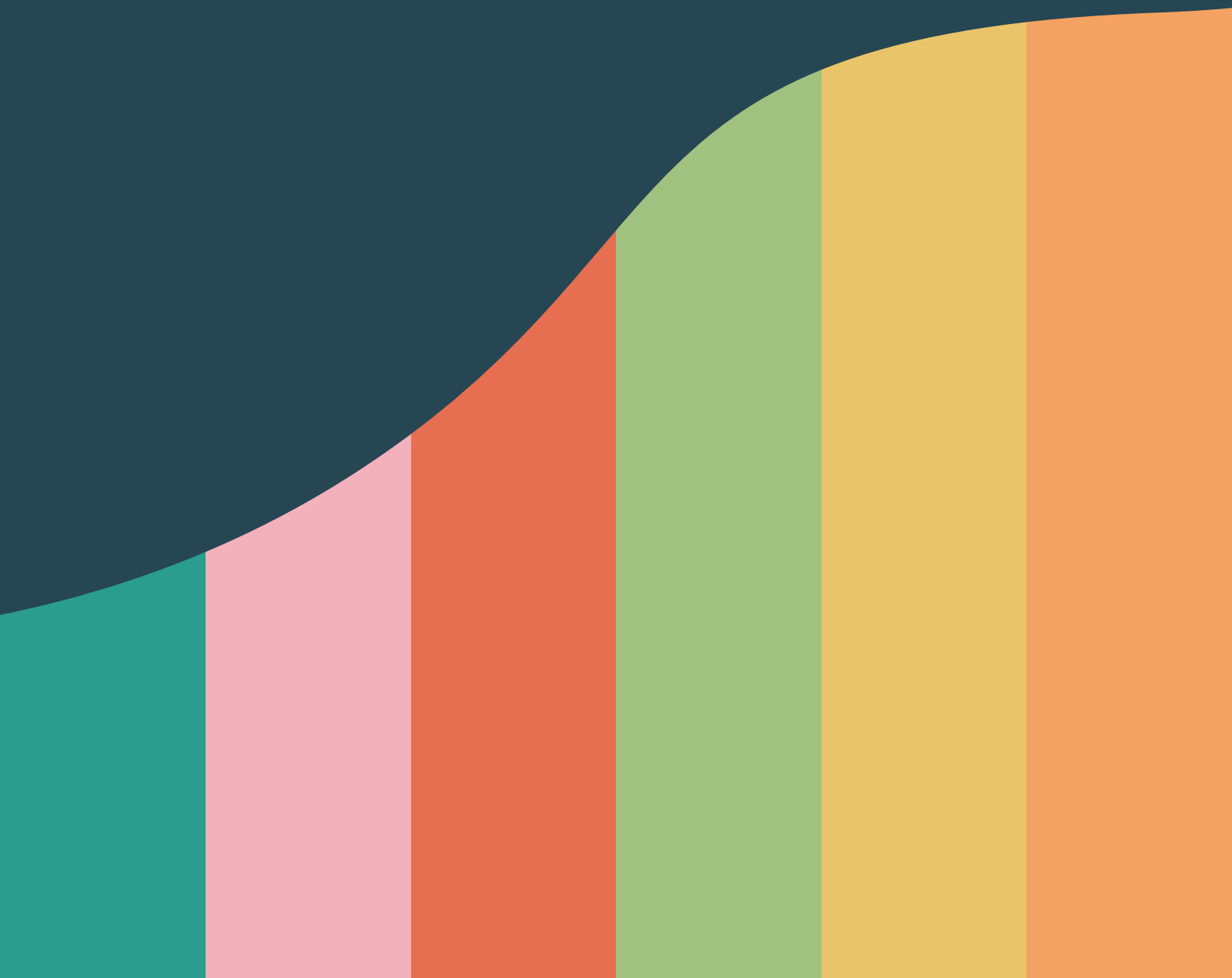


# The Whithorn Place Plan











HIGH STREET



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# Part One: Introduction & Process

## 1. Introduction

### Whithorn

Whithorn is a town and royal burgh on the central southern reaches of the Machars Peninsula, with the central town and wider area having a population of approximately 750 people. The town centre is arranged around the axis formed by St. John and George Streets, each flanked by characteristic townhouses, many with long and narrow back gardens. The town spreads from this axial high street upon which the majority of commercial activity takes place. A significant part of the town centre constitutes a conservation area within the Local Development Plan, with the town plan itself dating to the 13th Century.

The town and surrounding area hold a unique historic importance. Beyond its early trading importance to at least 300 AD, the core of its historic identity lies in its significant ecclesiastical antiquity. From the 5th Century onwards, the town grew as an important site for Christianity, and one of the earliest in the wider region; often referred to as the 'Cradle of Christianity' in Scotland, Whithorn was a central ecclesiastical site for more than 1000 years. The pinnacle of this history is presented still by the Whithorn Priory, which is recognised as a scheduled monument and is, alongside the wider historic assets of the town and its excavations, a core site of continued touristic appeal. The Whithorn Priory and Museum are owned and managed by Historic Environment Scotland.

Areas surrounding the town are largely agricultural, with small areas of woodland. Walking tourism and pilgrimage is one of the key threads which ties these areas through Whithorn, with the final stretches of the Whithorn Way – a pilgrimage route centred upon the history of St. Ninian and a number of sites initiating Christianity in Scotland – connecting the Isle of Whithorn to Glasgow. Beyond this, the wider area benefits from the proximity to the coast, Galloway Forest Park, a significant biosphere area and is recognised as a 'dark skies' location.

Wider connectivity journeys are primarily vehicular, with the major commercial centre of Dumfries a 1.5 hour drive away, with closer journeys Newton Stewart and Stranraer both under an hour travel. Two bus routes, with hourly services through the working week, connect Whithorn to the wider area.

The town is host to a diverse community, with just over half at working age, and a number of passionate and active local groups and community initiatives. Some of these include, but are not limited to, the South Machars Community Centre and New Town Hall which facilitate a significant number of important community ventures, alongside the Whithorn Trust, MAC-CAN and Whithorn Rebuild engaging in diverse works across heritage, skills and education, wellbeing and sustainability.



For the purposes of the requirements of the Borderlands Place Programme, a study of Whithorn, its history, assets, opportunities and challenges can be found in the context of spatial analysis and strategy/planning audits in Part One of the Appendices to this document, and in the findings of the public consultation presented in Part Two.

## **What is a 'Local Place Plan'?**

A Local Place Plan is an opportunity for a local community to have its voice heard and put forward its own aspirations and vision for its local area. The document is owned and submitted by the people it serves.

Local Place Plans were introduced by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 with aims to increase community participation in the new Scottish planning system; they give communities the opportunity to have their say on what development within their local area could look like.

