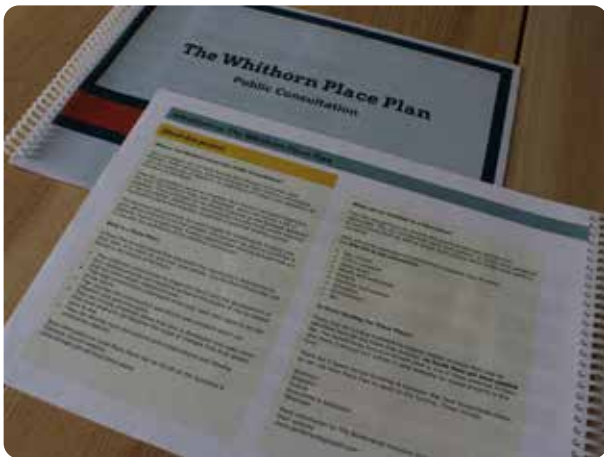
To aid in-person discussion, a booklet was developed to which briefly outlined the context of the Place Plan process, before presenting the series of themes and example initiatives with useful precedent imagery. This can be found in the Appendices.

## Engagement Boards and Feedback Cards

At key in-person engagement events, a series of engagement boards were positioned to provide detailed information on the entire Place Plan process, the teams involved, the criteria for Borderlands funding, and an extensive series of FAQs. These boards were primarily designed to provide an in-depth introduction to the entire initiative to participants before engaging our team in conversation. However, they also sat alongside a series of bespoke feedback cards to gather feedback from those wanting to engage in a more self-directed manner.

## Youth Worksheets

During the Youth Workshop with students at Douglas Ewart High School, a simple worksheet was used to facilitate conversation and gather ideas. This was framed around two themes: based on some of the perspectives on youth agency we'd gathered in the wider consultation, the first activity welcomed their thoughts on a youth space, what type of activities it could host and potential location; the second gathered wider ideas on what could improve Whithorn, across built, natural and social environments. A third planned activity, a 'postcard from the future' didn't get completed, as there were productive conversations still taking place, and it felt the most appropriate use of time to let the students continue, rather than stop their thinking to spend time introducing and initiating a new task.



## Engagement materials

# Overview of Findings

Feedback was gathered across a number of quantitative and qualitative methods throughout the consultation, with the core mediums being an online survey, in person discussion and promotional postcards direct to addresses. The consultation and its methods are outlined in greater detail in the main Place Plan document.

Questions asked in the survey, and conversations in person, were all directed along the six themes developed to aid consultation, alongside the respective example projects for each of them. This meant that much of the feedback, despite its varying nature as quantitative data or anecdotal thoughts, could be more easily aggregated to provide an overall consensus.

The survey was structured in a manner where general questions around the core themes were required to be answered, whereas detailed feedback within the themes and the example projects were optional to mitigate survey fatigue. This naturally means that there was less exhaustive quantitative data on the example projects themselves, with open comments and informal feedback forming a large part of the qualitative response to each.

Recurring topics across the consultation were tallied to create an overall indication of consensus and trends. In analysing these trends, topics that were raised across the six themes were counted in a tally attributed to the first theme they were raised in. For instance, comments

on green space were raised across multiple themes, however were first tallied when analysing the Community theme, and subsequent mentions of green space (i.e. from town improvement of sustainability) were registered in the Community tally. This was done to ensure that data was not 'doubled up' and was aggregated in a way that indicated general consensus of topics beyond the rigidity of the themes. As such, much of the recurring topics from later themes are captured in the earlier sections of this report, with those in later sections indicating more thematically specific topics or ideas.

Not all example projects received the same degree of discussion during the consultation (i.e. in the open questions of the online survey); this was not necessarily because the project was unpopular, in some cases other projects were of greater appeal to discuss, there was not enough time to cover all projects, or it was even seen as such an 'obvious' positive or negative that it could be quickly moved over in conversation. Due to this, comments and ideas are presented in the following report to provide additional nuance or commentary to example projects, and all example projects should be considered alongside the overall general ratings and wider themes of discussion.







# Priorities and Demographics

In both the online survey and the promotional postcard, respondents were invited to rank their top theme(s) to indicate what they thought was the most important priority for Whithorn's improvement and future. Along with general priorities, demographic data was also gathered.

## 1. Online Survey

**Out of the six themes and their respective goals, which do you think are the three most important for Whithorn's future?**

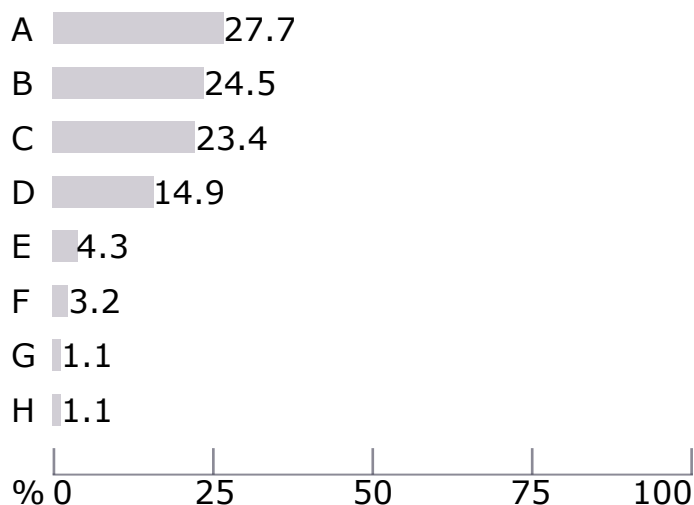
- |                           |         |
|---------------------------|---------|
| 1. Community              | (25.7%) |
| 2. Connectivity           | (21.4%) |
| 3. Townscape Improvements | (20.7%) |
| 4. Sustainability         | (20.7%) |
| 5. Tourism                | (16.4%) |
| 6. Town Identity          | (15.7%) |

## 2. Promotional Postcard

**Out of these six themes, what do you think is most important for Whithorn to improve?**

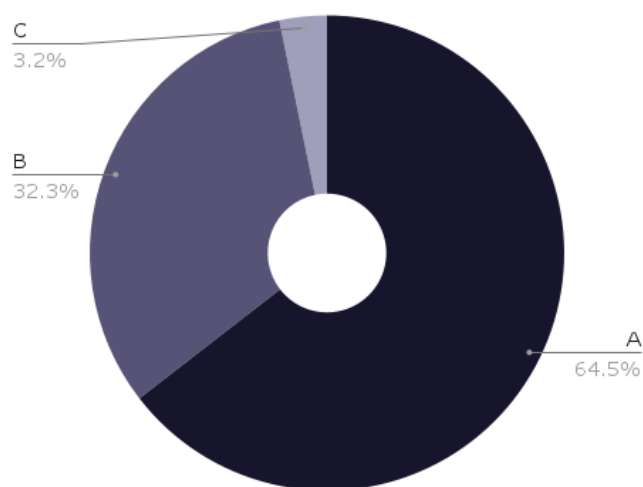
- |                           |         |
|---------------------------|---------|
| 1. Townscape Improvements | (22.7%) |
| 2. Tourism                | (22.7%) |
| 3. Community              | (20.5%) |
| 4. Town Identity          | (9.1%)  |
| 5. Sustainability         | (9.1%)  |
| 6. Other                  | (9.1%)  |
| 7. Connectivity           | (6.8%)  |

## 3. What is your age group?



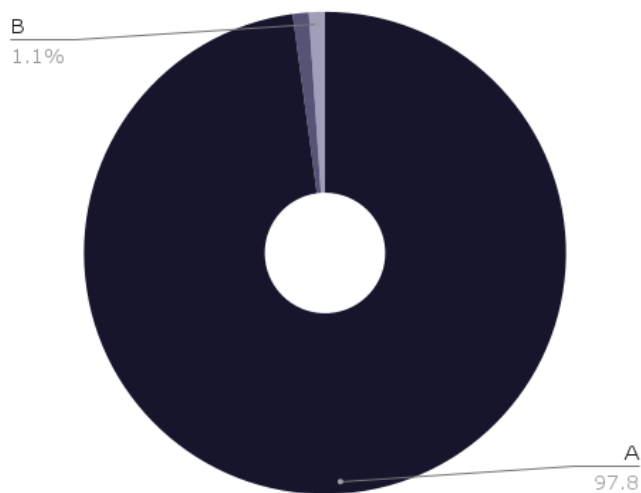
- A - 65 and over
- B - 55 - 64
- C - 45 - 54
- D - 35 - 44
- E - 25 - 34
- F - Prefer not to Say
- G - 19 - 24
- H - Under 18

## 4. What best describes your gender?



- A - Female
- B - Male
- C - Prefer not to say

#### 4. What is your ethnic group?

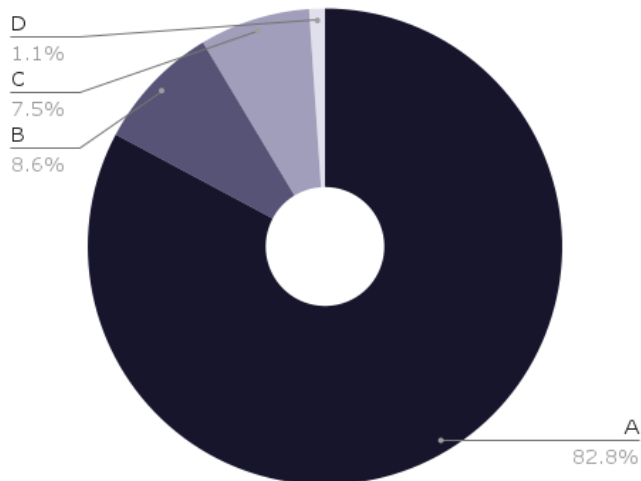


A - White British/Scottish/Welsh/Northern Irish/English

B - Other White

C - Prefer not to say (1.1%, not shown)

#### 5. What best describes your sexual orientation?



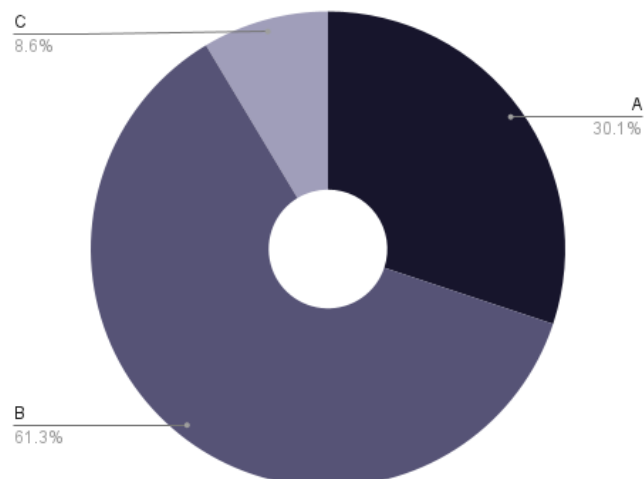
A - Straight / heterosexual

B - Gay or Lesbian

C - Prefer not to say

D - Asexual

#### 6. Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?

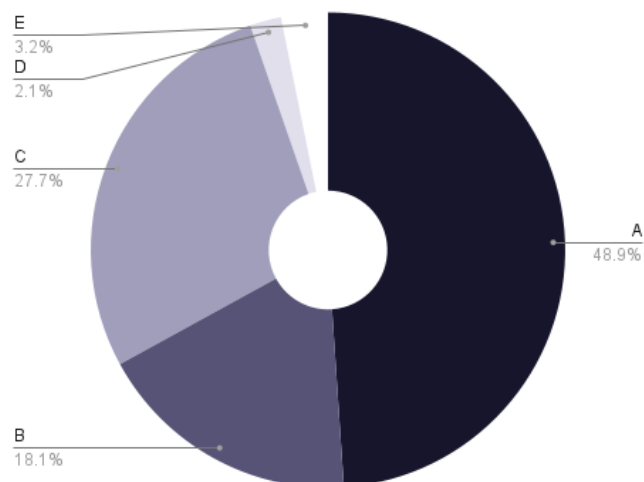


A - No

B - Yes

C - Prefer not to say

#### 7. How many adults are in your household, not including yourself?



A - One

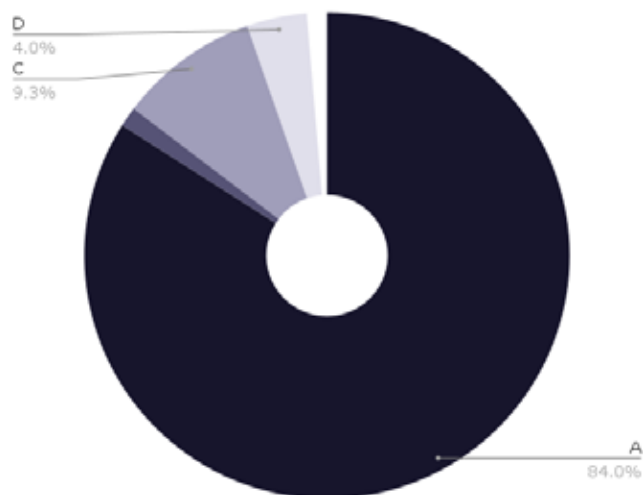
B - None

C - Two

D - Four or more

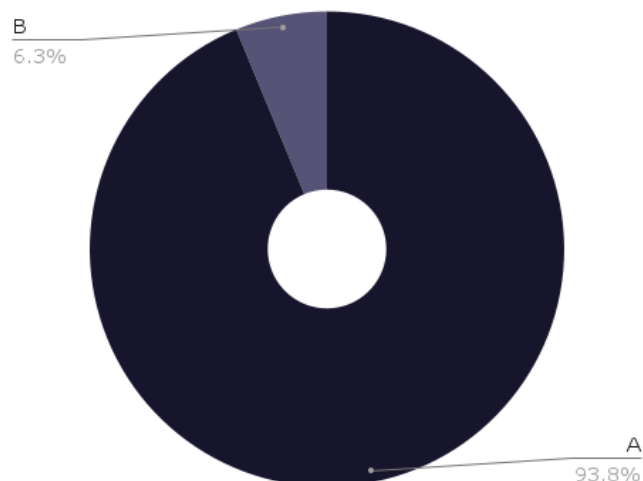
E - Three

**8. If you live with any other adults, please describe their relation to you:**



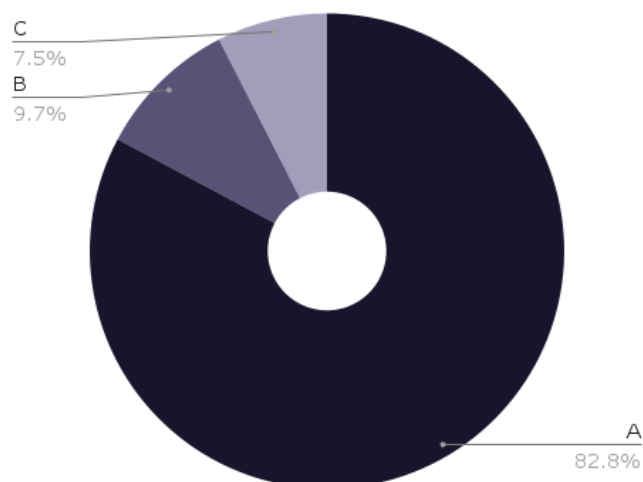
- A - My partner or spouse
- B - Elderly person or relative
- C - My adult child or children
- D - Elderly person or relative in my care
- E - Any other family relation

**10. If you live with any children, please describe their relation to you:**



- A - My own child or children
- B - A child or children in my care

**9. Are there any children in your household, and if so, how many?**



- A - None
- B - More than one
- C - One





# Community

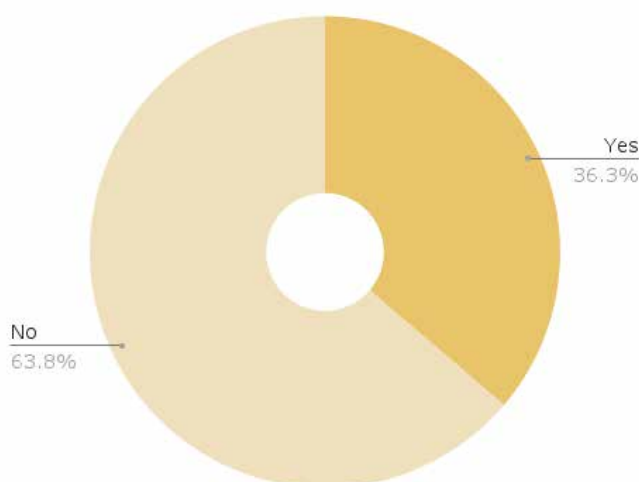
Across the consultation, this theme was described using the following:

## **Quick summary: Improve daily life for people in Whithorn with amenities or community initiatives.**

The goal: *"To enhance the quality of daily life for people in Whithorn by improving access to key amenities and services, training opportunities, and intergenerational and family focused activities and spaces."*

## **Overall Thoughts**

### **1. Is Whithorn meeting this goal well already?**



### **2. What's Whithorn already doing well to achieve this goal?**

*[A selection of comments, chosen to proportionally illustrate trends in responses]*

*"Providing training opportunities for young people, the recently revamped New Town Hall is providing classes for all sorts of interests as well as hosting the gym and Boxing club. The local church contributes with various weekly activities*

*for all ages."*

*"South Machars Community Centre is doing an incredible job of providing such amenities mainly via volunteers, but further could be done."*

*"SMCC has changed my life, helping me make friends."*

*"There are some amenities and training opportunities but there is always room for improvement and widening of access."*

*"There is very little available in the town, which could be improved by a genuine sports/health centre, affordable to people of all ages and abilities, a wider variety of businesses and places to eat, and a central museum -- what could be a major tourist and guest attraction -- that was opened at weekend and through the winter months. The town is slowly dying."*

*"Some local services and community groups on offer, plenty during the day but lack of social activities within the evening. No central hub space for community to convene."*

*"The gym, library, community centers and churches are very welcoming and inclusive. The community center does a lot of activities such as cinema and groups/classes."*

*"There are 4 main charities: The Whithorn Trust; All Roads Lead to Whithorn; Building Futures Galloway; and the South Machars Community Centre. These charities are working hard to enhance the quality of daily life for residents."*

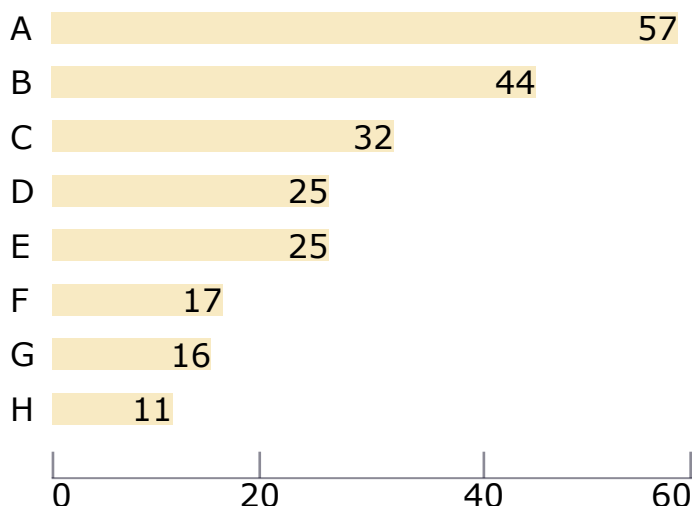
*"The Whithorn Trust tries hard in many ways to connect with the community, with visitors and the historic scientific community. Their support and*

*encouragement for youth is admirable."*

*"Building a sense of community and providing the basic services."*

### 3. What does Whithorn need to achieve this goal?

*[The most frequently recurring themes across both online and in-person responses]*



A - Support existing or make new community spaces (i.e. men's shed, youth space, space for elders)

B - Support existing or make new opportunities for cross-generational education and upskilling

C - More activities outside of current offered hours, for all age groups

D - Cafe or community cafe with employment opportunities

E - More job opportunities

F - Green spaces

G - Gardening space, garden sharing etc.

H - More events and festivals

\*\*

*[A selection of comments, chosen to illustrate proportional trends in relation to the most frequently recurring themes]*

*"Designated youth centre."*

*"Community cafe that is open every day is critical, not just for locals, but also for those visiting Whithorn for the day."*

*"Less underused shop frontage space. Need to look at a range of amenities for all age groups."*

*"A space for youth is critical, it feels like that's why a lot of doctors and others don't move to the town, because they don't want to raise their kids here."*

*"A space to be built to house our boxing club ring with big enough space for an audience. The one at the New Town Hall is too small. Youth clubs are needed."*

*"More apprenticeships or training opportunities for young people learning to drive need to travel to Newton Stewart and back."*

*"It is not meeting the goal well for some groups - older men, young people (very limited), nor for health services for any group. Transport is not adequate and there is no shelter while waiting. Whithorn is now the only Post Office south of Newton Stewart and the only shop south of Wigtown. There are limited opportunities for work training."*

*"Space for teenagers to learn skills is very important."*

*"Training as an older person would be great to develop some special skills to take up or give some time for volunteering."*

*"There should be more weekday/evening activities, such as sports tournaments."*

*"Develop local job opportunities and businesses within the town, use empty shop spaces to provide easier access to services and bring empty houses into use."*

*"Encourage new businesses, training*

*opportunities, cafes, and shops into Whithorn that employ local people."*

*"Somewhere for mental health. Away from people, trees, nature immersion."*

*"Would be quite glad to see Whithorn become a green space."*

*"The groups within the town need to accept that working together is much better than working apart."*

*"I would love an allotment."*

## Example Projects

### 4. How would you rate the projects out of 5?

#### Online Ratings

1. Library of things: 3.4
2. Community greening: 3.7
3. Inclusive and accessible intergenerational spaces and places: 3.8
4. Intergenerational upskilling and learning: 4.2
5. High street community space: 4.2

#### In-Person Ratings

1. Library of things: 4.1
2. Community greening: 3.8
3. Inclusive and accessible intergenerational spaces and places: 4.2
4. Intergenerational upskilling and learning: 4.2
5. High street community space: 4.3

### 5. Feedback on example projects:

#### Library of Things

People generally thought that this was a good idea, however questioned its appropriateness as a space on its own, with potential to be amalgamated with existing or more comprehensive new community space. There was also some concern about the policing of this

project, and ensuring that items would be returned.

#### Community Greening

While ratings for details of this specific project were lower, it proved a frequent and popular topic of more general conversation. There was an appetite for a more diverse idea of greening, with specific green and growing areas at community spaces (i.e. the Library of the Community Centre, and more community-focussed initiatives such as a gardening club and the growing of fruit and vegetables. These ideas were not just focussed on growing spaces but also green gardens to improve mental health and wellbeing. There was concern over resources for maintenance if exclusively community space ran, so there should be more diverse and flexible forms of implementation.

*"Greening out the back here [at South Machars Community Centre]. Would love a garden club."*

*"Big trees on George Street - something with height and substance."*

*"Yes to a community garden, when it comes to growing produce - could be hard due to aging population, who is going to do it?"*

#### Inclusive And Accessible Intergenerational Spaces And Places

Conversations on this theme largely overlapped with those regarding the needs or potential of a High Street Community Space, regarding topics of accessibility, cross-season availability, with a specific focus on the need for youth agency and their own leisure space.

*"Something for youth to feel excited for the future is important."*

#### Intergenerational Upskilling And Learning

There was a strong acknowledgement of the work local groups are already doing, and the need to support that while also

providing wider and new opportunities. Upskilling and learning should go beyond just skills for employment, to also provide skills for self-sufficiency, volunteering, hobbies and wellbeing. This endeavour should be central to all ideas for the future of the town, to create a win-win scenario where locals benefit from its development while building custodianship and community pride.

*"Gardening and maintenance, historic building skills."*

*"Building futures galloway is important."*

*"Upskilling and teaching is important for Whithorn because of the number of heritage and historic buildings, and the opportunities to develop new trades."*

### **High Street Community Space**

The diverse and strong community network was a frequent topic of conversation. There was a desire to bring some of that work to the centre of the town to bring a new vibrancy, with the possibility of a more focussed, rotating space and cafe, also with a more direct tourist appeal (i.e. local crafts). There was a strong emphasis on the need for specific youth space within this conversation, along with a consideration that any space would still need to be multi-purpose and act alongside the existing spaces and businesses of the town, rather than in competition.

*"The community space for a vibrant townscape is important."*

*"Need a good tea room, the cafe doesn't open until 4pm."*

*"Community exhibition space for local arts community."*

*"Great ideas that need to be thought through properly as workable in Whithorn and working with not against existing community organisations and projects."*



# Townscape Improvements

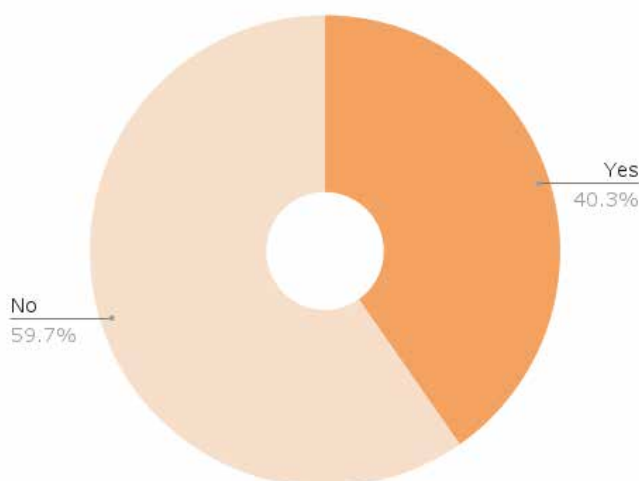
Across the consultation, this theme was described using the following:

**Quick summary: Create a town that is made for people, building on what is already on offer, particularly enhancing accessibility.**

The goal: "To create a cohesive and human-centred townscape, to encourage further development, facilitate events and community gathering in the town centre, and improve accessibility equitably throughout Whithorn."

## Overall Thoughts

### 1. Is Whithorn meeting this goal well already?



### 2. What's Whithorn already doing well to achieve this goal?

[A selection of comments, chosen to proportionally illustrate trends in responses]

"New people are moving into the town regularly and they are improving the townscape and encouraging further development. There are events - Flower show, older people's Christmas

party, Christmas lights and carols, Remembrance ceremony, activities in the Community Centre are growing in numbers and popularity."

"The Conservation Area means that we have an almost unique townscape. The refurbished Town Hall and the 'Grapes' has improved the area immensely."

"The centre of the town is unique and remains that way thanks to the conservation area status. That needs to be continued and maybe even enforced more rigorously."

"It's a beautiful townscape. I understand it is hard for wheelchairs to get around the town without dropped kerbs."

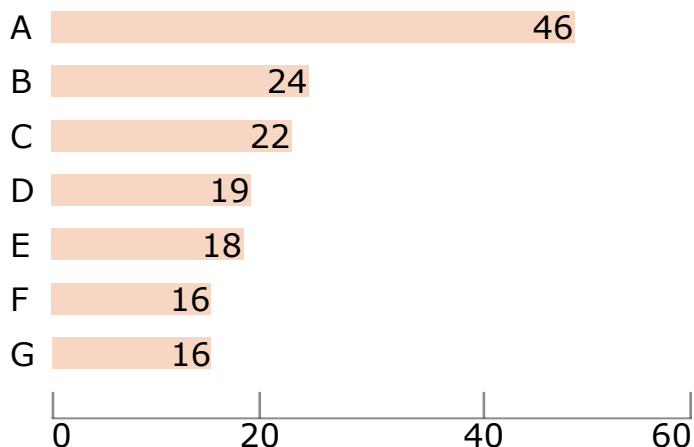
"Whenever I visit Whithorn it seems to be devoid of people from the streets. There's plenty going on, but it is hard to find out about it."

"There has been some success in recent years with the development of the New Town Hall and the South Machars Community Centre to become INDOOR spaces that can host community events and community groups can use. There has been some success recently with an outdoor showing of a film commissioned by the Whithorn Trust and premiered at "the top of the town" demonstrating equity and supporting accessibility. There have been outdoor events in the dig field managed by The Whithorn Trust as well as talks, presentations and film showings in the Slachterhus owned by Whithorn rebuild (BFG) in collaboration with the Whithorn Trust. In this regard, there are events and opportunities for community gatherings in the town centre in a variety of locations."

"Very little."

### 3. What does Whithorn need to achieve this goal?

*[The most frequently recurring themes across both online and in-person responses]*



A - More shops, markets, high street business etc.

B - Housing regeneration/provision

C - Flexible, holistic car parking spaces / strategy

D - Vibrant high street

E - Town accessibility

F - Places to rest

G - Shopfront improvements

\*\*

*[A selection of comments, chosen to illustrate proportional trends in relation to the most frequently recurring themes]*

*"There is a growing need to provide improved access for disabled people."*

*"There is no centre to the town. It's mostly just a long road with too many cars parked alongside. As it's a through road ... A greater selection of shops - butchers, greengrocers, bank, bakery, deli could be encouraged."*

*"Infrastructure. Small businesses, market days with pop up market stalls."*

*"More nursery provision, money to update the community centre and make it the hub of the town."*

*"A lot more improvement on this instead of being two halves as it's mainly the bottom half which annoys the top half."*  
*"There are still properties that need some caring for."*

*"Old shops being reopened for locals, pop ups and more shopping opportunities for locals instead of paying vastly inflated prices in two shops. More eateries, more events, better use of abandoned land for music festivals, capitalising on Wicker Man tourism, instead of Whithorn being a one-trick pony."*

*"Grants for people to renovate houses, some of which are derelict and empty."*  
*"The upkeep of the townscape needs to be looked at. Additional seating would be helpful."*

*"Off street parking in town centre which is a bottleneck for traffic and off putting for those who need to access amenities and services."*

*"More funds for improving the look of the town."*

*"More community gardens/sitting areas. Festivals that everyone can get involved with like music/food/art events."*

*"For an outstanding conservation area, Whithorn fails miserably to live up to its designation. The residents need to recognise the unique and intrinsic quality of the main street and to celebrate - and enhance - this medieval street plan. Currently, George Street is regarded as somewhere that you drive through or you walk past. There is considerable scope for creating spaces that would encourage people to linger in the centre of the street."*

## Example Projects

### 4. How would you rate the projects out of 5?

#### Online Ratings

1. Ground surface renovation scheme: 3
2. Flexible public space: 4.5
3. Places to wait and rest: 4.3
4. Business overspill: 4
5. Car parking strategy: 3.3

#### In-Person Ratings

1. Ground surface renovation scheme: 4
2. Flexible public space: 3.9
3. Places to wait and rest: 4.2
4. Business overspill: 3.5
5. Car parking strategy: 4.6

### 5. Feedback on example projects:

#### Ground Surface Renovation Scheme

There was frequent concern raised about poor accessibility, maintenance and speeding across the town, but particularly along the length of the high street. However, it was pointed out that any improvements or passive measures would need to still consider the needs of agricultural traffic which do rely on the through-route. This topic, while scoring low in the online survey, was far more popular when the nuance of in-person conversation was afforded, as it was seen as far more critical in a 'light-touch' mode which would support other ideas across the place plan.

*"The public space and ground treatment is vital for the town."*

*"Prioritise the middle of town for the disabled."*

*"I don't think pedestrianisation would work. But a 20 mph speed limit and traffic calming (lights triggered by speeding etc.) might make the town a little bit more pedestrian friendly. I also don't think the town is very wheelchair friendly. More ramps from road to pavement."*

*"Narrowing streets does reduce car speed, but somehow there needs to be strong consideration of those who have access issues without a car."*

*"Great care must be taken, this a rural area, agricultural vehicles (some of which can be large) must be able to access through the town. Also for large funerals all the parking is used, we are a rural area and no matter what you do for transport the majority will access by car, locals must be able to visit and use services locally or they will go somewhere easier to access which would kill local businesses."*

*"Some of these ideas would not support the requirements of large number of farm traffic through the town."*

*"Tractors speed up and down - there needs to be ways to slow this down."*

*"There is a massive farming community, and you need space for farm vehicles, it is a part of farm life; there should be more promotion to understand farm vehicles on the road, they need to take up most of the road to turn. But speed wise, there should be signs that flash all road user's speeds way before the 30 zone, this is important for both farm vehicles and people that do know roads."*

#### Flexible Public Space

The desire to host markets in the town was very strong throughout the consultation, not only for locals but also for potential tourist draw. In addition to this, there was a general desire for the ability to host wider events in the town more easily.

*"More regular markets to get people outside."*

*"Market pop-ups are a good idea."*

*"Can see a flexible event space happening in George Street, but needs to be considerate of the conservation area."*

*"There have in the past been events in the centre. Flexible market space would be money well spent could we split the street so it can be temporarily shut off?"*

### **Places to Wait and Rest**

The need for places to sit was popular in the town, beyond accessibility even just or somewhere to sit and have some food. A regular concern was the lack of covered space to wait, particularly for buses, in wet weather, with mention of school students often waiting in the rain.

*"Benches would be good, you need to be able to sit and rest - more accessibility."*

*"Kids are going to school absolutely soaked."*

*"Big need for seats."*

*"Don't need big park benches, just somewhere to rest going up the hill, it can be tiring."*

### **Business Overspill**

There was a positive response to the idea of business overspill, however it was regularly raised that this could be holistically considered as part of other initiatives to improve the town, and would need to also be supported by efforts to bolster its vibrancy and offering of activities and shop improvements.

### **Car parking strategy**

While its rankings were lower in the online survey, car parking was one of the most frequent topics of in-person conversation. The need for a re-thinking of the car parking strategy for the town was a key concern for many, with particular emphasis on a greater consideration of disabled accessibility, and congestion around key event times for residents with addresses on 'pinch points' of the high street. The possibility of providing a specific area for visitors to park, both to optimise resident parking and to create a more considered route for visitors through the town, was also

popular. However, it was raised that this strategy could be more 'light touch' as it's not always a critical issue.