Developing a Local Place Plan is a process that encourages communities within an area to work together, understanding their shared priorities while supporting the building of a collective identity. The final document communicates the community's aspirations for their area, made for and with local people. Every Local Place Plan is different, and can include specific proposals for the development and use of land, to a more general set of principles and aims for an area's future, alongside recommendations for changes to local planning policy.

Local Place Plans can identify immediate actions, however they also look forward to the future and can include visions for long term change. Sitting alongside the cycle of Local Development Plans for the area, they can identify opportunities for changes in policy to incorporate the voices and aspirations of local people.

## **The Borderlands Place Programme**

In addition to acting as a traditional Local Place Plan for planning purposes in the Dumfries & Galloway Council area, the Whithorn Place Plan also acts as the key document for future submission to the Borderlands Place Programme being delivered by the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal - supported by the UK Government and Scottish Government.

The Borderlands Place Programme seeks to invest in towns within the Borderlands area, and within this initiative has earmarked an available £15 million for eligible initiatives across five towns in Dumfries & Galloway; Whithorn is one of these towns.

This presents an exciting opportunity to not only establish consensus for a long-term vision for Whithorn and its future, but to bring forward a number of key initiatives for direct investment and action in the town.

The Place Plan must undergo an acceptance and endorsement process by Borderlands. First, the Dumfries & Galloway Council's Economy & Infrastructure Committee agree that the plan will be proposed for acceptance. Beyond this, for

any initiative to be eligible for potential Borderlands funding, it must first meet a number of investment objectives, before being taken forward for additional investment planning and assessments by Borderlands.

The Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, under which the Place Programme sits, includes a commitment to delivering inclusive and sustainable growth. The aim is to overcome the 3 BIG challenges that hold the Borderlands back from achieving its potential:

- Narrowing the productivity gap
- Increasing the working age population
- Delivering inclusive growth

The Place Plan has been prepared in the context of the Deal, with our vision, investment themes and strategic objectives all able to be linked back to the 3 BIG challenges. All initiatives within this document can be seen matched against the investment objectives in Chapter 8.

The seven Strategic Objectives (SO) of the Borderlands Place Programme are:

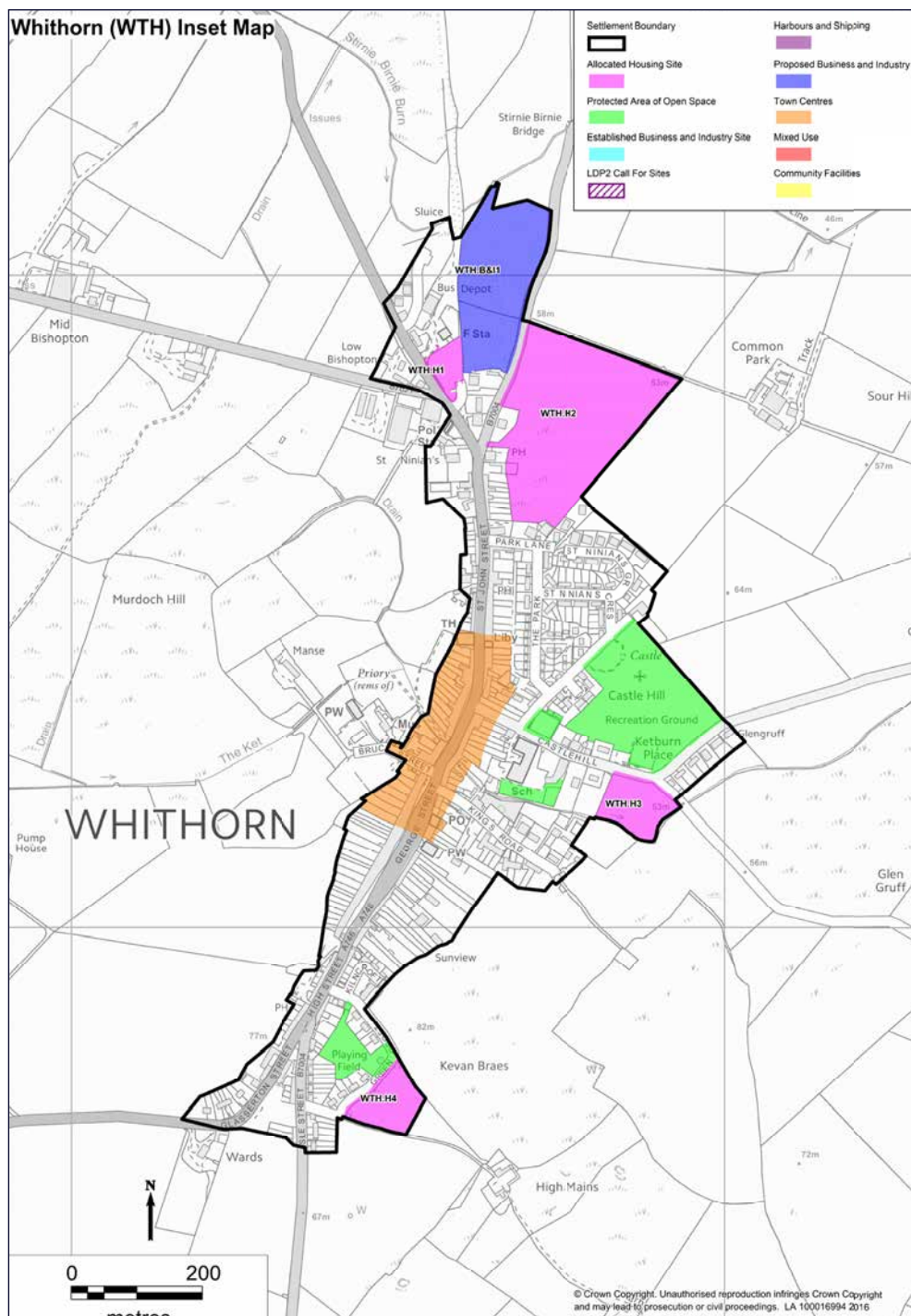
1. Empower local communities to imagine and then build a long-term future for the towns they live in, firmly in partnership with local, regional and national governments.
2. Safeguard existing businesses and attract new businesses to our towns and town centres.
3. Maintain and increase the number of visitors who spend time and money in our towns and town centres, increasing spend per visit and extending the visitor season.
4. Safeguard existing employment and deliver new jobs and opportunities for economic and social participation, including education and training opportunities.
5. Maintain and increase the number of people living in our towns and town centres.
6. Retain and increase our working age population.
7. Maintain and raise the standard of the physical environment in our towns and town centres.



## Initiative Boundary

For the purposes of this document in relation to the criteria and requirements of the Borderlands Place Programme, the boundary for the contents of the Place Plan has been set to the same extents set out for Whithorn in the Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) of Dumfries & Galloway Council.

However, in relation to use as an accepted Place Plan under planning purposes within Dumfries & Galloway, a wider boundary should be explored alongside any further feasibility analysis or consultation. The reason for this is that key demarcations in relation to the conservation area of Whithorn and the local community council have been considered within and are relevant to many initiatives set out in this document.