*"The resident parking area sounds great."*

*"No blue parking spaces. If I can't park, I can't access facilities."*

*"Sufficient parking is important. Anyone that comes here has to park, especially for rural traffic - especially before the population is dispersed."*

*"There needs to be a cohesive parking strategy. It is congested directly outside people's houses and difficult to park when there are events across the week, occasionally also blocking access to pavements."*



# Connectivity

Across the consultation, this theme was described using the following:

**Quick summary: Improve transport and internet services to help people stay connected.**

The goal: *"To provide better links and sustainable transport options for locals to access the wider area, along with digital connectivity improvements, to reduce isolation from services, provide more diverse employment opportunities and support employment retention."*

*"There are buses and full fibre broadband being rolled out."*

*"There is a bus service that could be better."*

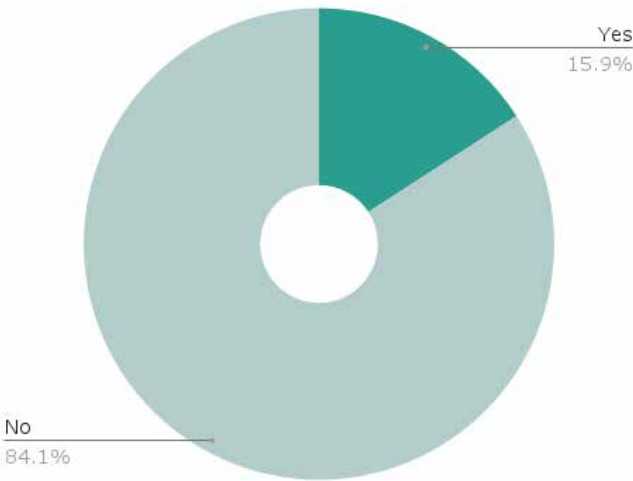
*"People here don't necessarily want to be more connected with the rest of the world. The relatively isolated position of Whithorn has its own attraction."*

*"Nothing, not even a bus shelter."*

*"Not a lot."*

## Overall Thoughts

### 1. Is Whithorn meeting this goal well already?



### 2. What's Whithorn already doing well to achieve this goal?

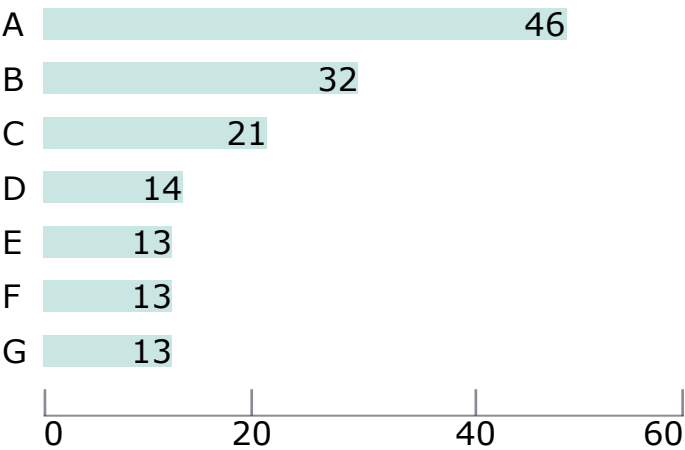
*[A selection of comments, chosen to proportionally illustrate trends in responses]*

*"There are great digital facilities at the town hall."*

*"Broadband speeds within the town are okay for current requirements."*

### 3. What does Whithorn need to achieve this goal?

*[The most frequently recurring themes across both online and in-person responses]*



A - Poor connections between public transport options or connections between networks to key places (including evenings and weekends)

B - Bus stops, shelters and signage

C - Optimised transport (i.e. smaller buses at off-peak times)

D - Night bus, community bus, dial-a-bus etc.

E - Accessibility options for transport

F - Better broadband

G - Active travel / mobility hub

\*\*

*[A selection of comments, chosen to illustrate proportional trends in relation to the most frequently recurring themes]*

*"A greatly improved public transport network with broken links to be removed asap. i.e. the distance between the bus stop in Stranraer and the railway station. The bus company does not provide toilet facilities on long journeys for neither staff or passengers. The provision of a toilet at the bust interchange in Newton Stewart would help with long journeys. There is no late evening service at all. To provide bus shelters and good disabled access."*

*"Better transport links between towns."*

*"Bring whithorn into the 21st century better transport links more employment prospects."*

*"More bus services running more often."*

*"I've not used public transport here, but I would if it was better."*

*"Perhaps a more frequent bus from Stranraer directly to Whithorn and a decent sized car park with a bus drop off area would be useful."*

*"More frequent public transport with better links to national transport and better internet infrastructure reaching out to the surrounding areas."*

*"More flexible transport options available e.g community bus which can be booked or a volunteer driver service. Improve condition of roads."*

*"Buses need to run until around 10pm."*

*"There's a great bus service but people have to stand in the elements waiting for a bus."*

*"High speed broadband wifi for all. More buses."*

*"More e-bikes for visitors and locals to access sites and services without using cars."*

## Example Projects

### 4. How would you rate the projects out of 5?

#### Online Ratings

1. Digital connectivity: 4.6
2. Revised public transport routes: 3.6
3. Revised public transport timetables: 3.9
4. Improved bus shelters: 3.6
5. Whithorn mobility hub: 4.2

#### In-Person Ratings

1. Digital connectivity: 3.5
2. Revised public transport routes: 4.3
3. Revised public transport timetables: 4.3
4. Improved bus shelters: 4.5
5. Whithorn mobility hub: 2.7

### 5. Feedback on example projects:

#### Digital Connectivity

Digital connectivity was a concern more frequently raised in the online survey, and was focussed more on improvement of connection to some rural areas. During in-person consultation, however, it was rarely noted as a concern within the scope of the Place Plan, with emphasis being largely placed on physical connectivity and its impacts on wellbeing and employment.

#### Revised Public Transport Routes

Public transport was a major theme in discussions on connectivity. In regards to buses, it wasn't however as often about the type or frequency of them, but rather their connectivity to wider areas at interchange points, and making this more practical for users. There was also a difference of opinion between people who thought that the service could be reduced due to its lack of use, or that additional services were required at key times of the day. As such, this indicated a desire more for holistic optimisation across the service, with the addition of more flexible and bespoke options to use only as

required, such as a community bus and options with improved accessibility.

*"More buses, you can only go to Newton Stewart, then you have to change."*

*"The buses are fine. You see the services already existing and there's only 2 people on them."*

*"Community bus, so that groups of locals can go to events locally and further away together."*

*"Long distance connections are the problem, more easily connected when you're here."*

*"They are inappropriate for prams and wheelchairs."*

*"Community bus and dial- a-bus could be great, so it's less time consuming for maintenance and upkeep."*

#### Revised Public Transport Timetables

Similar to the discussions concerning bus routes, there was less discussion about overall changing of timetables, but instead a focus on optimising what exists, particularly with options for late evening travel from the major commercial centres to open up wider leisure opportunities for all age groups. In particular, similar themes of an additional night or community bus service were popular. There was also a desire to see up to date timetables better communicated and present around the town, particularly at any new bus shelters.

*"Public transport isn't promoted with proper timetables."*

*"We can't get to the cinema because outings past 6pm are impossible."*

*"Routes/ timetable not too bad in the week - later buses are a problem."*

*"Better bus times to and from Stranraer, at the moment you can't spend the afternoon or evening there because the*

*bus back is too early in the day."*

*"From Isle of Whithorn the last bus is not late enough, I can't socialise without using taxis - these are of short supply."*

### **Improved Bus Shelters**

Bus shelters proved to be a frequent topic of conversation, both with reference to historical discussions in the town, and in direct relation to the themes of the place plan. Overall, there was strong support on the need for some type of shelter in the town, with there being no proper provision at present for both accessibility concerns and to keep out of poor weather. However, there was also a regular concern about the exact type of shelter and potential locations, with consideration on maintenance. With emphasis on the town needing at the minimum a sheltered place to rest and wait for the bus, a consensus on a single, well designed and maintained general shelter in a central location could also fulfil this need and meet these concerns.

*"Definite 100% for bus shelters to be introduced for our young and old in Whithorn."*

*"I live on George Street and people often use my porch to get out of the rain since there's no bus shelter."*

*"Bus shelters are important for kids."*

*"Bus stops should only be at an important part of the town, like the post office or opposite, and we only need one to cover the town. At dark you can't see and you get soaked."*

*"No one who lives on the main street will want a bus stop outside their house."*

*"Spend some money on doing them well."*

*"Bus stops where you can sit down, with digital signage."*

*"Bus shelters will get vandalised."*

*"I can't stand and wait for a bus. I sit in the car and wait for it, then there's a good chance you'll miss it."*

*"No need for bus shelters."*

### **Whithorn Mobility Hub**

There was strong support for the mobility hub in the online survey, however it was a less popular topic of in-person conversation. There was an agreement that it would help with accessibility and open up wider options for people to get around the area, for leisure or otherwise, however was generally considered as a simple and sensible enough idea that could be implemented without major issues, and wasn't a significant priority for devoting time to for improving the town itself.

*"Need to review the use of current offer in relation to electric vehicles but like the idea of connecting up with other things."*

*"Not a priority."*

*"Electric bikes would be good, for visitors too."*

*"Up for car club if feasible, will help with parking problem."*

*"All mobility hub ideas are good."*



# Tourism

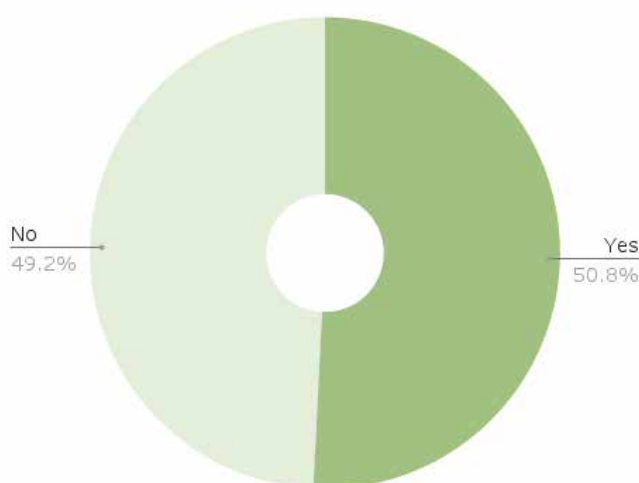
Across the consultation, this theme was described using the following:

**Quick summary: Developing Whithorn's unique tourist features, along with those of the surrounding area.**

The goal: *"To build upon the successes of existing and unique tourist attractions in Whithorn and the surrounding areas (such as Galloway dark skies), while also supporting growth in the sector, extending the dwell time of visitors and maximising the spending of tourists."*

## Overall Thoughts

### 1. Is Whithorn meeting this goal well already?



### 2. What's Whithorn already doing well to achieve this goal?

*[A selection of comments, chosen to proportionally illustrate trends in responses]*

*"The Roundhouse, the HES Museum and Whithorn Trust museum all draw visitors into the town, along with the Walk the Whithorn Way long distance pilgrim*

*footpath."*

*"The new Bunkhouse at the New Town Hall is great and I believe is growing in popularity all the time."*

*"Upgrade of Whithorn way. Availability of accommodation. Promotion of events on social media."*

*"We have great visitor attractions but organisations don't work well together to promote themselves within the area."*

*"Mostly highlighting the historic significance through HES and the Whithorn Trust."*

*"There is widespread name recognition of Whithorn among visitors. The trick is how to translate the recognition to visits."*

*"There is a lot of focus on Whithorn as the birthplace of Christianity in Scotland, but we also have fascinating wildlife, geology and a variety of landscapes."*

*"Some local offer of groups and museum but this is very seasonal."*

*"They love the tourists more than the residents."*

*"Tourist numbers are increasing on a yearly basis. I have lived here for thirty four years and have seen a great increase in visitors, walkers and pilgrims. The Trust and the Priory both give a warm welcome to all. The picnic area at the Priory is in constant use throughout the summer proving that tourist attractions need not be elaborate to work well."*

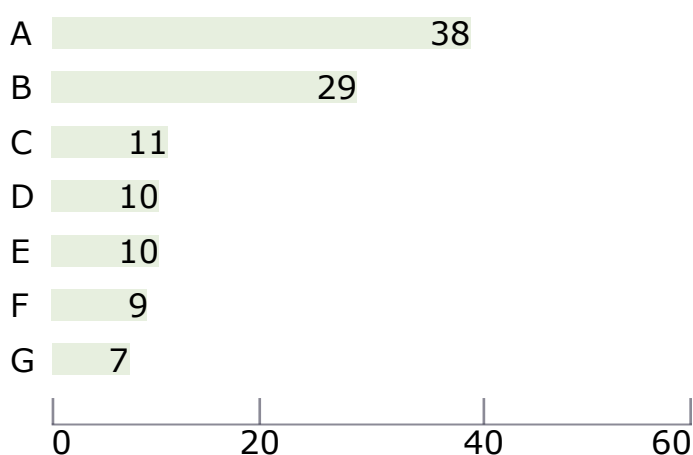
*"The Whithorn Trust is a huge draw for visitors. Over the years visitor numbers have been rising. The Whithorn Way is an increasing attraction for walkers and cyclists. The development of the*

*Bunkhouse at the NTH is fabulous.”  
 “Natural Historic sites. The Priory Church.”*

*“We have a fabulous HES museum. The Whithorn Trust already hold events and show case local history. The roundhouse brings in visitors.”*

### 3. What does Whithorn need to achieve this goal?

*[The most frequently recurring themes across both online and in-person responses]*



A - Capitalising on tourist offer by supporting Whithorn’s heritage

B - ‘All year round’ cafes needed / wider tourist season window

C - Better signage for tourism

D - Local heritage and outdoor guides, with training

E - Drawing upon natural assets

F - Better heritage information and communications

G - Facade upkeep in the town

\*\*

*[A selection of comments, chosen to illustrate proportional trends in relation to the most frequently recurring themes]*

*“Whithorn is virtually a ghost town, even in summer! There’s nothing other than a museum and a cafe. We need to bring tourists in and have them spend time and money!”*

*“A tea room or restaurant to get something to eat and open more history on the place.”*

*“Whithorn needs to grasp the idea that it is a very significant place in the history of Christianity and that by doing so they can tap into international tourism. Currently there is NO effort to develop the Medieval story other than the beautiful little museum of standing stones. It must be preserved. Think about it this way - Whithorn stands alongside Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Constantinople and other centres in its significance but that is not reflected in the development of local assets which are just not inspiring. There has to be something to SEE!”*

*“More places to stay and attractions to see to extend a visit with longer opening hours for amenities.”*

*“There needs to be more places to eat - cafe, sandwich shop, Indian or Chinese takeaway so that tourists have somewhere to eat.”*

*“The signage/marketing material/visitor centre are not completely in sync, which is unhelpful for visitors.”*

*“The community needs to pull together and realise the national and international importance of its heritage.”*

*“The provision of hospitality is poor. The Whithorn Story is only open seasonally and for part of the week; the café is peripheral to the main business but should be developed to provide more comprehensive hospitality offer to visitors year round. The only café is now a chip shop and therefore there is nowhere for visitors to enjoy sit-down hospitality other than the Whithorn Trust with its limited offer or a pub.*

*Visitors frequently stop residents in the street to enquire where they can get refreshment and they usually have to be directed to neighbouring towns or villages rather than stay in Whithorn. There are also a large number of houses within the central conservation area which have been left unoccupied and in a deteriorating condition for many years which further serves to blight the quality of the townscape. The overall image of the town is unappealing and is of neglect. One of the established local charities should have the resource to acquire these essentially derelict properties and return them to beneficial use."*

*"Better businesses, somewhere for tourists to sit when visiting. Lovely planters around the town, flowers, more visitor friendly. More high street appeal."*

*"Further signage for the new pathways within the town, such as a noticeboard."*

*"Improved signage, clean and attractive signs right back to Newton Stewart."*

*"We need more in the way of visitor attractions, The Dig/Whithorn Trust is great, but it targets a very niche tourism sector or religious and archaeology interest types. The Hoarde from the dig at Whithorn is one of the most comprehensive collections that exist, but it is not held here, it's at the National Museum of Scotland, largely in Archives. We could do with a museum here in the town to showcase this collection properly. A modern facility that compliments the historical ones."*

## Example Projects

### 4. How would you rate the projects out of 5?

#### Online Ratings

1. Community run campsite: 3.5
2. Development of existing tourist offerings: 3.8
3. Library of things: 3.2
4. Improving connections beyond Whithorn: 4
5. Creative wayfinding strategy: 3.5
6. Outdoor and tourism training: 3.6

#### In-Person Ratings

1. Community run campsite: 4.1
2. Development of existing tourist offerings: 4.8
3. Library of things: 3.8
4. Improving connections beyond Whithorn: 4.5
5. Creative wayfinding strategy: 4.6
6. Outdoor and tourism training: 3.9

### 5. Feedback on example projects:

#### Community Run Campsite

While there was some positive feedback on the idea of a campsite, it was most often considered as not a significant priority. This was due to a perceived general lack of urgent need to help with tourism, the difficulty in finding the right site for it, and similar campsites in nearby areas.

*"Campsite could be great but where could it go?"*

#### Development Of Existing Tourist Offerings

This was one of the most passionate and frequent topics of conversation in the town. There was an almost unanimous understanding of how important and unique the history of Whithorn is, and how central it is to its identity and future. There was a consensus that heritage assets and sites had to be both protected and developed for both local and touristic

purposes. There was more nuanced discussion on how this should be done, either through a more diverse series of initiatives versus a selection of existing strategies and plans. Generally this was centred around a desire to involve the entire town in the nurturing and celebration of Whithorn's heritage, and to have an 'every season' tourist industry with the town itself being part of a vibrant story - this came with a common assertion that the whole town should be cared for and protected, as well as the key assets, as it forms part of the iconic character of Whithorn. Beyond this, there was a common desire to see Whithorn at the same time diversify, and capitalise on wider possibilities such as Dark Skies, nature, and agricultural heritage, alongside local culture such as arts and crafts.

*"A vibrant high street is needed for visitors with maintenance strategy for the town (facade upkeep is important); the town centre feels lacking."*

*"The historic assets are key. It's not just tourism, but teaching local kids about what's important about the town and to care about it."*

*"We need to tell the whole story of Whithorn across its history, and bring out some of the important items from the archives."*

*"Short season is the problem."*

*"Needs to be a religious experience at the end of the journey (e.g. in Rome you have St. John's Bop). There's lots of stones, but nothing else, no 'project' - could there be a Ninian statue? The pilgrimage aspect is important."*

*"Archaeology is world class - they need support. This could be an ambitious and joined up series of sites and activities, across all stages of history from the Iron Age onwards, with time travel tours and local guides."*

*"Not just Christianity; dark skies and rural history can be tapped into."*

*"Whithorn Trust is important - the narrative of Christianity is lost in Scotland. Whithorn is more important than Iona, but this isn't publicised. Tourism and Christianity are side by side here."*

*"Art town could be pursued- particularly if a community cafe art exhibition space existed."*

*"It's not just about St. Ninian's, there is also arts and culture, arts and crafts."*

*"Those trying to observe and amplify this heritage should be supported."*

### **Library of Things**

While this project received some positive feedback, it wasn't seen as a priority for capitalising on tourism in the area, or as a key standalone initiative for the place plan which could rather be incorporated into a wider community or tourist space.

### **Improving Connections Beyond Whithorn**

It was seen as a 'quick win' with nearly all parties that connecting up to existing networks, such as those for cycling, was a quick way to bring more people to the area. This was often expressed with the need for better infrastructure across all types of transport (particularly walking and cycling) throughout the key tourist routes, threaded through the town centre, and with improved signage and wayfinding.

*"Need to capitalise on walkers and cycling."*

*"We should develop sustainable tourism - biking, hiking etc."*

*"South West 300 almost reaches here. We get groups from Europe, motorcyclists etc."*

*"Whithorn way infrastructure for cyclists"*



*and tourists would be good."*

*"Yes to connecting to the NCN and perhaps a shuttle bus for walkers."*

*"In town, have noticeable signs that show routes for walking and cycling around town."*

### **Creative Wayfinding Strategy**

This was seen as an almost unanimously positive project, crucial to the improvement of Whithorn's vibrancy and the nurturing of its touristic potential. There was a desire for any wayfinding to be tied to Whithorn's identity, and to be a creative storytelling device that expresses both history and the more local identity of the town.

### **Outdoor and Tourism Training**

This project was popular with nearly all spoken to, however less as a standalone project and instead something that should be subsumed into a wider general initiative for the entire place plan, centred on the importance of upskilling and learning for all ages, across employment, leisure and wellbeing.



# Town Identity

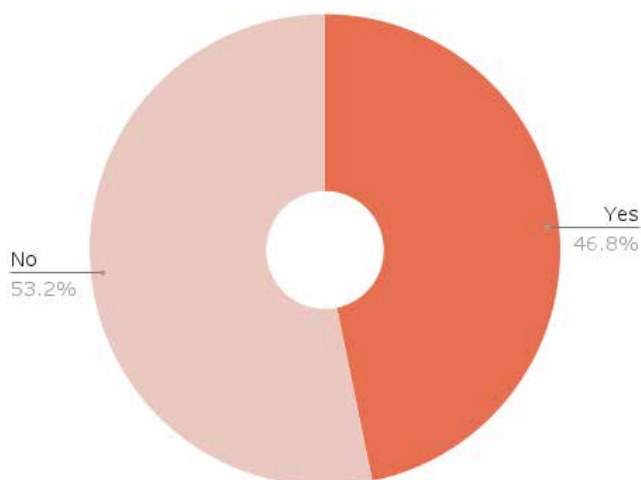
Across the consultation, this theme was described using the following:

**Quick summary: Developing a unique town identity, along with its expression in the town itself.**

The goal: *"To define Whithorn's niche identity ('put it on the map') and develop its creative expression in the town, while supporting local communities to foster a cohesive and unique sense of place."*

## Overall Thoughts

### 1. Is Whithorn meeting this goal well already?



*"There is a strong local identity but this needs better promotion and linking up regionally to showcase skills from the community."*

*"Whithorn's archaeology is internationally important and makes us who we are. Its townscape is attractive."*

*"The Bravehearts Boxing Club, there are Scottish and British champions made in that club."*

*"When you're in Whithorn, it has one of the strongest and best communities I've experienced anywhere."*

*"Lots of good things have happened over the last few years - the new town hall refurbishment, the Grapes made into flats, the community centre."*

*"It is on the map as the 'cradle of Christianity' but this only brings in tourists interested in religion. We need to take a look at other avenues to bring in visitors ie. the natural beauty of the countryside, the unique layout of the town, cycling, walking."*

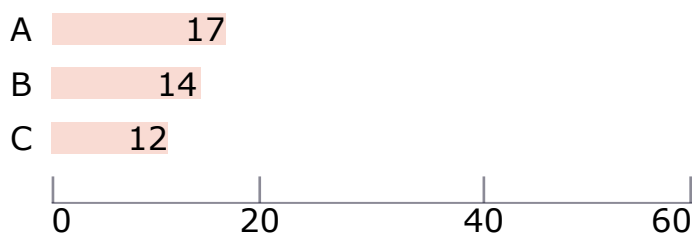
### 2. What's Whithorn already doing well to achieve this goal?

*[A selection of comments, chosen to proportionally illustrate trends in responses]*

*"There are lots of community events and courses etc. but it can be difficult to navigate what is going on, where and when. Oftentimes events clash with one another. Better communication and planning might be a good idea."*

### 3. What does Whithorn need to achieve this goal?

[The most frequently recurring themes across both online and in-person responses]



A - Improved / traditional signage

B - More paths to walking routes

C - A town brand

\*\*

[A selection of comments, chosen to illustrate proportional trends in relation to the most frequently recurring themes]

"Other than charities and the few local essential shops, Whithorn has not got much going for it. It's a funded town, where independent businesses are unable to thrive."

"Whithorn has a split community."

"More investment into artist town status, more classes and a hub for aspiring artists."

"A small few do an awful lot. It needs greater community engagement. The Conservation zone, while it maintains the character of the town centre, makes improvements and repairs to homes much more expensive, in an area where many just can't afford to pay for things like replacement wooden sash windows which cost a multiple of what even aluminium ones would. This leads to some homes falling into a state of continuing and increasing disrepair. Perhaps some sort of means tested support to maintain properties."

"Capitalise like Wigtown on bringing

tourists in. Markets, shops, music, because the current state only appeals to the elderly and not the younger generations."

"Improved signage, more tourist meeting places."

"To help fund a tourist information centre in Whithorn which would cover the Machars and surrounding areas."

"New shop fronts. Residents getting property tidied up, painted, repaired. Creating jobs by encouraging businesses to thrive and settle in Whithorn."

"A sense of common purpose, and good concise signs. Continuing to connect young people with Whithorn priory as a source of pride, employment and leisure."

"There was briefly an arts group in the last decade or so which enhanced the appeal of the area to visitors. Regrettably, this has all but collapsed so this needs to be re-established. Encouragement needs to be given to attract artists to the town. Unfortunately, there is a historical and now misplaced perception that Whithorn is rough and has nothing to offer either the residents or visitors. Whithorn is a very deprived community, both socially and economically, and therefore it will be very difficult to overcome the innate negativity which permeates the community: negativity about the place, the institutions and towards people who are different to themselves. The way to change this is through engagement with young people: directly with the young people themselves and indirectly with their parents. Local young people live in a bubble and are not aware of how wonderful the town and the environs is."

"Whithorn's identity cannot be separated from its history. Support existing qualified organisations to articulate this story! Grants for householders as well as businesses which would help stimulate the local economy and provide training opportunities for local young people."



## Example Projects

### 4. How would you rate the projects out of 5?

#### Online Ratings

1. Wayfinding scheme: 3.5
2. Shopfront improvement strategy: 4.3
3. Improved and cohesive welcome experience: 3.1
4. Facade upkeep scheme: 4
5. Formalised town brand: 3.9

#### In-Person Ratings

1. Wayfinding scheme: 3.5
2. Shopfront improvement strategy: 4.3
3. Improved and cohesive welcome experience: 3.1
4. Facade upkeep scheme: 4
5. Formalised town brand: 3.9

### 5. Feedback on example projects:

#### Wayfinding Scheme

Much like the creative wayfinding strategy for tourism, a wayfinding scheme for the town's general identity was also seen as critical, and the two were often seen as hand-in-hand. There was a desire to see the strategy pick up on walking routes and accessibility while still heavily drawing upon heritage assets. There was an emphasis that the signage and the wider wayfinding should be cohesive, with a strong heritage aesthetic, and present across all signage, from parking and local cultural centres for residents, to key tourist sites.

*"Traditional signage is a good idea, draw on St. Ninian?"*

*"It wouldn't take much to improve heritage signage. We used to have black signs with gold, like in Newton Stewart. This should be brought back across the town, the signage should be cohesive."*

*"Cattle are the barrier with walking routes in Whithorn. Farmers are reluctant to allow people across their land (sometimes*

*for safety reasons)."*

*"Whithorn is difficult to navigate in a wheelchair, signage should also have this in mind, and be cohesive, traditional."*

*"I'm sure HES would be pleased if their unnamed sites were part of a trail, guided by local tourists."*

#### Shopfront Improvement Strategy

Shopfront improvements were seen as important for Whithorn, particularly as an initiative tied into a wider renovation and protection of the entire historic centre of the town. It was mentioned by many that it should amplify the historic character of Whithorn, while also drawing upon or developing local skills if possible.

*"Shopfront improvements need to be made to shops that are empty at the moment too, rather than waiting for them to be filled, so it looks like a fully finished job across the whole street."*

*"Shop front scheme could be good if all businesses could be tied in."*

*"Wood carving workshops could make signage for the town."*

#### Improved and Cohesive Welcome Experience

This was seen as another obvious 'quick win' project, which could be more holistically incorporated into a wider signage and tourist experience strategy, and being tied to many of the same benefits and concerns raised for those wider projects.

#### Facade Upkeep Scheme

The revitalisation, repair and upkeep of Whithorn's buildings was one of the main topics of conversation. It was seen as critical to the future of the town not only for tourism, but also for atmosphere and vibrancy for locals and a sense of pride. It was acknowledged that their historic nature and the conservation area can make upkeep difficult and expensive, and that support needs to be provided

directly, alongside ongoing education about the importance and methods of heritage upkeep. It was also often noted that this should not be limited to George Street, and should encompass the entire town equitably, while also making use of initiatives to link in skills development for youth and cross-generational learning. Support. Education. Skills, locals. Across the whole town, not just George street.

*"Run down properties and empty shops are not nice, this needs to be changed; house colour should be kept up everywhere."*

*"It's important to mention the unique architecture in regards to any improvement of the town."*

*"Lots of houses are listed so we shouldn't change the look of the facades."*

*"The facade upkeep is needed, but it needs to be continuous maintenance so it doesn't just get bad again. Training locally is key, cost of maintenance of heritage buildings is a significant and huge barrier."*

### **Formalised Town Brand**

The consensus across the consultation was that a more robust and formalised town brand would be a great asset to Whithorn. It was raised by many, however, that this should go beyond the obvious ecclesiastical themes and, while still holding them as the key driver, consider wider themes and points of identity for the town and the surrounding area. In particular, it was mentioned that this should be developed with the whole town's involvement, rather than just those operating within touristic spheres.

*"We need to diversify - hairdressers, places for people to pop in and out. People travel for a nice piece of cake."*

*"The whole town should come together and decide this, it should involve local people."*

*"Everyone should know what whithorn is about."*

*"Could definitely be more of a 'foodie brand' - lots of people in the area doing food stuff."*

*"Town brand like wigtown booktown would be good - what brings people to Whithorn?"*

*"This is vital for the town."*

# Sustainability

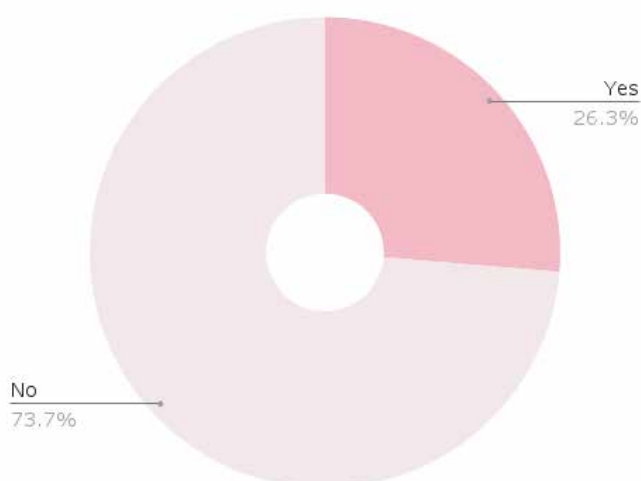
Across the consultation, this theme was described using the following:

**Quick summary: Support and introduce more initiatives that help make Whithorn a sustainable place to live.**

The goal: *"To introduce and improve upon existing sustainable initiatives of varying scales, the impact of which will enhance the day to day quality of life for the community of Whithorn, for instance by improving access to affordable energy, local food networks, sustainable transport options, and providing appropriate improvements to property."*

## Overall Thoughts

### 1. Is Whithorn meeting this goal well already?



### 2. What's Whithorn already doing well to achieve this goal?

*[A selection of comments, chosen to proportionally illustrate trends in responses]*

*"We have a superb local shop whose staff go well beyond anything that could*

*be expected of them. This shop already stocks much local produce."*

*"There are small initiatives regarding food poverty, but these are not accessed by all."*

*"The food bank in the community centre."*

*"We have phenomenal primary food producers right on our doorstep, some of the best in the country and the perfect climate for these with the gulfstream giving the SW its own microclimate. Dairy, Beef, Pork, Lamb, Poultry and Eggs are all being done to their best standards within a 10 minute drive of Whithorn."*

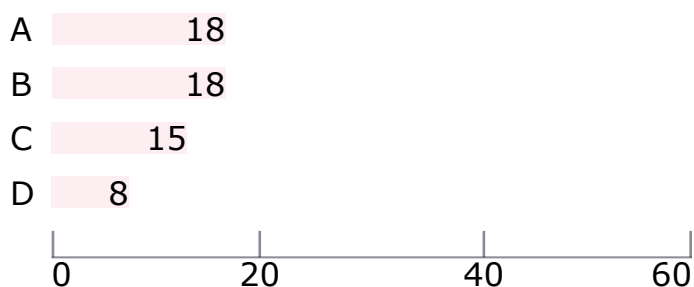
*"The Whithorn Trust and Whithorn Rebuild are training young people and raising awareness through free workshops to adults to understand the importance of sustainability through the built environment."*

*"There is a core of people very interested in sustainable initiatives but from anecdotal experience, these are mostly people who have moved into the area rather than local people."*

*"The community centre does an amazing job in supporting the local community."*

### 3. What does Whithorn need to achieve this goal?

[The most frequently recurring themes across both online and in-person responses]



A - Renewable energy community network/grid

B - Sustainable food networks

C - Retrofit of buildings, improve building energy efficiency etc.

D - Community allotments

\*\*

[A selection of comments, chosen to illustrate proportional trends in relation to the most frequently recurring themes]

"There are small efforts to help with food poverty, but Whithorn is still an expensive place to heat a home. Need a householder grant scheme for appropriate retrofit of traditional properties to improve energy efficiency."

"Energy and transport could be reviewed as to how Whithorn could benefit from infrastructure projects such as wind farms to support the local economy."

"An investment programme in the fabric of older properties, to make them viable, easy to heat and still as attractive as they are."

"Easier upgrading of older listed buildings to combat climate change."

"We are in the middle of a cost of living crisis that is getting worse. We can't

afford to eat or heat our homes."

"Despite the quality of our local produce, there is no local processing capacity. Dairy almost all goes to Stranraer to the cheese factory, beef and lamb are either sold out of the area to other markets. Our nearest Abattoir being at Lockerbie, 80 miles away. This means to sell local produce locally, you've to pay to transport it to Lockerbie and back, which adds to the cost, and there is not the wealth in the local community to be able to pay this cost. Sustainable transport is a fallacy in areas as rural as this, it's not practical, it's unreliable, and results in empty buses driving around."

"Local small shops are good, but with the economic and financial crisis people cannot afford the prices and shop out of town at larger supermarkets."

"Advice surgeries on how to access solar panels, insulation etc. Allotments for people of the town to rent at a reasonable price."

"More grants towards heat pumps/solar panels/home improvements."

"This goal will take a community working together, lots of cooperation, and a tangible change of lifestyle with shopping co-ops, improved access to transport and a desire to make it work."

"Significant injection of financial resources to the townscape within the central conservation area by way of restoration of traditional building details, repaving of currently inappropriate monoblock and tarmac mess which exists in the centre of the street and creation of a green public space in the environs of the priory which could lead to a re-wilded area of former marshland and potential community woodland."