## Whithorn boundary within Local Development Plan 2

## Strategic Context of this Document

This document sits within a wider context of planning documents and strategies, across national and regional levels. The core purpose of the local Place Plan is to sit as one of the core facets within planning, alongside the National Planning Framework and the Local Development Plan of Dumfries & Galloway Council. The most recent National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) for Scotland was adopted in February 2023; the current Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) for Dumfries & Galloway Council was published in 2019, and as such a review of the plan will be taking place in preparation for its third iteration (LDP3) in 2027. This presents voices of Whithorn an opportunity to be considered at crucial point in the adoption of new National planning policy and the assessment of future plans for the regional area.

In addition to the planning context, this Place Plan also acts as the core document for the Borderlands Place Programme and the opportunity to indicate direct funding opportunities, with Whithorn one of the suite of towns selected as part of the programme.

As such, an audit of the key criteria across the aforementioned documents, in addition to the analysis and cross-checking of opportunities for overlap and joined-up thinking, as well as potential clashes or room for change, took place in the first stages in the development of this document. This took the form of a wider spatial analysis and audit of key strategies. This in-depth process and its findings can be found in Part One of the Appendices to this document.

Building from the findings of consultation, all initiatives within this Place Plan have been analysed and set against the context above, to ensure a feasible and deliverable series of opportunities for Whithorn.





## 2. A Community Vision for Whithorn

The future of Whithorn is multi-faceted, and builds upon a number of unique and important traits of the town, while connecting with opportunities to diversify its identity and ensure it's providing a fulfilling wellbeing for all its residents from the ground up. The foundations of Whithorn's history are singular and strong, and merging the celebration of this with efforts to revitalise economy both within and outwith the tourist sector will see the town flourish. This ambition, within the context of Whithorn's beautiful and peaceful natural surroundings, and its historic buildings and character, can see the town draw a new generation of visitors as well as residents.

### Regenerating the Local Economy and Employment

Many people in Whithorn remember when the centre of their town was more vibrant and lively, and feel that the current town offers little opportunity for sustainable employment. Whithorn's unique identity can be used as a strong catalyst, in addition to engaging wider initiatives to support existing residents, while encouraging new working residents choose Whithorn.

- **Local businesses need to be revitalised**, with a desire to create a more vibrant town high street with new shops, support for existing retailers, and encouraging and facilitating diverse local enterprise.
- **The visitor economy needs to be developed** to capitalise on Whithorn's unique heritage, drawing on its archaeological significant and St Ninian's connections to build tourism.
- **There needs to be more support for entrepreneurship**, which should promote micro-businesses, upskilling and training workshops, diverse self-employment and draw upon local crafts and agriculture.
- **Whithorn could be a centre for rural enterprise in the area**, with initiatives for support and training becoming a priority for the town.
- **Improving Whithorn's townscape to unlock greater enterprise**, with aesthetic and functional upgrades to its town centre and public spaces. Street lighting, bus stops, signage, shop-front improvements and the re-engagement of empty properties would all work to encourage and support visitorship, business and new, diverse forms of cultural economy.

### Improving Health, Wellbeing and Social Inclusion

Whithorn could provide better for all its residents, improving its direct services and the building a strong sense of belonging across its community. The future of Whithorn builds upon its strong sense of community, passionate about the town's history, to create a shared wellbeing.

- **Facilities are needed for all ages**, with both young people and elderly residents needing spaces to feel a sense of community and agency. Rather than being isolated, this should cut across community spaces to ensure that there is a mix of generational learning that also caters to families, young adults, single



professionals and non-traditional living units.

- **Social isolation within a remote, rural setting** needs to be combated by supporting and building upon the existing, strong community networks and activities, and by creating new initiatives where required.
- **The rural setting of Whithorn**, lends itself to supporting healthy lifestyles which interact with the environment. The land around Whithorn lends itself to beautiful walking and cycling tracks full of history, which could also be brought into the town centre itself so residents can get in touch with nature for their wellbeing closer to home.
- **Greater agency for young people**, so that they feel a sense of ownership and custodianship over any initiatives to improve their wellbeing and opportunity, and to participate and build their own place in community life.
- **The opportunity to learn new skills** is vital for the community of Whithorn. This will help to provide skills for potential employment, but also provide useful tools to improve everyday life, from DIY and digital literacy to growing food and painting.

## Celebrating and Protecting Whithorn's Heritage and Culture

The world-class ecclesiastical heritage needs little introduction, but this could be better shared and celebrated to bring new visitors to the town. Beyond tourism, this identity is central to making Whithorn a special place to live, and its heritage, built fabric and culture are central to town's next chapter.

- **This historic identity must be preserved**, building upon the strong community interest to conserve and celebrate local heritage, notably its vast heritage assets from the early Christian and medieval past.
- **A better programme of cultural activities** could engage visitors year-round, and bring new tourists, diversifying Whithorn's cultural offerings and providing new activities for local residents to enjoy with and support.
- **Restoring Whithorn's historic buildings**, which give the town its special character. These should be future-proofed through care and protection, and given new purposes for community, enterprise and tourism to give them a new life.

## Better Connectivity and Improved Transport

Even with a car, Whithorn can be difficult to access - this heightens the sense of rural isolation and opportunity. With improved transport options, the rural setting and seclusion of Whithorn could also be harnessed for unique connections to the wider area.

- **Improved public transport options** are needed. Even if these don't come in the form of new routes and services, there are creative options that could be used by community members, such as shared community buses, that allow them to enjoy and engage with culture and essential services further afield.
- **Active travel could be central to improving connectivity**, with great routes for cycling through and around the town, and links to national cycle routes nearby. Beyond this, diverse forms of wheeling and walking could make this an accessible form of engaging with the wider area and getting around.

# 3. The Main Opportunities & Challenges

## Opportunities

### **Tourism and Heritage Development**

Whithorn's position as one of Scotland's oldest Christian pilgrimage destinations gives it unique heritage appeal. Protecting this, while improving interpretation, events and partnerships with national tourism bodies could increase visitor numbers and support local business.

### **Growing Demand for Remote Working**

The post-COVID shift to remote and hybrid work opens opportunities for Whithorn to attract new residents seeking a rural setting, if some quality-of-life improvements can be provided.

### **Underused Historic Buildings**

There are several underused or vacant buildings within the town which could be sensitively redeveloped for community needs. This would also future proof them and retain the town character.

### **Strong Community Passion**

Whithorn benefits from a highly engaged and proactive community of passionate locals, with a number of key actors who care deeply about the town and its community welfare.

### **Regeneration Funding Potential**

With low scoring on some SIMD themes, and its isolated rural setting, there is opportunity for additional targeted funding for some social initiatives.

### **Skills Development through Existing Community Projects**

There are existing community initiatives which have showed initial success in training locals. These are ideal to be expanded and deliver greater capacity.