## Example Projects

### 4. How would you rate the projects out of 5?

#### Online Ratings

1. Renewable energy community grid: 4.3
2. Whithorn mobility hub: 4.3
3. Building on biosphere: 3.8
4. Baseline dwelling standard: 4.6
5. Re-purpose / re-use / repair existing buildings: 5
6. Support the development of sustainable food network: 4.5

#### In-Person Ratings

1. Renewable energy community grid: 4.6
2. Whithorn mobility hub: 3.5
3. Building on biosphere: 4.4
4. Baseline dwelling standard: 3.9
5. Re-purpose / re-use / repair existing buildings: 4.8
6. Support the development of sustainable food network: 4.6

### 5. Feedback on example projects:

#### Renewable Energy Community Grid

A district system for energy was very popular across all platforms and forms of consultation. However, there was a lot of disagreement about what exactly the resource should be and how it should be harnessed. Wind and solar were seen as unpopular visually, but also based on poor anecdotes of their efficiency. Ground source heating was popular, however there have been similar cases of energy bills not being improved in some cases. This indicates that despite the popularity, there is significantly more consideration and analysis to further any project of this nature.

*"Good to reduce bills, but not wind or solar."*

*"Ground source heat pump or community ground source heat pump, too much*

*controversy for wind and solar would look hideous."*

*"In support of the grid, folk wouldn't have to worry. With community heating, the currently the retrofitted heat pumps are not working well, bad electricity bills."*

*"We need to respect the conservation area."*

*"District energy/heating system would be amazing for locals."*

*"Local wind farm would be good, or some sort of connection for existing ones."*

*"It should allow people who live outside town, not just centrally."*

#### Whithorn Mobility Hub

The mobility hub was, again, not a common or particularly popular topic of conversation. However, many agreed that if it's easy and ready to implement it could provide better options for locals and tourists. When discussed with a focus on sustainability, there was also consideration for a hub's appeal as an accessibility feature for seeing the wider area, if it contained accessible forms of transport, rather than just being about electric vehicles for residents or tourists on e-bikes.

*"Don't care for electric bikes, they should be embedded into facilities that already exist."*

*"Funding for a tramping facility would be fantastic - would want 2 so you can do it together."*

#### Building on Biosphere

There was some confusion about what exactly the biosphere was, and how Whithorn could directly impact or build from it. However, it was generally emphasised that it was an important asset for the area, and that Whithorn should directly link into its surrounding natural assets both for the benefit of its own residents and as a more diverse touristic potential. Much of the

conversation focussed on agriculture and food, and overlapped regularly with discussions concerning food networks.

*"The woodlands are important, and there could be a rewilding of old agricultural land."*

*"The biosphere could encourage more people to come to the town, tourists should know dark skies of Galloway include Whithorn."*

*"Agricultural development could be more sustainable and in keeping with the town's wider strategy. How can it be made more sustainable in the biosphere area?"*

### **Baseline Dwelling Standard**

This was a very popular project with nearly all spoken to, and was often seen as an important step in improving liveability of Whithorn and alleviating cost of living pressures. It was also seen as important to keep the historic buildings in use, however it was regularly asserted that any improvements need to be done in a way sensitive to heritage and conservation. It was raised by many that this needed to go beyond just key historic buildings, and should be provided across the whole town. This project was seen to be more popular in the context of a more holistic strategy to repair and care for the buildings of the town, along with their re-use, and that it should be used to develop local skills and employment prospects.

*"Baseline dwelling must be done historically."*

*"It's important for this to link with work to develop skills for youth ongoing in the town."*

*"This shouldn't destroy heritage of area, e.g. no external cladding."*

*"Council properties have a lot of damp."*

### **Re-Purpose / Re-Use / Repair Existing Buildings**

This project represented another of the most popular and vital initiatives for the future of the town. Consensus was that the historic buildings of Whithorn are key to its appeal and character, and that they should be protected. With many mentioning the successes of the Grapes Hotel renovations, this was in addition to a desire to see more holistic affordable housing in the existing buildings, to see them used and lived in by families. There was a general consensus that this project was vital to providing new skills to residents, particularly youth, and that it should draw upon the existing work already being done in this area.

*"This could help improve lives but also upskill people."*

*"Some organisations have bravely taken on empty properties already, and this scheme should support them as they have taken on all the risk."*

*"This should also help with skills development and the improving of buildings for liveability."*

*"Important to retrofit old buildings to futureproof the town and make it sustainable."*

*"I would like to see existing buildings being useful."*

*"Invest with a view to maximise opportunity. Is it a derelict building for young people to do up and improve energy efficiency?"*

*"A definite need for family housing in the town."*

### **Support the Development of Sustainable Food Network**

Another very popular and 'obvious' project for Whithorn to capitalise upon. It was recognised that the wider agricultural industries don't have a direct relation to the town in selling their produce, nor is

there a regular market for this to occur. This was seen as an important step in combating food poverty and the cost of groceries in the area. Some saw that there was not the need for a formal food network, however it was generally agreed that locals should take part too, whether through initiatives such as seed and knowledge swaps, or through more formal arrangements with the characteristic large gardens throughout the town. Many saw the existing community spaces as crucial to helping this work, many with existing smaller efforts already in place.

*"Could we have beehives for honey, a vegetable path, community allotments, and sharing spaces for anyone?"*

*"Good food is seen as a middle class thing, and to access much of the food produced here you need to go to markets at Wigtown or further north. This should be addressed and make it more accessible for everyone in Whithorn."*

*"I want to shop locally but the shops are twice as much."*

*"Focus seems to be on dairy farming; local farmers should be able to sell their vegetables they grow and not just dairy."*

*"I want to see local shops selling local produce."*

*"Connect the annual flower and produce show with tourism."*

*"Plants are important, there's a big seed swap in the area."*

*"Food network is not necessary. People already have gardens, it should be a swap locally between gardens instead."*





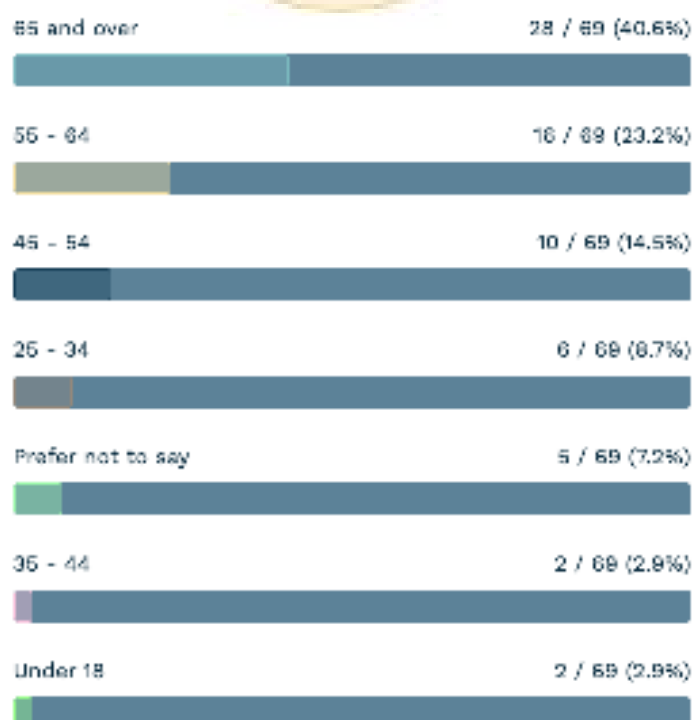
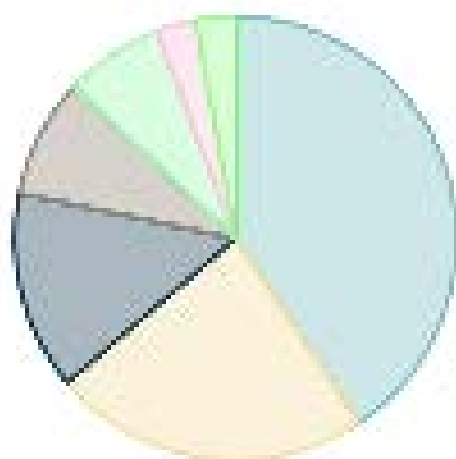


# Final Ranking Survey

Following our main public engagement and production of a final draft of the Whithorn Place Plan, we conducted a final stage of community consultation. This allowed the local community of Whithorn to prioritise the projects within the Place Plan. The outcomes of this survey can be found in The Whithorn Place Plan on page 72 and 73. This spread presents the data from the demographic of this survey.

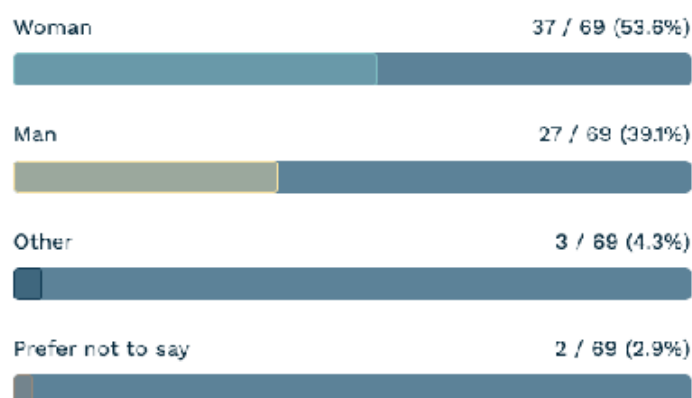
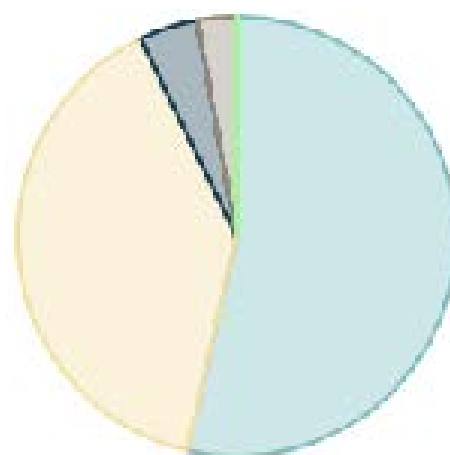
## 1. Please select your age from the options below:

65 and over 55 - 64 45 - 54 25 - 34  
Prefer not to say 35 - 44 Under 18 19 - 24

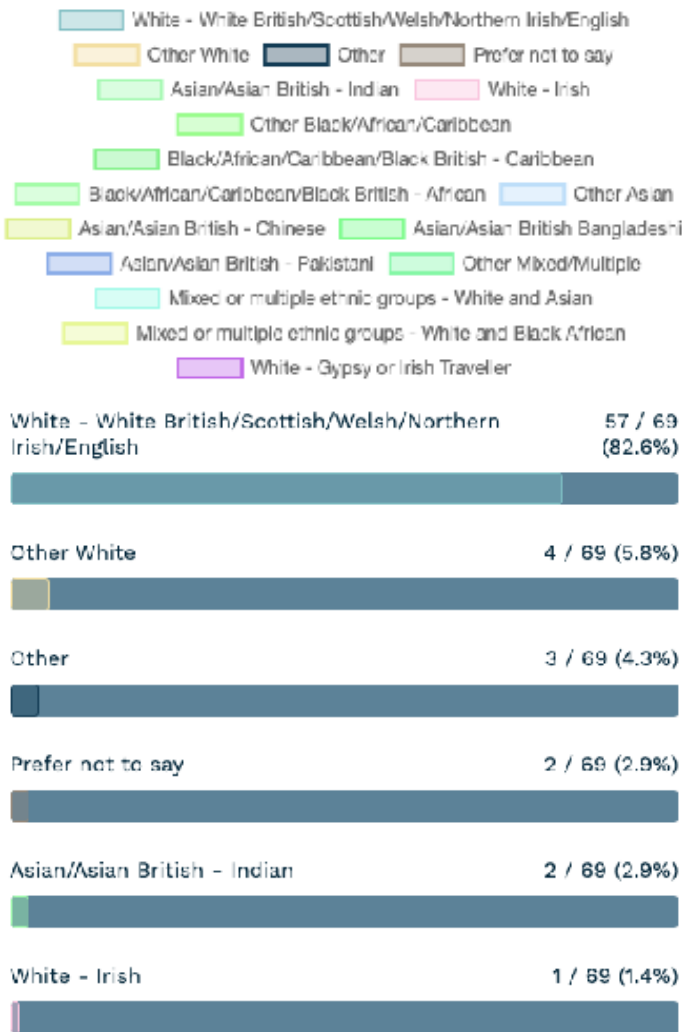


## 2. What best describes your gender?

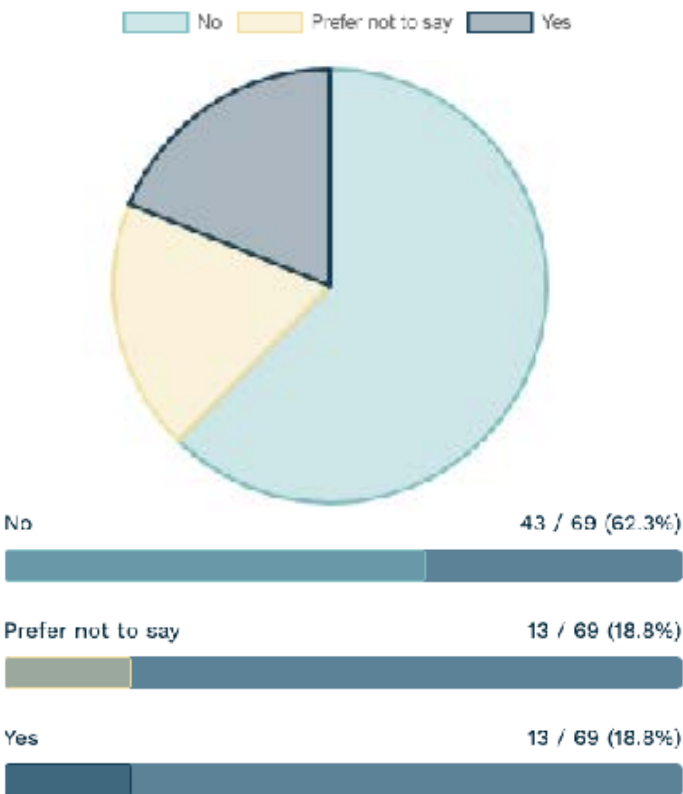
Woman Man Other Prefer not to say  
Non-binary Trans\* woman Trans\* man



3. What is your ethnic group?



4. Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?





# **Part Three**

## **Chapter 6 Full Initiatives of the Whithorn Place Plan**



# Theme One

## Community Safeguarding & Enrichment



The theme seeks to build upon the existing passions and initiatives within the Whithorn community, while also providing new opportunities and capacities for community-building and support. Beyond activities and resources, the enrichment of community has at its core the particularities of rural life, opportunities for learning and agency, and equitable wellbeing.

### Summary of Initiatives:

- A.** Intergenerational Upskilling and Training
- B.** Community Greening and Growing
- C.** MUGA Improvements with Micro-Hub
- D.** Community Renewable Energy Grid
- E.** 'Filling the Gaps' in the Bus Service
  - E1 - Night Bus
  - E2 - Community Bus
  - E3 - Bus Shelter
- F.** Rethinking Car Parking
- G.** Mobility Hub

### Initiative A - Intergenerational Upskilling and Training

Support the development of initiatives which provide upskilling, education and training. This should be intergenerational and cross-sectional in its benefit for youth skills, the encouragement of diverse employment opportunities, and general wellbeing, leisure and agency. There is potential for this to overlap with a number of other initiatives in the Local Place Plan, to unlock in its delivery the development of local skills and agency.

#### Key Features

- **Youth Skills and Training:** Support both the development of new initiatives and existing work being undertaken to provide extra-curricular education and upskilling for young people, for wellbeing, agency and employable skills.
- **Cross-Generational Opportunities:** Support opportunities for cross-generational upskilling and learning, beyond just employable skills, to allow residents of all ages to also unlock agency and ability to volunteer or provide wider support to community initiatives.

*"We have a community centre with lots going on, New Town Hall with new facilities, active church with children activities and adult clubs."*

*"Different groups are doing great things in Whithorn, and it would be brilliant if they could collaborate on some of their initiatives"*



*"SMCC has changed my life helping me make friends."*

*"There are four main charities...The volunteers and staff who run and work for these groups are doing an excellent job, and Whithorn is thriving because of the work that they do to improve the community."*

**South Machars  
Community Centre**



Over the consultation, there were **57** comments to support existing or to make new community spaces (e.g. 'men's shed' or youth space).

There were **44** comments to support existing or to make new upskilling initiatives for all generations.

*"Excellent community centre, Town Hall, lovely pub. A friendly and inclusive vibe. More needed for teens."*

*"The New Town Hall has been a great addition. The Building Futures Galloway initiative is offering training for the first time to young people."*

*"The community needs to be empowered / trained to achieve their goals."*

*"Whithorn Rebuild and Building Futures Galloway are very important to give kids skills and something to do."*



**Building Futures Galloway**



## The New Town Hall



*"Facilities like the New Town Hall are fantastic, tying in the gym with the boxing club, rentable hall spaces and a bunkhouse which is the first non-airbnb type accommodation in Whithorn for years."*

## The Whithorn Trust



*"The Whithorn trust tries hard in many ways to connect with the community, with visitors and the historic scientific community. Their support and encouragement for youth is admirable."*

Image credit: [scotlandstartshere.com](http://scotlandstartshere.com)



## Initiative B - Community Greening and Growing

Provide new ways for local residents to engage with greenery and growing in Whithorn. This goes beyond planting, to consider general wellbeing, spaces to rest and socialise in nature, opportunities to learn and engage in the growing of plants and food, and the sharing of produce, resources and knowledge.

### Key Features

- **Community Growing Space:** New community growing spaces for leisure and learning. These could be delivered by the development of a specific area for direct resident use such as allotments or a communal area facilitated by a local community group.
- **Community Garden:** In addition to space for growing, community gardens and spaces to 'be in nature' are equally important. These should have a focus on wellbeing, sensory experience and act as a space for local residents to rest and meet, and be located in convenient and accessible areas.
- **Sustainable Food Networks:** Encourage knowledge and resource sharing between residents, such as seed and plant swaps, spaces and support for markets, or the creation of a network to share unused space across the characteristically large gardens of Whithorn's residential properties. Whithorn should also be linked to existing sustainable food networks across the wider area, joining and supporting wider sustainable food initiatives and capitalising on the area's agricultural economy.



**Planters on  
George Street**

*"Make the village as nice and pretty as possible for the people who live here. E.g. tidying up the planters and adding more flowers and trees"*



When we asked the community to rate the initiative '**Support the Development of a Sustainable Food Network**'

- the average rating was **4.5/5** via the survey.

Over the consultation, there were **17** comments about the improvement or introduction of green spaces, and there were **16** comments regarding the improvement or introduction of a community garden.

## Inspirations



Image credit: meristemdesign.co.uk

Garden at Lea Bridge Library, East London

### **Key Take-aways:**

- Shelter at the rear of the library acts as a threshold to the garden.
- Immersive paths and seating areas.
- Sensory and edible planting.



Image credit: thestove.org

The Unexpected Garden, Stranraer

### **Key Take-aways:**

- Outdoor community space.
- Community wellbeing and learning.

*"A local quiet green space with trees where you can be immersed in nature would be beneficial for people that are experiencing poor mental health."*

*"There are really great sustainable food initiatives set up in the wider area - but the networks seem to stop at Wigtown."*

*"Despite the quality of our local produce, there is no local processing capacity. Dairy almost all goes to Stranraer to the cheese factory, beef and lamb are sold out of the area to other markets. Our nearest Abattoir is in Lockerbie, 80 miles away. This means to sell local produce locally, you've got to pay to transport it to Lockerbie and back, which adds to the cost, and there is not the wealth in the local community to be able to pay this cost."*

## Initiative C - MUGA Improvements with Micro-Hub

Repair and upgrade the existing MUGA site, with the installation of a spectator area, for use by the whole community, including relevant groups and Whithorn Primary School. This upgrade should include the development of a new Micro-Hub, responding to local appetite for a sports or leisure centre, which provides covered, indoor space for storage and small group gathering in all weather conditions. This development could link in with existing activities and initiatives, allowing wider use or providing satellite space.

### Key Features

- **Outdoor Sports Facility:** The Micro-Hub should offer equipment and storage of equipment for a range of outdoor sports and activities at the new MUGA site. This should include not just sport equipment itself, but also the equipment required to flexibly cater for events.
- **Youth Friendly Space:** At the Micro-Hub or elsewhere, provide covered and indoor space for youths to gather, meet and self-initiate events which need not always be related to sport.
- **Space for Girls:** Ensure that development at the MUGA incorporates Make Space for Girls initiatives, to reduce intimidation and encourage diverse use of the space. For instance, the provision of activity equipment beyond traditional ball-sports, large swings and playful covered meeting spaces.
- **Enhanced Accessibility:** Accessibility into and throughout the MUGA area should be improved, including disabled parking provisions. Accessibility should also drive the design of the Micro-Hub space.
- **Public Toilets:** Toilets (including accessible changing spaces) should be provided at the MUGA, to bolster its autonomous use and reduce reliance on neighbouring community and school sites.

### Existing MUGA







During the youth workshop at Douglas Ewart High School with 12-16 year olds who live in Whithorn, when asked where they would like to see a dedicated youth space,

**8** participants said near or beside the MUGA / Football Pitch.

## Inspiration



MUGA, Copenhagen

### Key Take-aways:

- Replace high fences, designed to keep 'anti-social' teenagers at arms-length, and replace with benches or terraced seating to provide an intergenerational space and activity for all.
- An accessible and flexible place to meet, wait, watch, socialise **and** play.

Image credit: [activeurbanist.com/post/tear-down-the-fences-replace-them-with-benches](https://activeurbanist.com/post/tear-down-the-fences-replace-them-with-benches)

*"Because there are no toilets at the MUGA, it is very impractical to use with the school children as we end up ferrying groups of children back to the school every 10 minutes."*



## Initiative D - Community Renewable Energy Grid

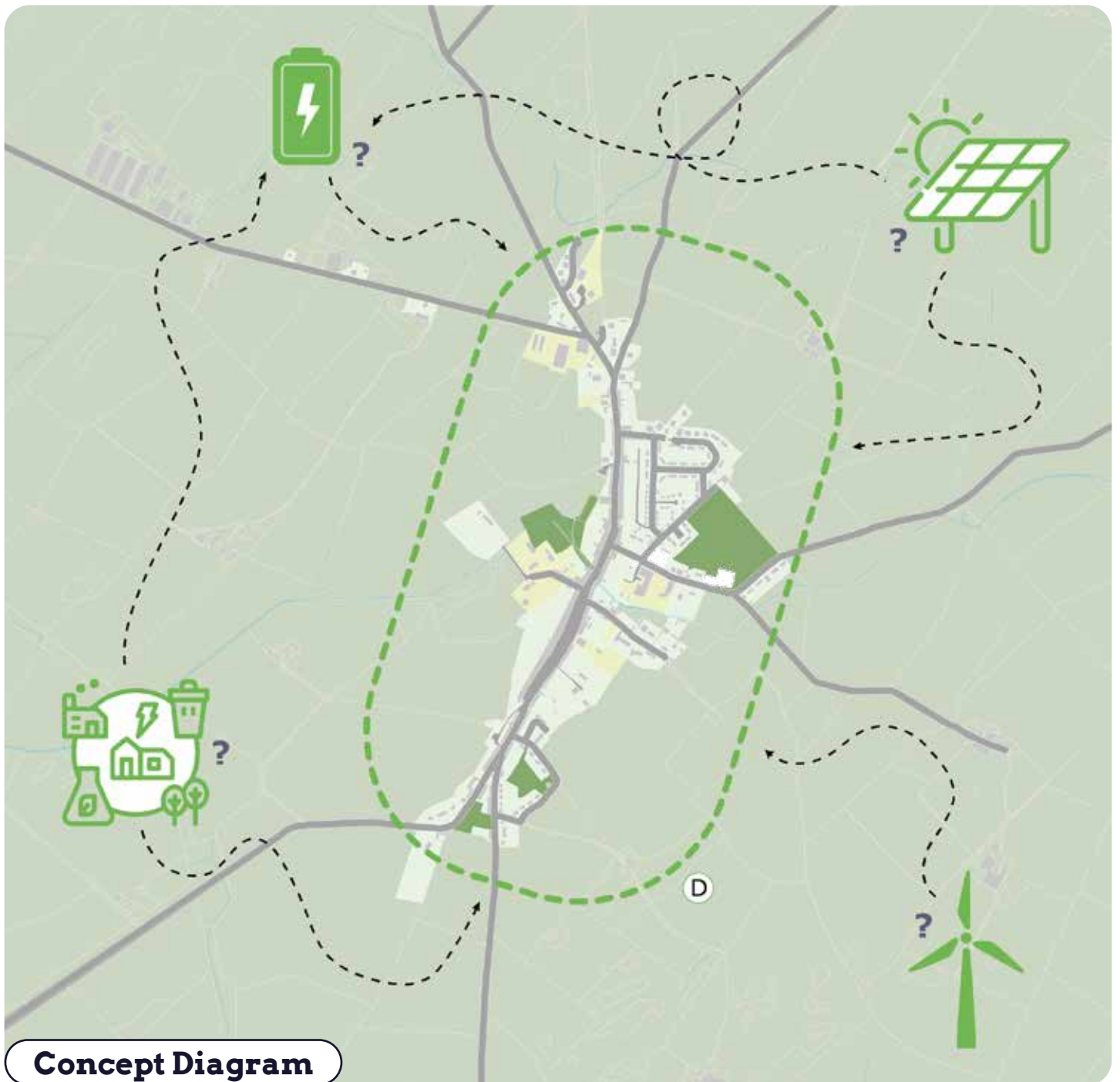
Develop and build a community renewable energy asset for the town, which provides energy resources directly to all local residents. This could be through either the direct provision of the resources to properties, or feeding to the local grid with subsequent subsidising of utilities costs for residents. The overall objective is to reduce utilities costs for local residents, helping to improve the cost of living and afford potential expendable income for the local economy. Also to be explored is the possibility of excess resources to be provided to the grid, with any financial gains to be reinvented into the town and its community. Further work is required to understand the exact form of this initiative, the most appropriate resource (i.e. electricity versus heating) and its required scale.

### Key Features

- **Community energy champions:** Support the ambition for a local renewable energy grid through the formation of a taskforce of energy champions. Their remit would be to lead the development of a compelling case for evolution of the historic town as resilient, low-carbon community. Community Energy Scotland could be engaged as an advisor in the development of the future approach.
- **Low energy economy:** Increase understanding of local waste products and the potential for their re-use in local industry, business or energy uses through knowledge sharing with the local and regional business community.
- **Community energy skills and training:** Support an increase in understanding of the cumulative impact of energy-related behaviour changes and the steps to delivering energy-related initiatives in the local community, through a programme of interactive and discussion focused workshops. As an example, workshops could cover – smart homes and buildings, domestic recycling, low carbon heat, low carbon transport and smart networks.



When we asked the community to rate the initiative '**Renewable Energy Community Grid**' - the average rating was **4.3/5** via the survey.



*"A renewable energy community grid would be great so long as it works and is in fact cheaper"*

*"We don't need a wind farm but the geology would support a community thermal heating system"*

## Initiative E - 'Filling the Gaps' in the Bus Service

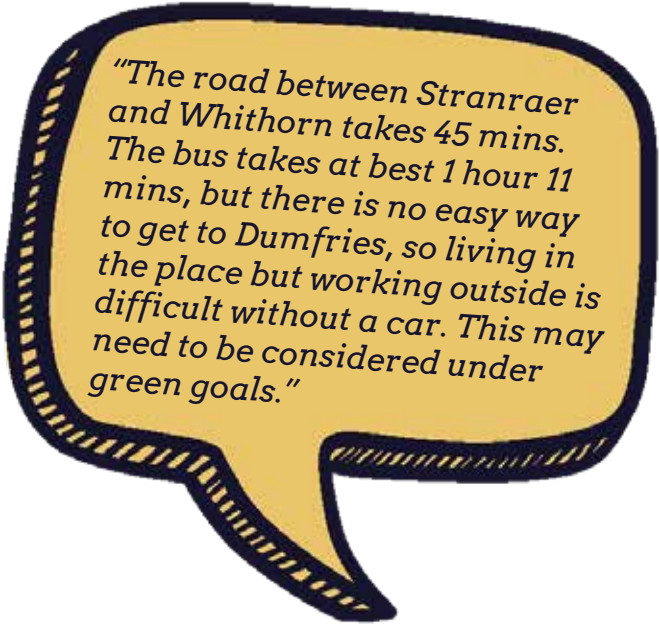
Respond to the gaps in the existing bus service, optimising its usefulness to local residents for diverse needs and improving its accessibility both physically and in means of use. While many local residents rely on cars, this would improve accessibility for those who are unable to drive or may wish to attend events which will restrict them from using a car (i.e. consuming alcohol), while supporting a broader modal shift towards more sustainable transport modes.

### Key Features


- **Optimise Existing Service:** Make use of smaller buses during off-peak times, and larger buses during peak times to increase capacity. Existing networks should also be re-assessed with a human-centred approach to usability to ensure practical timetables and that ample time is provided at interchange points between routes, to improve the ability to get from Whithorn to wider locations such as Dumfries.

### Sub-Initiatives

- **E1 - Night Bus:** Commission a night bus service, which would allow Whithorn residents to either extend their visits to the wider area for work, wellbeing resources or leisure, and to attend evening activities within the wider area. Further studies on the most suitable times for this are needed; for instance, this service may only be most useful Thursday to Saturday.
- **E2 - Community Bus:** Support the development of a community bus service, which could be either hired by community members or operate as a 'Dial-A-Bus' service. This would allow groups of community members to access leisure and wellbeing activities in the wider area together.
- **E3 - Bus Shelter:** Shelter for those waiting for buses with up-to-date and live timetables (either printed or through a display), and providing shelter to those waiting for buses (both general and school services) in poor weather. This could be delivered in tandem with the Theme Two initiative for Places to Rest and Wait.



*"The road between Stranraer and Whithorn takes 45 mins. The bus takes at best 1 hour 11 mins, but there is no easy way to get to Dumfries, so living in the place but working outside is difficult without a car. This may need to be considered under green goals."*



*"When it rains the children waiting for the school bus get wet through before the day has even begun"*



Over the consultation, there were **46** comments expressing that public transport connections are poor. Many went on to say it is particularly problematic in the evening, and that connections between different services and networks are problematic.

and there were **32** comments regarding improvements to bus stops, shelters and/or signage.

## Inspiration



Image credit: [brighton-hove.gov.uk](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk)

*Bus shelter with a living roof, Brighton*

### **Key Take-aways:**

- Shelter for all during adverse weather.
- Digital signage with live service updates.
- Timetable.



## Initiative F - Rethinking Car Parking

Re-assess the car parking strategy in Whithorn, and implement a new system which affords more accessible use for residents, optimises and improves upon visitor experiences, and alleviates congestion points for the benefit of local residents and visitors alike.

### Key Features

- **Blue Badge Parking:** Providing a number of 'blue badge' car parking spaces for disabled users in central, convenient parts of the town centre.
- **Maintain Resident Car Parking:** Ensuring that locals still have spaces to park their cars which are convenient for residents, and within practical distance for those parking to use businesses or key places of interest.
- **Congestion Measures:** Implementing measures to reduce congestion at 'tight points' in the town centre (i.e. double yellow lines or passive methods such as planters), particularly at local places of interest with periods of higher capacity use.
- **Visitor Parking:** Developing a site for visitor parking, which could also act as an overspill for seasonal periods of increased capacity. This could be incorporated into wayfinding initiatives within Themes Two and Three to better consider the route that visitors take through the town past key businesses and heritage sites.

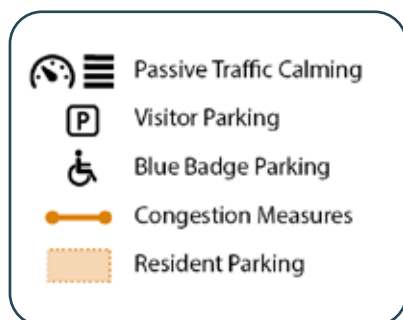
*"Off street parking in town centre which is a bottle neck for traffic and off putting for those who need to access amenities and services."*

*"Because of my disability, if I can't park right outside the shops, post office or chemist, I can not access the services, because there is a risk I will fall"*

*"Parking in St John Street needs a complete rethink."*

**St John Street**





When we asked the community to rate the initiative '**Car Parking Strategy**' - the average rating was **3.3/5** via the survey.

Over the consultation, there were **22** mentions about the issues of car parking being addressed.

## Initiative G - Mobility Hub

The delivery of a 'mobility hub' within the town centre. This would create space designed specifically to bring together public, shared and active travel modes alongside other facilities such as clean fuel for cars (EV charging), light and heavy duty vehicles and buses (such as bio Compressed Natural Gas and hydrogen), and consolidating goods for more efficient and sustainable deliveries. The hire of electric cars, vans and bikes could be considered in either an 'as required' manner or through a membership scheme. The provision of cars and vans would alleviate isolation for local residents (particularly for those who don't own such vehicles); electric bikes would provide leisure opportunities for both residents and visitors.

The ambition is to design, deliver and operate uses on the site that can enable Whithorn, and neighbouring rural communities, to decarbonise transport and energy through activities that enable local skills and training opportunities, create jobs and improve affordability and access to services.

### **Potential mobility hub features:**

1. Ultra-fast EV hub for cars, buses and vans;
2. Car & ebike share facility;
3. An interpretation and promotional space;
4. Hub for local and longer distance regional bus operations with charging facilities;
5. Potential for land for commercial property as an innovation area to support local businesses and to connect with the mobility hub uses/'offer';
6. Sustainable urban drainage scheme to showcase biodiversity;
7. A neighbourhood space for local services such as a banking and ebikes, shaped by community consultation;
8. Locally produced renewable energy and storage to energise the site and uses as a local, green energy neighbourhood.



When we asked the community to rate the initiative '**Whithorn Mobility Hub**' - the average rating was **4.2/5** via the survey.

"I would love trampers or mobility scooters on the new Whithorn way section. Or ability for special blue badge access and parking to access the woods. Otherwise people like me cannot get onto this pathway."