## Challenges

### **Economic Decline and Job Loss**

There are limited employment opportunities, especially for young adults, contributing to cost of living stress, outmigration and fewer new residents.

### **Poor Public Transport Links**

Whithorn's remote location is compounded by an infrequent bus service which lacks optimised onward connections. This severely limits access to work, health care and leisure activities.

### **High Deprivation and Health Inequalities**

Whithorn ranks in the bottom 20% nationally for income, access and health. Issues such as fuel, poverty, chronic illness, and poor mental health are exacerbated by geographic isolation and limited social services.

### **Aging Population and Youth Outmigration**

Limited higher education and employment opportunities sees many young people leave after school and not return. The aging population left has greater pressure on health and social care with a reduced working-age base.

### **Challenges of Historic Buildings**

Prominent buildings are currently unused or semi-derelict. Without intervention these spaces could continue to degrade. The historic nature of many of the dwellings in the town means they are difficult to retrofit or improve, and costly to maintain, impacting cost of living but also living conditions for some residents.



KING'S ROAD





# 4. Process Summary

## Summary of Stages: 'The Road to the Place Plan'



## Stage One:

### Research and Inception

- Analysis of the Whithorn area
- Audit of relevant planning policy
- Audit past consultations by Dumfries & Galloway Council
- Introductions and conversations with key stakeholders to get their advice on how best to engage with the local community

Oct 2023 ————— Dec 2023



## Designing the Engagement Programme:

After Stage One, we designed the core engagement programme (Stage Two). Rather than approaching conversations in the community with a 'blank canvas', we came up with six high-level themes that we think best describe the opportunities most applicable to the scope of the Place Plan.

- |                          |                  |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| • Community              | • Tourism        |
| • Townscape Improvements | • Town Identity  |
| • Connectivity           | • Sustainability |



For each theme, a series of example initiatives were given, for the community to give feedback on, and to act as a 'springboard' for them to share their own ideas.

## Stage Two:

### Public Engagement

- Gathering feedback on the six themes themselves, their associated goals, as well as asking how well Whithorn is currently achieving each goal
- Gathering feedback on the initiative examples introduced, and asking what other initiative ideas people think should be included.

Jan  
15th  
2024

Initiative website

Paid promo on Meta

Promo images sent to stakeholders for them to share with their networks (e.g. on their social media pages)

Posters distributed

Feb  
5th

Survey launch

Promo postcards delivered

13th  
to  
15th

x2 Library Drop-In Sessions

Informal conversations with those visiting or attending existing events at South Machars Community Centre and The New Town Hall

23rd  
to  
24th

Library Drop-In Session

Youth workshop at Douglas Ewart High School

25th

Survey closed

A

## Promotion



- Paid promotion on Meta (i.e. Facebook, Instagram), geographically targeted to the Whithorn locale.
- Emails to stakeholders requesting that they support our promotion by sharing material with their own networks.
- Large format posters in the windows of a town centre property.
- Promotional postcard delivered to local addresses.
- Posters distributed to local shops and community centres.

## Stage Three:

### Understanding Priorities

- Asking the public to select their 'top 5' initiatives from the 19 included in the Place Plan.
- Asking the public to select their favourite / priority initiative from their top 5.

Jun  
2024

Aug  
2024

## Stage Four:

### Identifying Projects

- A two stage 'expression of interest' process to source potential projects from the community, which can fulfill ambitions in the Place Plan within the Borerlands fuding context.

Feb  
2025

Mar  
2025



# 5. Community Engagement Overview

## Building on Past Consultation

The work to develop the Local Place Plan did not begin with New Practice and Page\Park. An initial process of engagement was initiated by Dumfries & Galloway Council in 2023, primarily using the Place Standard Tool to begin understanding the thoughts and visions of local residents. The materials gathered from this first consultation were provided to New Practice and Page\Park in the commencement of their work for reference. An audit of the findings of the Place Standard Tool process can be found in Part One of the Appendices.

The opinions and ideas expressed in these materials, which covered the wide range of useful topics encouraged in the Place Standard themes, helped to build a foundational understanding of pre-existing views within Whithorn. Learning from this information acted in a manner similar to a preliminary engagement period, which typically seeks to introduce relevant concepts and understand general principles and experiences.

However, as it didn't directly lead to the development of a Place Plan itself, it was recognised that this early engagement using the Place Standard Tool wasn't a completed process, and thus was understood as an initial 'taste of Whithorn'.

The response to this engagement was hence built upon with the past experience of New Practice in delivering engagement, overlapping with discussions with Dumfries & Galloway Council and introductions to a number of groups in the town to learn about past consultation activities, and any methods to important help widen access and best reach a diverse range of people.

## The Engagement 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.

Further detail and summaries of the findings from the consultation process can be found in the appendices.

## **Reflections and Developing the Place Plan**

Based on the discussions and ideas raised during the consultation, the themes and example initiatives which had been developed were reassessed.

It was understood that the six themes were too rigid, and while a number ranked lower than others in our conversations, across all there were still popular points of discussion. This indicated the potential for overlap and looser themes, and for initiatives to be linked for a more 'joined up' approach in developing the Place Plan. As anticipated, a number of the example initiatives were more popular than others, with some being considered less appropriate for the area. Many people raised similar talking points across a number of initiatives, the potential for the merging of initiatives. A number of new initiatives also emerged from the ideas discussed.

Some initiatives and themes were more popular during in-person engagement compared to online counterparts; it is assumed that this can be attributed due to the time provided to discuss and consider the potential of possibilities around certain ideas. However, there were a number of topics which had strong and quick reactions both across most settings. In particular, the following themes were all strong points of discussion:

- The vital importance of protecting and capitalising on Whithorn's world-class heritage;
- The protection and upkeep of its characteristic town centre and buildings;
- The importance of supporting existing community initiatives, alongside further development of new ones;
- The delivery of skills and learning;
- Combating rural isolation;
- Town centre vibrancy, in terms of businesses, as well as public leisure and general beautifying.

With these learnings, the six themes were dissolved and reformed as three looser organising themes which better reflected the priorities of the people of Whithorn, and the possibility for looser initiatives which sat across a number of concerns to be presented. This allowed them to sit across the dual purpose of the document in regards to the Borderlands Place Programme and the role of a local Place Plan within the regional planning context; many of the initiatives contain both specific initiatives for potential funding as well as links to wider aspirations for the town. This works much better toward representing the more holistic visions expressed by locals, of improving the town through both direct solutions and long-term, more iterative decisions.

## **Understanding Priorities**

Following our main public engagement and production of an initial draft of the Whithorn Place Plan, we conducted a final stage of community consultation. The purpose of this final stage was twofold: first, to fulfil the statutory consultation requirements of for Local Place Plans within the Dumfries and Galloway local authority, by providing notice and opportunities for final comments from elected members and neighbouring community councils; second, to allow the local community of Whithorn to assist in prioritising the initiatives within the Place Plan, to develop a more immediate action plan for the Borderlands Inclusive Growth process in relation to the initiatives with the most community appetite.