## Inspiration



Image credit: [visitlakedistrict.com](https://www.visitlakedistrict.com)

*Tramper Hire, Lake District*

### **Key Take-aways:**

- Ensuring that visitors **and** locals with varying mobility can enjoy the wonderful local footpaths that Whithorn boasts on it's doorstep.
- In conjunction with accessible parking spaces at the start of the routes.
- Minimum of two Trampers for hire.



# Theme Two

## A Vibrant Town Centre

Whithorn has a unique and vitally important built environment, with its history being central to its central sense of place and its appeal to wider groups. In addition to celebrating this, the spaces and activities between and within the buildings are equally seen deserving of care, with fostering a new town vibrancy both visually and through new chances for activity.

### Summary of Initiatives:

- H.** Whithorn Street Market
- I.** Ground Surface Renovation Scheme
  - I1 - Beautifying Whithorn
- J.** Places to Wait and Rest
- K.** Shop Front Improvements
- L.** Flexible High Street Community Space(s)
- M.** Heritage Sensitive Signage
- N.** Improvement, Reinstatement & Care of Buildings

### Initiative H - Whithorn Street Market

Deliver and support continued development of a 'Whithorn Street Market' which can take place regularly in the town centre (i.e. on George Street). This will foster a regular opportunity for locals and residents of the wider area to sell or exhibit their own local crafts or produce, and be connected to those of others, potentially overlapping with the Community Greening and Growing initiative. With adequate development and support, this can become a key cultural asset for Whithorn to diversify its offering for both tourists and visitors from the surrounding area, building upon the strength of local crafts, agriculture and potentially also antiques and heritage.

#### Key Features

- **A Collaborative Venture:** The market should incorporate collaboration between existing community groups that already run market events, and with a new town centre location, act as an improved and/or alternative location to build upon existing ventures, not as competition.
- **Market Stalls:** To provide a strong foundation for longevity and a unique character, a commission for the creation of bespoke robust and 'pop-up' market stalls should be considered. These could allow flexibility to be erected on the slope of George Street (if not incorporated into the Ground Surface Renovation Scheme initiative), and could also be an opportunity for local skills development and creative heritage expression.
- **Advertisement:** To ensure the success of the market, it must be properly advertised beyond Whithorn, with the development of a creative identity and brand.



When we asked the community to rate the initiative '**Flexible Public Space**' - the average rating was **4.5/5** via the survey.

Over the consultation, there were **46** mentions that more shops or markets or high street businesses would be desirable.

## Inspiration



*Barras Market Stalls*

### **Key Take-aways:**

- Bespoke market stalls for flexible use.
- Durable, but can be moved and easily packed away for safe keeping.

*"Further development required within the main area (George Street) as the shops we have are excellent and provide an excellent service but could be further enhanced with encouragement and funding to bring other businesses into the town"*

*"Promote walks in and around the area. More free events and guided tours of the areas unique historical attractions. More pop up cafés and food themed festivals and events."*

*"A more vibrant high street. Artisan bread and a proper green grocer selling local products. Independent retailers such as somewhere selling plants, tools, compost etc."*

*"What Whithorn is lacking is more OUTDOOR space for events and gathering"*

*"Encourage new businesses, training opportunities, cafés, and shops into Whithorn that employ local people"*

**George Street**

## Initiative I - Ground Surface Renovation Scheme

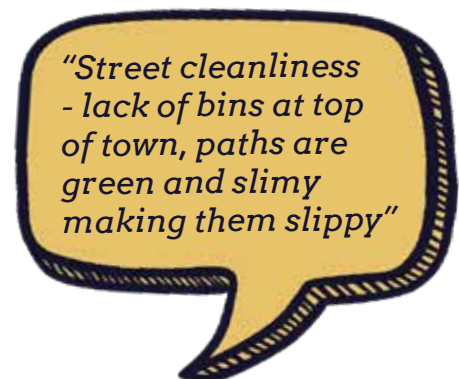
Renovate the town centre of Whithorn, predominantly through a series of subtle changes to ground surfaces, to passively redistribute space and improve accessibility. This would be done with adherence to conservation area requirements and sensitivity to heritage character.

### Key Features

- **Flexible Public Space:** Using different ground surfaces, create a zone which can be flexibly and easily used for a range of public events (i.e. the area can still provide car parking the majority of time when not in use). This area should include built-in utilities services to widen the types of events possible, from markets to an outdoor cinema or music performance.
- **Improved Accessibility:** Ground surfaces and levels at key junctions and kerbs should be enhanced to improve accessibility, with details such as tactile paving.
- **Passive Traffic Calming:** Passive traffic calming at ground-level should be incorporated for accessibility, public safety (especially with any new public space) and noise control for residents. Such measures would passively slow vehicles down throughout key stretches of George Street, with the understanding that ample space must still be provided for agricultural traffic to travel through the town at an appropriate speed.

### Sub-Initiatives

- **I1 - Beautifying Whithorn:** Beautify and enhance the quality of the built environment with heritage and quality at the core, with tools such as planters and integrated greening. These could be designed to act as passive measures in the delivery of wider goals of the Ground Surface Renovation Scheme.



We send postcards to every Whithorn postcode, on which we asked the community to select the theme that is most important to them.

From the postcards that were returned **22.7%** selected the theme 'Townscape Improvements' - making it the joint most popular theme via this engagement method.



*"For an outstanding conservation area, Whithorn fails miserably to live up to its designation. The residents need to recognise the unique and intrinsic quality of the main street and to celebrate- and enhance- this medieval street plan. Currently, George Street is regarded as somewhere that you drive through or you walk past. There is considerable scope for creating spaces that would encourage people linger in the centre of the street."*

*"There is no centre to the town. It's mostly just a long road with too many cars parked alongside. As it's a through road, I don't think pedestrianisation would work. But a 20 mph speed limit and traffic calming (lights triggered by speeding etc.) might make the town a little bit more pedestrian friendly. I also don't think the town is very wheelchair friendly. More ramps from road to pavement."*

### Street furniture on George Street



### Inspiration

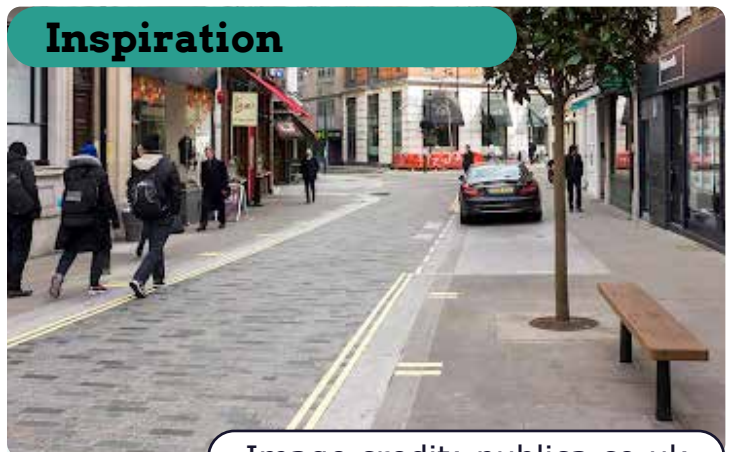


Image credit: publica.co.uk

*Lane accessibility and ground surface improvements, Marylebone*

#### **Key Take-aways:**

- High quality materiality.
- No street clutter.
- Priority to pedestrian accessibility.
- Vehicular access and parking maintained but managed.
- Street trees.



## Initiative J - Places to Wait and Rest

Making Whithorn a more 'walkable' place, by providing spaces to rest and sit, with consideration also for poor weather. This would also provide spaces to meet others, and foster a vibrant sense of place and community.

### Key Features

- **Benches:** a number of benches provided throughout key parts of the town centre, to aid accessibility and allow general rest, alongside the opportunity for local businesses to capitalise on these in good weather (i.e. somewhere to have a sandwich).
- **Shelter:** space to wait undercover in poor weather; at the very least, one shelter in a central part of the town. This could be integrated with the provision of the Bus Shelter in Theme One.

*"I can only walk short distances, so would benefit from places to sit and rest"*

*"It's quite a long slog from the shop to the top of George Street - even for someone who is quite fit"*

*"The upkeep of the townscape needs to be looked at. Additional seating would be helpful"*



When we asked the community to rate the initiative '**Places to Wait and Rest**' - the average rating was **4.3/5** via the survey.

## Initiative K - Shop Front Improvements

Improving shop front facades throughout the town centre, including new or improved signage. This will elevate the look of the street environment, and provide a fresh and rejuvenated, eye-catching vibrancy to the town centre. Supporting traders in upgrading facades will contribute to the special character of Whithorn and aim to improve general footfall, and to create a high quality urban environment that people will want to visit, linger, meet friends and shop.

### Key Features

- **Iconically 'Whithorn':** An aesthetic strategy must be developed, which will be present across improved shop fronts. This should consider the local heritage of Whithorn, the existing historic signs present in the town, as well as the wider character of the place and its people.
- **Increasing Footfall, Dwell Time and Visitor Appeal:** Foster the development of a unique town centre that will either attract visitors or encourage passers-by to stop. Improving the street environment in this manner will aim to increase general dwell time of footfall, with the hope of leading to new opportunities for businesses and jobs.
- **Harness and Develop Local Skills:** Aim for the improvements to be carried out by local talented craftspeople and tradespeople, or with the integration of training and upskilling for people who live in Whithorn as a way to enrich the initiative and foster ownership and custodianship.

### Inspiration



Image credit: getintogovan.com

Shop Front Improvements, Glasgow

### Key Take-aways:

- Reinststate the original scale, proportion and details of shop fronts.
- Attractive and high quality townscape.

*"Grants for householders as well as businesses which would help stimulate the local economy and provide training opportunities for local young people in Whithorn ReBuild"*

*"The town looks run down"*



When we asked the community to rate the initiative '**Shopfront Improvement Strategy**' - the average rating was **4.3/5** via the survey.

## Initiative L - Flexible High Street Community Space(s)

Creating a new community space on the town centre high street. This will aim to create new opportunities for community activity, and also providing space for existing community groups a third space to carry out events, in an attempt to build upon the existing initiatives in Whithorn and bring part of their energy and vibrancy 'out into the open' on the high street. This space, in addition to hosting its own activities and being available for hire, could act as an 'overspill' location for existing community groups and centres. The programming of the space can be flexible, but should also respond to existing gaps in the offering of services and activities on Whithorn's high street, for locals and visitors alike.

This could be considered alongside a desire for community asset transfer of a site, which would require further consultation and feasibility study.

### Key Features

- **Central and 'Always Open':** The community space must be centrally located in Whithorn on the high street for maximum effect. The space should also respond to the seasonal nature of Whithorn's visitorship, and provide services that are open standard hours across the whole year.
- **Rotating Uses:** To alleviate the need for long leases and the cost for start-up ventures, the space can offer rotating uses to the community, while also showcasing their skills and providing a range of services. For instance, a makers' and growers' hub where local people can sell their handmade wares, temporary exhibitions for local artists, or a potential location for 'Library of Things' which would allow residents to hire larger appliances and equipment which are either costly or only available in major urban centres.
- **Community Cafe:** An all-year-round cafe space for locals to meet and eat. Programmed in a way that works with existing food and beverage venues and shops, not as competition. This could offer professional cafe and barista training for a team of Whithorn residents.
- **Youth-Friendly Space:** Provide an ongoing space for youth to meet. This should be developed with youth, and they should be involved in its ongoing development, programming and upkeep.
- **An Attractive Space to Be:** A well designed and cosy space, with a unique ambience to attract visitors from the wider area or encourage those visiting the town to stop and use the space.



When we asked the community to rate the initiative '**High Street Community Space**' - the average rating was **4.2/5** via the survey, and **4.3/5** in-person.

Over the consultation, there were **25** mentions that a cafe or community cafe with employment opportunities would be desirable.

## Inspirations



Image credit:  
milkcafeglasgow.co.uk

*MILK cafe, Glasgow*

### **Key Take-aways:**

- Cafe as well as multifunctional space that hosts a number of local groups, classes, workshops, and pop-up events.
- Welcoming and cosy atmosphere with delicious coffee and cake.



Image credit:  
okrastudio.com

*Spotlight Youth Space and Cafe, London*

### **Key Take-aways:**

- Cafe as well as a dedicated youth space.
- Interior and furniture designed to be adaptable, such as moveable dividers and a meeting-dining table which transforms into a tennis table.
- Co-design sessions with young people so they can put their stamp on their 'zone'.

*"The closest good cappuccino is in Edinburgh or Glasgow"*

*"More small businesses - food outlets and craftspeople (pop up to begin with)"*

*"Sometimes I travel 20 minutes to a cafe in another town to find coffee and a good piece of cake, only to find they're closed"*

*"Visitors frequently stop residents in the street to enquire where they can get refreshment and they usually have to be directed to neighbouring towns or villages rather than stay in Whithorn."*



## Initiative M - Heritage Sensitive Signage

Refresh existing and heritage signage throughout the town, and create new signs for key locations and wayfinding. This aims to foster a cohesive style of high quality, heritage appropriate, and accessible signage for residents and visitors, directing them both to and within Whithorn. This initiative focuses on new and existing general signage and is distinct from a wider creative heritage-focused wayfinding strategy for tourism, which is a separate (but linked) initiative within Theme Three.

### Key Features

- **Directional Signage to Whithorn:** Implement more signage directing drivers, cyclists and walkers travelling through the wider area to Whithorn. These should direct to the town but also be appropriate for the type of traveller, i.e. specific consideration for walking and cycling routes versus driving.
- **Welcome Signage:** A refreshed welcome experience to the town through cohesive and singular signage.
- **Restoration and Education:** Restore existing heritage signs with improvements to readability, and the development of a cohesive strategy for signage in the town based on heritage. This should come with education to residents and businesses on the appropriate signage for the future and its importance.



**A Photo Study of Existing Signage in Whithorn**



Over the consultation, there were **17** mentions of improved and / or more traditional signage, and there were **11** mentions of better signage for tourism.

## Initiative N - Improvement, Reinstatement & Care of Buildings

Safeguard the unique and characteristic built heritage of Whithorn, by encouraging the reinstatement or repair of historic buildings. This should not be limited to listed heritage assets, but should include the characteristic historic buildings prevalent throughout the town. The historic character of Whithorn is foundational to its unique character, and beyond safeguarding it, caring for and amplifying it would enhance town centre vibrancy and visitor appeal. Encouraging and allowing people to comfortably live or move into well maintained historic buildings will bring overall vibrancy, liveability and appeal to Whithorn.

### Key Features

- **Sustainability:** The greenest building is one already built; to enhance this general principle guiding this initiative, methods of repair or retrofit should also use sustainable materials and methods.
- **Affordable Housing:** Any buildings retrofitted, repaired or reinstated for dwelling should include provisions for them to potentially be used for affordable housing, for local or new residents.
- **Local Economy, Upskilling and Training:** Aim for the improvements to be carried out by local talented craftspeople and tradespeople, with the integration of training and upskilling for people who live in Whithorn as a way to enrich the initiative and develop local skills.

### Sub-Initiatives

- **N1 - Facade Upkeep Scheme:** To enhance the visual character of these buildings, general upkeep support should be offered to local residents to maintain their historic homes, particularly those along St John and George Streets, through both aiding the means to do so and through education on heritage, its importance and appropriate types of maintenance or upgrades for the conservation area.
- **N2 - Enhanced Liveability in Historic Buildings:** Develop and deliver a strategy for improving the baseline dwelling standard (i.e. thermal performance) for those living in historic and older buildings across Whithorn. This will help with general cost of living while safeguarding the use of older buildings for years to come, making them more appealing for prolonged use by existing or new residents. Any improvement of this nature should be done sensitive to heritage and ensure to not damage the historic fabric (both internal and external) of a building.
- **N3 - Re-purpose, Retrofit or Reoccupy Empty and Derelict Buildings:** To enhance the visual impact of the historic town centre and to bring greater vibrancy, empty historic buildings should be prioritised for re-use, along with any necessary heritage-sensitive retrofitting or repurposing to facilitate this. Derelict buildings should be repaired to enhance the general visual environment of the town and to safeguard its built history; endeavours should be made to ensure these are in use.





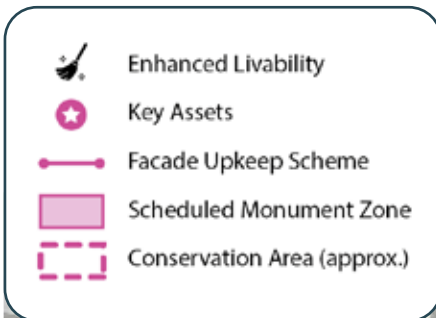
**The former Grapes Hotel, refurbished into affordable family housing.**

*"The Whithorn Trust and Whithorn Rebuild (BFG) are training young people and raising awareness through free workshops to adults to understand the importance of sustainability through the built environment. They are committed to education and training to empower people to become upskilled and aware for the need for sustainable approach to preservation of buildings and the fight against climate change."*

*"The Conservation zone, while it maintains the character of the town centre, makes improvements and repairs to homes much more expensive, in an area where many just can't afford to pay for things like replacement wooden sash windows"*

*"The Conservation Area means that we have an almost unique townscape. The refurbished Town Hall and the 'Grapes' has improved the area immensely."*

*"An investment programme in the fabric of older properties, to make them viable, easy to heat and still as attractive as they are"*



**Concept Diagram**



## Inspiration



*Shawlands' Parklets, Glasgow*

### **Key Take-aways:**

- Durable but light intervention for street greening and resting space.
- Can be positioned on pavements or in existing plazas, or made to easily fit and beautify 'left over' spaces caused by car parking geometry.