The prioritising task was done through a survey which was available both online and at Whithorn Library, across June to August. This survey took the form of two simple rating questions, providing quantitative data which would provide a clear indication as to which initiatives from the long list in the Whithorn Place Plan should be prioritised. A space for open comments was provided, for those that had additional thoughts on the Place Plan, the process, or any other matters to be provided alongside the submission of the document.

## **Identifying Potential Projects**

To assist with the delivery of the ambitions of the Place Plan, for Borderlands, a final stage in the process sought to identify projects which aligned with both the funding objectives of the Borderlands Place Programme, and the priorities of the Whithorn Place Plan. To achieve this, a two stage 'Expression of Interest' process was launched, in which members of Whithorn's community could suggest projects to meet the prioritised initiatives.

The Expression of Interest stage was open to the general public, and welcomed any ideas for relevant projects, at any degree of completion or development - five projects were submitted. From this pool of projects, a second Expression of Interest stage was to proceed with those most applicable to the Borderlands objectives and the priorities of the Place Plan. Due to the lower number of projects received in the first stage, and with all projects being relevant, all progressed to the second stage. The second stage requested further detail on the project, including outlines for its aims, potential delivery, measurement of success, risks and cost.



There had initially been scope to undertake a third public survey, to allow the community to rank the projects received through the Expression of Interest process. However, the number of projects was seen as manageable for all to be considered for future stages in the Place Plan process, and all now feature in the Whithorn Place Plan.

The five projects identified from the community have been supplemented with a sixth project through consideration of the projects by Dumfries & Galloway Council. While all the community projects consider, in differing manners, the priorities of the Place Plan and the Borderlands objectives, none were received through the Expression of Interest process which responded directly to improvements of the wider townscape itself. The sixth project seeks to further consider opportunities to fill these gaps, and ensure that all potential for relevant funding is explored.





# Part Two:

## The Whithorn Place Plan

### 6. Executive Summary

The Whithorn Place Plan uses as its foundation the results of the community engagement, alongside spatial analysis and audit of policy. The outcome of this work is the twofold content of the Place Plan: a series of initiatives for consideration for investment as part of the Borderlands Place Programme, and a wider series of initiatives and ambitions for the purpose of a Local Place Plan for the Local Authority, with consideration for relevant planning policy.

The content of the Place Plan is structured to fall under five guiding principles, which should lead all future related work:

1. Community Cohesion
2. Cultivating Reasons to Stay and Visit
3. Celebrating Whithorn's Unique Assets
4. Alleviating Rural Isolation
5. Cost of Living

Within this structure, the initiatives of the Place Plan are arranged within three major themes:

1. Community Safeguarding and Enrichment
2. A Vibrant Town Centre
3. Nurturing Whithorn's Unique Assets

In total there are 19 individual initiatives in the Place Plan. These are provided in full in the appendices, and outline the full ambitions of Whithorn for its future, within the scope of the Place Plan. This full suite of initiatives should be considered a holistic deliverable of the Place Plan wherever feasible, as all initiatives have the potential to be impactful and relevant to local planning policy and the Borderlands place Programme should identified projects or prioritised initiatives not be deliverable.

The 19 initiatives were prioritised through a final consultation to understand the town's appetite for the most immediate and important initiatives, and the top six initiatives were selected for a reduced action plan. This action plan identifies for the most desired initiatives for the purposes of streamlining processes for potential Borderlands Place Programme investment. These six initiatives are:

1. Initiative N. Improvement, Reinstatement & Care of Buildings
2. Initiative A. Intergenerational Upskilling and Training
3. Initiative P. Improve Connections Within & Beyond Whithorn
4. Initiative O. Safeguarding Existing Heritage Assets
5. Initiative J. Places to Wait and Rest
6. Initiative E. 'Filling the Gaps' in the Bus Service



The prioritised initiatives themselves were not necessarily all complete projects for delivery, so they were also used as a framework to seek from the community of Whithorn any existing or new projects which could fulfil the ambitions of these priorities. Through this Expression of Interest process, five projects were sourced from the community, which along with an additional project to meet gaps within the priorities, comprise the six 'Identified Projects' to be progressed via the Borderlands Place Programme. These six projects sit at varying degrees of detail and progress, and in many cases require further options appraisals or feasibility to be considered as the first 'next step' - together the identified projects are:

1. South Machars Community Centre Evolution
2. Reinstatement of Derelict Historic Building at Grapes Hotel
3. Net Zero Training Flagship at Whithorn Old Town Hall
4. Centre for Understanding Early Mediaeval Scotland
5. Aet Hwitan-Aerne: ReBuilding Whithorn's Anglian Minster
6. Townscape Improvements at the Heart of Whithorn

## Guiding Principles

The Local Place Plan is driven by a set of five guiding principles. These have been formed through the findings of community engagement, and present a series of important points of aspiration and identity for the people of Whithorn. All initiatives and projects taken forward or any respective considerations, or changes to planning matters, should have at their heart these five principles. This will ensure that all work following the Local Place Plan holistically and meaningfully contains the collective voices of and visions for Whithorn.

### 1. Community Cohesion

There should be equitable delivery of the Local Place Plan across the town, accounting for differences and needs across both the 'top and bottom of the town' generally, as well as in any continued economic feasibility or consultation for respective initiatives. For the most successful and smooth delivery of the Local Place Plan, community unity is vital, and opportunities for diverse groups to work together should be encouraged and facilitated.

### 2. Cultivating Reasons to Stay and Visit

The development of youth agency should be sought at any opportunity, to begin to foster a greater sense of ownership and embedding within the area, encouraging youth to either stay beyond their adolescence or return to the town as young adults. Beyond just themes of employment, education and skills, this should consider leisure and the cultivation of creative and social ownership within their community. This recognises that a foundation of such agency is currently lacking and needs to be actively formed, to then be built upon.

Beyond youth, diverse skills development and employment opportunities are vital for allowing all community members to build strong livelihoods in the area. This must work in tandem with the drawing of wider activities and ventures into Whithorn, and beyond initiatives and activities, should include general appeal for residents across Dumfries & Galloway with accessible and easy means of connectivity.

### 3. Celebrating Whithorn's Unique Assets

Whithorn is host to world class historic sites of antiquity and has a long, rich history

encompassing both built and cultural assets. This historic quality is foundational to the town's identity, and the protection and celebration of its built and unbuilt heritage should be a guiding concern for all development in the town. Particularly, any work carried out in the town should be done so with a sensitivity to heritage, and a holistic incorporation of heritage into all aspects of the Local Place Plan should be pursued.

#### 4. Alleviating Rural Isolation

Rural isolation should be considered in relation to why residents may choose to leave Whithorn, and also why new residents may choose not to relocate to the area. Beyond alleviation of physical isolation through improvements to connectivity, isolation should also be considered as tied to leisure, creative agency and wider social resources which make the area liveable and appealing for both existing or potential new residents. Through the Local Place Plan, it's important that any work for the future of Whithorn fosters intergenerational activities, and develops cultural and social assets for families and workers.

#### 5. Cost of Living

Cost of living is a key concern in Whithorn and the wider area. All work from the Local Place Plan, and any future consideration for planning in the area, should directly consider cost of living relief for local residents, holistically improving both quality of life and increasing economic agency to contribute to local business and culture. Relevant development should directly consider cost of living relief, such as the reduction of energy costs through sustainable community energy networks (i.e. for power, heating or similar resources), or through the provision of affordable housing in any new, reinstated or retrofitted residential development in the area.



## **7. Identified Projects**

The following projects were sourced from the community through and Expression of Interest process, which invited ideas which responded to the prioritised initiatives of the Whithorn Place Plan and the Borderlands Strategic Objectives. To ensure accessibility and an equitable opportunity to engage with this process across the whole community, the level of detail required in the Expression of Interest material was intentionally relaxed, so that projects at all stages, all scales and from any member of the community could be submitted. As such, projects vary in their level of detail and completion, and require varying levels of future work through options appraisals, brief building, feasibility analysis and community engagement as initial steps to identify the most appropriate allocation of funding. The information presented in the following section summarises returned Expression of Interest responses for comparative purposes; the full Expression of Interest details are provided to Dumfries & Galloway Council and Borderlands alongside this document.

### **Project One**

## **South Machars Community Centre Evolution**

#### **In a nutshell...**

Modernise and upgrade the existing facilities to create a more accessible, energy efficient, environmentally friendly, and safer building that is safeguarded for future use by the community. Reconfigure and expand the existing facilities with a focus on enhancing accessibility, and increasing the diversity and quantity of spaces available to host an expanded programme of creative and skills-based workshops and to allow growth of the existing Reuse Shop and Pop-Up Cafe.

#### **Benefits Overview:**

The South Machars Community Centre provides a safe, welcoming space where people can connect, improve wellbeing, and access vital services. This project will enhance physical and mental health, reduce isolation, and offer learning and development opportunities. It will attract more visitors through creative and cultural activities, boosting local spending and supporting the economy. Energy-efficiency upgrades will reduce carbon emissions and improve the Centre's sustainability and resilience. This project will enable SMCC to continue delivering meaningful benefits to the community.



| Strategic Summary                               |   |  |   |   |   |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| Whithorn Place Plan:<br>Prioritised Initiatives |   | Whithorn Place Plan:<br>Guiding Principles |   | Borderlands Place<br>Programme: Strategic<br>Objectives |   |
| Initiative N.                                   | ● | Community Cohesion                         | ● | S01   | ○ |
| Initiative A.                                   | ● | Cultivating Reasons to<br>Stay and Visit   | ● | S02   | ● |
| Initiative P.                                   |   | Celebrating Whithorn's<br>Unique Assets    | ● | S03   | ● |
| Initiative O.                                   | ● | Alleviating Rural<br>Isolation             | ● | S04   | ● |
| Initiative J.                                   |   | Cost of Living                             | ● | S05   | ● |
| Initiative E.                                   |   |  |   | S06   | ● |
|   |   |  |   | S07   | ● |

○ - Potential to meet with further options appraisal or community engagement  
● - Item met

| Timeline and Delivery  |
|--|
| <p>The project is an initial idea proposal, and has not began beyond a conceptual stage in response to the outcomes of the Whithorn Place Plan process.</p> <p>The project would be delivered by the existing and future Trustees of SMCC, who will deliver the project working closely with Dumfries and Galloway Council (the site landlord).</p>  |
| Outcomes, Outputs and Performance Evaluation   |
| <p>Beyond the outputs outlined by the project benefits, further outputs will require additional project brief development and feasibility analysis to discern.</p> <p>Performance evaluation similarly requires further consideration, however will centre around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uptake in use of the centre</li> <li>• New classes delivered and attendance</li> <li>• Visitorship or hosting of skills and events from beyond the immediate Whithorn area</li> <li>• Revenue raised by initiatives such as the Reuse Shop and Pop-Up Cafe</li> <li>• Hire rates of external events.</li> </ul>    |
| Costs  |
| <p>Without further development in briefing and early RIBA stage options appraisals, costs are unknown and scale upon the level of works funded. A working window of £200,000 to £1 million depending on scale of works is a reasonable estimate.</p>   |
| Next Steps   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out options appraisal to develop refined brief for improvement works, including scope to provide extension to centre as additional capital investment.</li> <li>• Further community and stakeholder engagement to understand in detail the needs and uses that could be further met and provided by the SMCC.</li> <li>• Develop a series of options from appraisal across scales of investment with high level RIBA 0-1 costings to inform ongoing RIBA 1-2 works and feasibility studies.</li> <li>• Identify applicability of options for additional funding sources.</li> </ul> |



| Benefits under Whithorn Place Plan                                     |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Initiative N.</b><br>Improvement, Reinstatement & Care of Buildings | Refurbishing the SMCC building is essential to ensure its long-term sustainability and continued service to the community. As an older structure, many aspects are no longer fit for purpose and require urgent modernisation. With over 200 weekly visitors, the demand for the Centre's facilities and activities is clear. Upgrading the building will provide a safe, accessible, and energy-efficient environment that can support current needs and future growth.   |
| <b>Initiative A.</b><br>Intergenerational Upskilling and Training      | The project supports intergenerational up-skilling and training by offering a diverse, inclusive programme of hands-on workshops and events that cater to all age groups. By teaching skills such as blacksmithing, baking, bookbinding, and food preservation, the project enables participants to learn from and alongside one another, fostering knowledge exchange across generations. The emphasis on accessibility, creativity, and community connection ensures that both personal and professional development opportunities are available to all, strengthening intergenerational ties through shared learning experiences. |
| <b>Initiative O.</b><br>Safeguarding Existing Heritage Assets          | The project will safeguard the South Machars Community Centre, a historic 1845 building, by addressing structural issues and investing in sustainable upgrades like insulation, solar panels, and improved drainage. These improvements ensure the building's longevity, reduce its carbon footprint, and make it more accessible and functional. By adapting the space for modern and flexible use the centre will remain a vital part of the community, preserving its heritage through continued active use.  |