Note: The visual opposite has been developed to provide a high level 'vision' of a combined number of features. It indicates a potential sense of atmosphere, rather than specific design options or arrangements, for which further consultation and full design initiation is necessary.

1

Bespoke and heritage-sensitive 'pop-up' market stalls and/or events infrastructure, which can be taken down and stored in a high street unit on non-market days.

2

Bespoke and heritage-sensitive way-finding signage.

3

Passive traffic calming measures, with a walking and wheeling prioritised approach, while retaining vehicular access.

4

Places to wait and rest.

5

Bespoke and heritage-sensitive 'storytelling' signage.

6

Street trees and greening.

7

Feature lighting.

## Early-Stage Propositional Illustration of George Street as a Flexible Public Space



# Theme Three

## Nurturing Whithorn's Unique Assets



The historic heart of Whithorn is its ecclesiastical heritage, dating back centuries and offering some of the most important sites within Scotland for Christianity. Protecting, celebrating and seizing the potential of this history is vital for the future. Alongside this, Whithorn should take opportunities to draw upon wider assets, to truly build a unique and one-of-a-kind place.

### Summary of Initiatives:

- O.** Safeguarding Existing Heritage Assets
- P.** Improve Connections Within & Beyond Whithorn
- Q.** A Creative Wayfinding Strategy
- R.** Formalise a Town Brand
- S.** Diversify Whithorn's Tourist Offering

### Initiative O - Safeguarding Existing Heritage Assets

Whithorn is especial due to its density of unique historical sites, which are crucial to the cultural history of the area and have links to the wider history of Scotland. For Whithorn to thrive and encourage visitors to the town, its history must be both preserved and celebrated. In particular, the key historical sites of antiquity within the town must be protected. The preservation and celebration of Whithorn's history is central to the development of a cohesive local identity, for general town vibrancy and visitor appeal, and one of the most important, future-proofing catalysts for retaining residents, creating new skills and employment opportunities, and encouraging new business and residents coming to the town.

#### Key Features

- **Local Economy, Upskilling, Training and Education:** It is imperative that any work safeguarding and developing the celebration of heritage and historical sites should be undertaken in tandem with opportunities to engage the entire local population. This includes ongoing equitable consultation, general education for all age groups, commissioning local talented craftspeople and tradespeople, with the integration of training and upskilling for people who live in Whithorn as a way to enrich the initiative and develop local skills.
- **In Collaboration with Historic Environment Scotland:** As owners and managers of many of the key historical sites within and nearby to Whithorn, Historic Environment Scotland should remain a key stakeholder in any new or ongoing conversations regarding heritage assets.

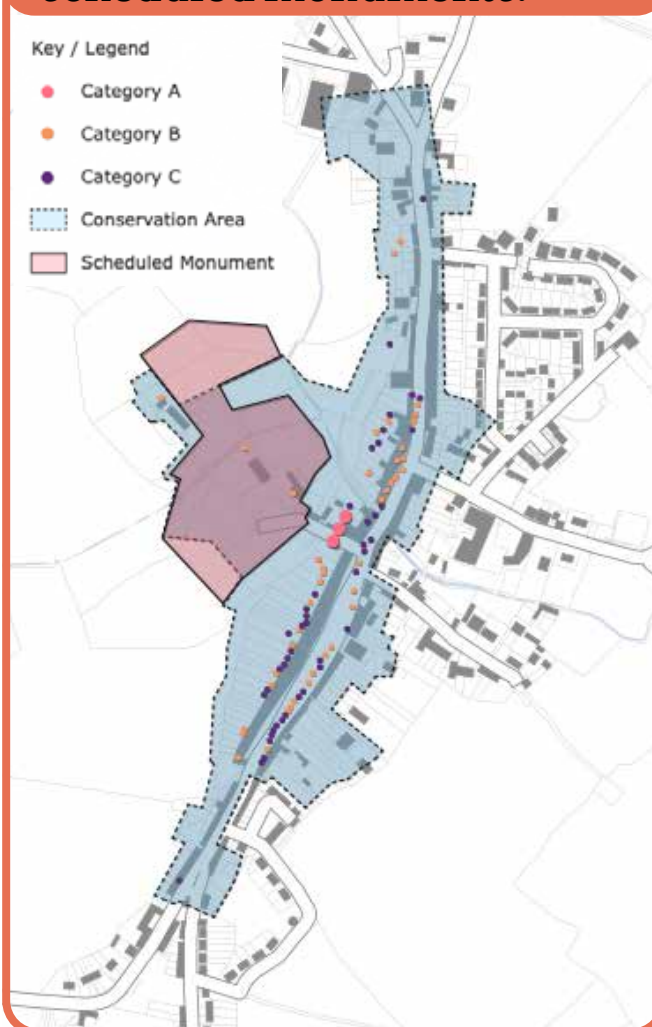


*"Whithorn stands alongside Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Constantinople and other centres in its significance but that is not reflected in the development of local assets which are just not inspiring. There has to be something to SEE!"*

*"Whithorn was once the 'centre of the Southern Machars'. It needs to develop its tourism industry by further developing interest in its historical and archaeological heritage; and become a destination in its own right by focussing on its heritage both archaeological and historical"*

*"ARCHAEOLOGY - Whithorn is nothing without it!"*

## Map of listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled monuments:



We send postcards to every Whithorn postcode, on which we asked the community to select the theme that is most important to them.

From the postcards that were returned **22.7%** selected the theme 'Tourism' - making it the joint most popular theme via this engagement method.



## Initiative P - Improve Connections Within & Beyond Whithorn

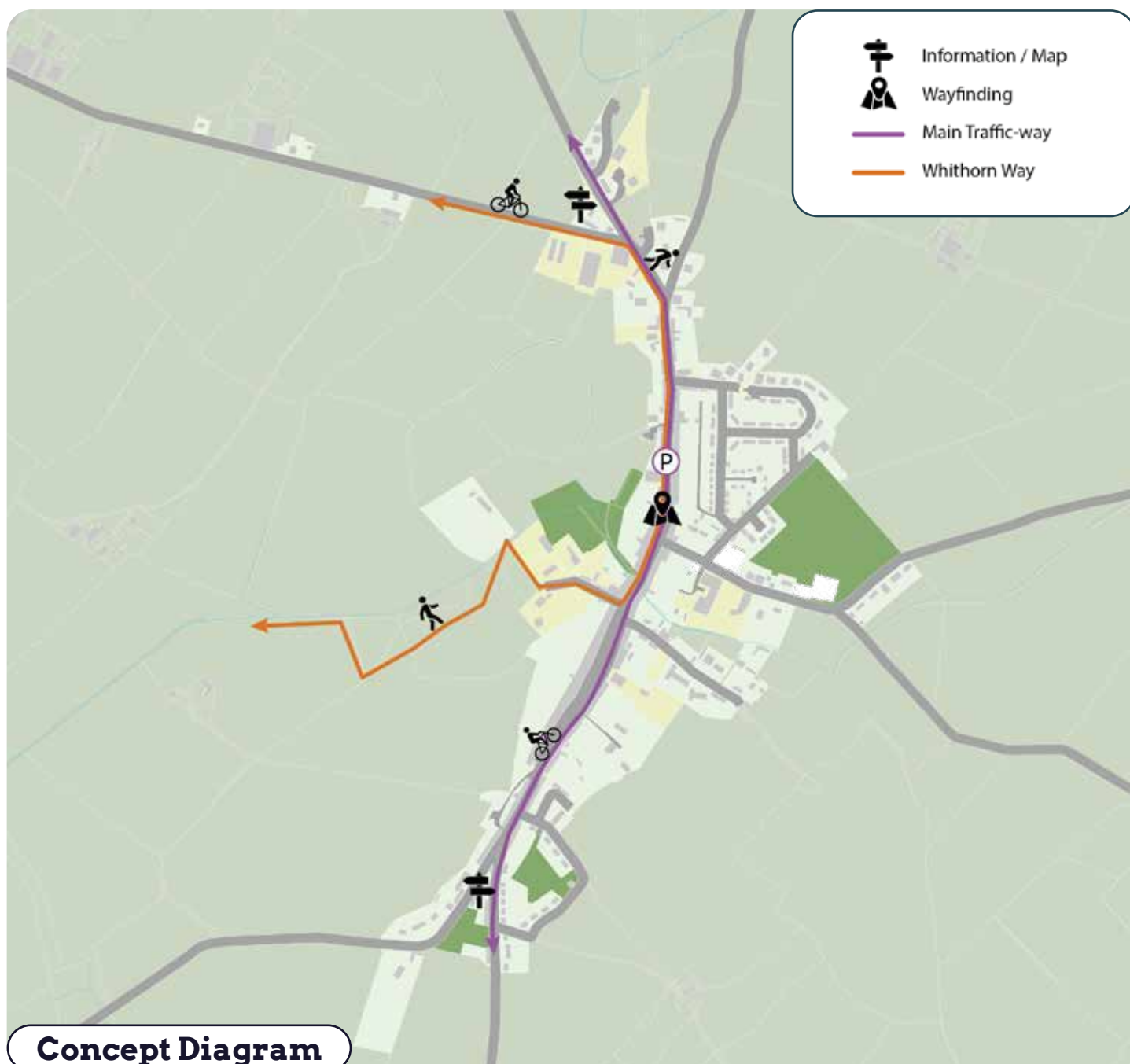
Remedy perceptions of isolation by better connecting Whithorn to the wider area, while also improving and better capitalising upon the routes (both historic and general) throughout the town itself. This would help to not only open up possibilities for tourists to get to-and-from Whithorn more directly, but also allow existing routes in the town to be more accessible, clearer and obvious to visitors. This initiative considers the connectivity of routes themselves, and has strong and high-yield overlap with the initiative for A Creative Wayfinding Strategy within this

### Key Features

- **Improving and Accenting Routes Within Whithorn:** Highlight and better sign key walking routes, such as the Whithorn Way but also wider walking pathways, across Whithorn. Improve their accessibility for diverse users.
- **Connections for Cyclists:** Connect Whithorn to key cycling routes such as the NCN7 and incorporate the area into cycling initiatives such as coast-to-coast routes and events. Improve the signage for cyclists in the area, directing them to and throughout the Whithorn area, including diverse cycling types to capitalise on the potential of existing or new off-road and gravel routes, which could foster connections to off road cycling initiatives in wider Galloway.

### Sub-Initiatives

- **P1 - Map and Visitor Kiosk:** Create a central sculptural map which indicates key sites in Whithorn and the wider area, and the key historic and leisure routes for walking and cycling throughout. This could be housed within a small kiosk style structure within the town centre, which can act as a greeting point for visitors, but also provide key information during off seasons or hours when heritage sites and information-providing venues are closed. These initiatives, and their maintenance, could be constructed through engagement with local residents and provide opportunities for education and upskilling. The construction and style of the map and hub should be heritage-led.



## Initiative Q - A Creative Wayfinding Strategy

Design and implement a creative wayfinding strategy throughout Whithorn, which directs visitors to key historic sites and tourist attractions, while conveying a wider historic story itself. The wayfinding strategy should be creative, incorporating materials, artistic devices and visual themes which are 'uniquely Whithorn' and contribute to the telling and celebration of its story. Ultimately, the wayfinding strategy should be a creative piece which acts as a tourist draw in itself and contributes overall to town centre vibrancy. This initiative considers story-led wayfinding; this has strong and high-yield overlap with the initiative to Improve Connections Within & Beyond Whithorn within this Theme.

### **Key Features**

- **Welcome Signage:** A new and cohesive welcome signage experience, announcing entry to Whithorn and conveying an eye-catching historic story to encourage passers-by to stop.
- **Storytelling Devices:** The wayfinding strategy should be a consistent storytelling device within its wider strategy. However, it should also include individual moments of storytelling within its constituent assets.
- **Incorporate Greenery:** The wayfinding strategy should be used as a way to bring greenery into the town centre in a heritage-sensitive manner. This could include simple tactics such as planting incorporated into wayfinding devices, or iconic planters or street trees to creatively indicate the portions of the Whithorn Way which pass through the town for general tourists and pilgrims.
- **Tell the Whole Town's Story:** While sites of antiquity and religious heritage will be a prime theme, the creative identity used to create the strategy should tell the story of the whole town, and speak to its wider attractions and identity. This links directly to the initiative within this theme to Formalise a Town Brand.

### **Sub-Initiatives**

- **Q1 - Map and Visitor Kiosk:** Create a central sculptural map which indicates key sites in Whithorn and the wider area, and the key historic and leisure routes for walking and cycling throughout. This could be housed within a small kiosk style structure within the town centre, which can act as a greeting point for visitors, but also provide key information during off seasons or hours when heritage sites and information-providing venues are closed. These initiatives, and their maintenance, could be constructed through engagement with local residents and provide opportunities for education and upskilling. The construction and style of the map and kiosk should be heritage-led.

## Inspirations



*Milngavie Streetscape*

### **Key Take-aways:**

- Creative wayfinding information and storytelling.
- Bespoke, durable and attractive design.



*Heritage Wayfinding at Abertarff House, Inverness City Centre*

### **Key Take-aways:**

- Creative wayfinding information and storytelling.
- Bespoke, durable and attractive design.
- Attractive and high quality townscape.

*"Yes to wayfinding - heritage assets have none. There are elements but they are not done in a cohesive way. Historic Environment Scotland would be pleased if their unnamed sites were part of a trail, guided by local tour guides"*



*Make Way, Glasgow*

### **Key Take-aways:**

- Vibrant wayfinding with functional use.
- Durable and visually interactive.
- Created in collaboration with local youth and community residents.



## Initiative R - Formalise a Town Brand

Formalise a town brand which can be used across all initiatives to foster the creative, heritage and place-based identity of Whithorn. The brand concept should be used consistently in media, advertising and branding assets, and associated brand imagery or iconography should be developed to create a visual identity which is characteristic of and recognised as 'Whithorn'. To carry out this work, graphic, branding or marketing consultants may need to be appointed, and guidance may be required to ensure that its expression in media, online and in internet search engines is as effective as possible.

### Key Features

- **Diverse and Representative:** While sites of antiquity and religious heritage will be a prime theme, the creative identity used to create the strategy should tell the story of the whole town, and speak to its wider attractions and identity. This can help to diversify the tourist offering of the town, and build in the skills and passions of local people, growing and greening and the character of the wider landscape (both agricultural and wild). This links directly to the initiative to diversify Whithorn's Tourist Offering within this theme, and to help capitalise and bolster wider initiatives such as the Whithorn Street Market in Theme Two.

## Initiative S - Diversify Whithorn's Tourist Offering

The special religious heritage of Whithorn and its important sites of antiquity are naturally foundational to its identity, the more forefront and obvious tourist draw and also the assets which require considerable safeguarding and celebration. However, there is opportunity to diversify Whithorn's tourist offering and identity to encourage a wider audience to visit, and to enrich the story of the town. This will also help to incorporate wider assets and the stories of everyday people of Whithorn into its holistic touristic appeal. Diversifying and holistically widening the scope of Whithorn's touristic identity will help to support new ventures and encourage new residents or businesses relating to the diversified themes to come to the area, while also potentially providing a bolstered economy industry for the existing community.

### Key Features

- **'In Addition', not 'Instead Of':** Anything used to diversify the offering of Whithorn should be incorporated and considered not to supplant the important heritage of the town and its site of antiquity. Instead, any diversification should be considered in a manner to enrich and further celebrate the uniqueness of Whithorn and the area in a holistic manner.
- **Wild Nature and the Biosphere:** Celebrate the natural beauty of the wider area, and its proximity to Galloway Forest. In particular, attempts to connect to, incorporate and capitalise upon the wider identity and initiatives of the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere should be encouraged and supported.
- **Stories of the Coast and Travelling:** Build upon Whithorn's proximity to coasts of natural beauty, connect to and support biosphere initiatives surrounding the coast, and develop and celebrate stories of travel through Whithorn throughout past centuries to reach further afield places by sea.
- **Dark Skies:** Celebrate the world class recognition of the area for Dark Skies and connect to wider initiatives to protect and advertise the Dark Skies status of Galloway.

- **Rural Land, Agriculture and Produce:** Recognise the agricultural identity of the surrounding area, its rural nature and the produce it yields. This is a defining feature of the area that can be celebrated and incorporated into the identity of the town in a holistic manner, and could support initiatives such as the Whithorn Street Market in Theme Two, growing and greening and the sharing of local knowledge and produce.

*"There is a lot of focus on Whithorn as the birthplace of Christianity in Scotland, but we also have fascinating wildlife, geology and a variety of landscapes."*

*"We need more in the way of visitor attractions, The Dig/Whithorn Trust is great, but it targets a very niche tourism sector or religious and archaeology interest types. The Hoarde from the dig at Whithorn is one of the most comprehensive collections that exist, but it is not held here, it's at the National Museum of Scotland, largely in Archives. We could do with a museum here in the town to showcase this collection properly. A modern facility that compliments the historical ones."*

*"There is widespread name recognition of Whithorn among visitors. The trick is how to translate the recognition to visits. The signage / marketing material / visitor centre are not in sync, which is unhelpful for visitors."*



Over the consultation, there were **38** mentions relating to capitalising on the **tourist offer**.