| Benefits under Borderlands Place Programme |  |
|--|--|
| <b>S02</b>                                 | The SMCC's development plans - including enhanced professional grade facilities and workshop spaces - will create opportunities for local micro-businesses and entrepreneurs in areas like food production and cooking, heritage crafts, and the arts. The centre will showcase local talent - hosting markets, events, and pop-ups, encouraging new business activity in Whithorn.  |
| <b>S03</b>                                 | Enhanced unique creative and cultural programming, including cinema, cooking schools, crafts, and performance arts, will draw visitors from surrounding areas. New facilities like EV chargers, Changing Place toilets, and accessible event spaces will encourage longer stays and increased visitor spend, directly benefiting Whithorn's economy and visibility as a destination.   |
| <b>S04</b>                                 | The Centre already generates revenue through the Reuse Shop and Pop-Up Cafe, and plans to expand its income-generating activities as a part of this project. The expansion generally will likely require SMCC to hire more local staff to support operations. The upgraded spaces will support employment in hospitality, arts, heritage crafts, and more. Inclusive programming offers volunteering, training, and participation opportunities for people of all ages and abilities, fostering social engagement and participation. |
| <b>S05</b>                                 | By improving local infrastructure, creating new services, and offering a high standard of community life, the project makes Whithorn a more appealing place to live. Enhanced amenities such as cultural spaces, youth zones, and a resilience hub will support long-term settlement and help attract new residents who value community-oriented living.   |
| <b>S06</b>                                 | By offering skills training, youth development programmes, certified courses and creative workshops, the project supports employability and personal development. This enhances prospects for young and working-age residents, making the area more attractive for families and individuals seeking a high quality of life and career development in a rural setting.  |
| <b>S07</b>                                 | The proposed works - including new insulation, roofing, drainage, windows, doors, and accessibility upgrades - will significantly improve the physical condition of the SMCC, a key civic building in Whithorn. A modernised, energy-efficient, and accessible facility will enhance the physical environment of the townscape.  |

## Project Two

# Reinstatement of Derelict Historic Building at Grapes Hotel

### In a nutshell...

Reinstate the historic traditional building to the rear of the former Grapes Hotel site in Castlehill by providing affordable, energy efficient housing for local people and remedying an eyesore in the outstanding conservation area.

### Benefits Overview:

Renovating this derelict historic building in the outstanding conservation area of Whithorn brings a wide range of benefits, from preserving cultural heritage to boosting the local economy, improving infrastructure, and providing affordable housing. It would contribute to a sustainable, vibrant, and prosperous community for current and future generations.

| Strategic Summary                               |   |  |   |   |   |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| Whithorn Place Plan:<br>Prioritised Initiatives |   | Whithorn Place Plan:<br>Guiding Principles |   | Borderlands Place<br>Programme: Strategic<br>Objectives |   |
| Initiative N.                                   | ● | Community Cohesion                         | ○ | S01   | ○ |
| Initiative A.                                   | ● | Cultivating Reasons to Stay and Visit      | ● | S02   |   |
| Initiative P.                                   |   | Celebrating Whithorn's Unique Assets       | ● | S03   | ● |
| Initiative O.                                   | ● | Alleviating Rural Isolation                |   | S04   | ● |
| Initiative J.                                   |   | Cost of Living                             | ● | S05   | ● |
| Initiative E.                                   |   |  |   | S06   |   |
|   |   |  |   | S07   | ● |

○ - Potential to meet with further options appraisal or community engagement  
● - Item me

## Timeline and Delivery

This project has already started in that design work commenced in March 2019 and some consolidation and stabilisation works have been undertaken to the structure.

RIBA Stage 4A Technical Design is complete and the project currently in Stage 4B which involves the detailed construction information and tender process. Full planning permission and building warrant has been granted by Dumfries & Galloway Council:

- Planning in October 2020 (ref 20/0993/FUL)
- Listed building consent in October 2020 (ref 20/0992/LBC)
- Building warrant in January 2025 (ref 24/0328)

Construction start could be estimated for June-July 2025. A construction period of 13 months would see the project complete July-August 2026.

All Roads Lead to Whithorn community development trust as applicant and owner of the site will oversee the project development, led by the chair who is a chartered architect. A design team has already been engaged for works to date.

Development funding has been received and spent from AHF, UKSPF, Inspiring Scotland, Scottish Rural Housing Fund and the region-wide benefit fund from Dumfries & Galloway Council to date. SOSCH is also engaged to assist community organisations in bringing empty buildings back into use as affordable housing.

## Outcomes, Outputs and Performance Evaluation

The renovation works are expected to generate employment with opportunities in construction. Transforming a neglected building into functional housing can stimulate local economies by attracting new residents, retaining local young people, increasing property values and enhancing the area's appeal.

Performance evaluation requires further consideration but will likely centre upon:

- Number of local people engaged in works for skills development
- Number of local jobs created through works
- Number of affordable homes successfully reinstated and adopted by tenants
- Success of reinstatement works assessed by heritage and architectural evaluations

## Costs

Previous construction estimates in March 2023 were approx £780,000 (ex. VAT). Further engagement work and the creation of skills-development avenues to engage local workers work require additional appraisals to identify costs, however reasonable initial estimates would be £30-50,000.

## Next Steps

- Updated cost appraisals to account for any uplift since 2023 with BTIP.
- Further community and stakeholder engagement for options appraisal identifying existing or new opportunities to engage local skills and workers.



| Benefits under Whithorn Place Plan   |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Initiative N.</b><br>Improvement,<br>Reinstatement &<br>Care of Buildings | Restoring the derelict building would transform the area into a more visually appealing environment, which would lead to an overall improvement in the quality of life for local residents by creating a more attractive, well-maintained neighbourhood.          |
| <b>Initiative A.</b><br>Intergenerational<br>Upskilling and<br>Training      | The renovation can provide an opportunity for educational programmes or tours, allowing both residents and visitors to learn about Whithorn's rich historical and cultural past.  |
| <b>Initiative O.</b><br>Safeguarding<br>Existing Heritage<br>Assets          | Renovating an historic building preserves the local heritage and history of Whithorn, helping to maintain its unique character and identities. It can foster pride among local residents and visitors who feel a connection to the town's history and traditions. |

| Benefits under Borderlands Place Programme |  |
|--|--|
| <b>S03</b>                                 | Restoring an historic building can attract tourists interested in restoration of historic buildings, increasing tourists to Whithorn would support local businesses such as shops and cafes. The renovation can provide an opportunity for educational programmes and tours, allowing both residents and visitors to learn about Whithorn's rich historical and cultural past.                     |
| <b>S04</b>                                 | The project will foster local business opportunities during the renovation phase and enhance the skill sets of workers involved in heritage restoration and sustainable building practices. It will do this by creating jobs for local builders, craftsmen and other tradespeople and as well as support local businesses that supply materials.   |
| <b>S05</b>                                 | The project will provide affordable, energy efficient, accessible and comfortable living spaces for residents, which will help retain people living in Whithorn.   |
| <b>S07</b>                                 | The project would raise the standard of the physical environment in the town by restoring a historic building, which will help to preserve the town's architectural and cultural heritage and enhance the visual appeal of the conservation area for both residents and visitors. Providing affordable housing at this location will contribute to a more vibrant and well-maintained town centre. |

# Project Three

## Net Zero Training Flagship at Whithorn Old Town Hall

### In a nutshell...

Renovate Whithorn Old Town Hall (built in 1814), offering in-work heritage skills training to young people with barriers to employment throughout the project. Training opportunities will be expansive, from lime pointing and stone carving to window and shutter making and construction project management. The project will be a flagship for energy efficiency measures appropriate to older buildings, applicable to all traditional buildings across Scotland and with public outreach opportunities for learning and practical training. The building will be restored to public use as a museum, gallery and office base for Building Futures Galloway, with full disabled access.

### Benefits Overview:

The restoration of the iconic Listed “B” building which is central to Whithorn’s identity will return it to public use and showcase local history, diversifying the existing tourist offer. It will provide hands-on heritage training for vulnerable young people, helping them build skills, confidence, and employment prospects, and strengthens Whithorn’s social fabric.

| Strategic Summary                               |   |  |   |   |   |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| Whithorn Place Plan:<br>Prioritised Initiatives |   | Whithorn Place Plan:<br>Guiding Principles |   | Borderlands Place<br>Programme: Strategic<br>Objectives |   |
| Initiative N.                                   | ● | Community Cohesion                         | ● | S01   | ○ |
| Initiative A.                                   | ● | Cultivating Reasons to<br>Stay and Visit   | ● | S02   |   |
| Initiative P.                                   |   | Celebrating Whithorn’s<br>Unique Assets    | ● | S03   | ● |
| Initiative O.                                   | ● | Alleviating Rural<br>Isolation             | ● | S04   | ● |
| Initiative J.                                   |   | Cost of Living                             |   | S05   |   |
| Initiative E.                                   |   |  |   | S06   | ● |
|   |   |  |   | S07   | ● |

○ - Potential to meet with further options appraisal or community engagement  
● - Item met

## Timeline and Delivery

The project currently sits at the end of RIBA 4, with the completion of building warrant packages at end of March 2025. Construction works are estimated to take 2.5 years to complete.

To date, planning consent has been granted for Change of Use to a public building (private building conversion consent was granted in 2011 and had to be reversed). Reports completed include historical research, condition reports, M&E, steeplejack survey, environmental survey, lightning rod inspection, clock inspection, and energy efficiency report, hygrothermal survey.

The project would be delivered by Building Futures Galloway.

## Outcomes, Outputs and Performance Evaluation

- Creation of a flagship for appropriate retrofit, involving sustainable materials, supporting the values of the Just Transition, and the role of traditional skills in relation to climate change.
- Creation of a centre of skilled masonry repair and retrofit in Whithorn, where over 50% of the main street is Listed and pre-1830. Support of our early-stage social enterprise, enabling it to become sustainable through offer of courses and rare masonry skills to the market.
- Improving Whithorn's poor record of attainment at school, including non-attenders and numbers who fail to obtain qualifications. In the 2011 Census, relatively low levels of 16-17-year olds in Whithorn were reported as being in education – only 68.2%, compared to 78.9% regionally and almost 80% nationally. We will do this through offering an alternative, locally-based pathway to skilled employment through in-work training for those most remote from the labour market. By doing so, we help to address rural depopulation and demographic imbalance due to young people leaving to find work and opportunity.
- Creation of an SQA accredited centre in an area which suffers from access deprivation which affects educational opportunity, leading to income and employment deprivation and impacts on life chances for generations of South Machars young people.

Performance evaluation requires further consideration but will likely centre upon:

- Number of local residents and young people engaged through these initiatives
- Number of jobs created and jobs secured by trainees
- Number of visitors to the reinstated building
- Number of additional sites in Whithorn improved through the development of heritage skills
- Number of students not in school engaged in activities
- Success of reinstatement works assessed by heritage and architectural evaluations

## Costs

Initial cost estimates are at £1.1 - 1.2 million. Fundraising has previously been provided by Architectural Heritage Fund, UKSPF and SOSE. Further cost estimates will be required for any additional options appraisal or feasibility analysis relating to community engagement and the establishing of initiatives for engaging local residents and young people in skills development programmes.

## Next Steps

- Updated cost appraisals with BTIP to engage future works.
- Further community and stakeholder engagement for options appraisal identifying existing or new opportunities to engage local skills and workers.







| Benefits under Whithorn Place Plan   |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Initiative N.</b><br>Improvement,<br>Reinstatement &<br>Care of Buildings | The building is in urgent need of repair, new use and removal of inappropriate modern materials; it is an iconic building in the town, central to its townscape.   |
| <b>Initiative A.</b><br>Intergenerational<br>Upskilling and<br>Training      | <p>Our charity tackles unequal access to education in remote rural areas like Whithorn and the South Machars, where young people face poor school attendance, low qualification levels, and high youth unemployment. Some haven't attended school in years and are vulnerable to addiction and exploitation. With limited access to post-16 education, our project brings high-quality, traditional skills training directly to the community—offering both income opportunities and accredited learning to address deep-rooted inequalities.</p> <p>Heritage skills, especially stonemasonry, are in crisis, with only 360 qualified stonemasons left nationwide. By training young people locally in these essential crafts, we help preserve Scotland's built heritage, support the economy, and reduce carbon emissions. Based in a region with high employment needs and rich historic architecture, our initiative offers a unique and vital solution.</p> |
| <b>Initiative O.</b><br>Safeguarding<br>Existing Heritage<br>Assets          | The Old Town Hall is a fine example of a Scottish early 19th Century "town house", which will be restored to public use and the centre of burgh life, in conformity with modern access regulations. It is a cultural asset of value to the community, but also of value to the visitor economy once restored to public use.  |

| Benefits under Borderlands Place Programme |   |
|--|---|
| <b>S03</b>                                 | The restoration of the Old Town Hall will create a publicly-accessible front gallery to house an exhibit on the burgh history - diversifying the current historical visitor offer of Whithorn. In addition, the exemplary restoration work of our trainees' throughout the project will be exhibited as a case study in energy efficient design for hard-to-treat historic buildings. This unique and increasingly topical tourist draw, with an educational focus, will further diversify Whithorn's tourist offering, attracting audiences who may not currently visit.   |
| <b>S04</b>                                 | The project will provide exceptional conservation opportunities for young people across all traditional trades, ranging from leadwork, to stone carving, to sash and case window making, but also including project management skills, understanding of health and safety and working at height. These opportunities will allow young participants to provide evidence for their skills portfolios, leading to accredited qualifications in joinery and masonry. A complex building like this offers a live project for skills over a number of years and underpins the charity's first steps as a centre offering accredited training. |
| <b>S06</b>                                 | The project will assist in alleviating the record of youth unemployment in Whithorn, often generational, which is a structural issue in the economy of the South Machars, by linking young people with a national market for critically-endangered heritage skills. The venture will provide a new and different, non-academic pathway to qualifications, close to the place where young people live, but where there is also a preponderance (more than 50%) of Listed and traditional buildings.  |
| <b>S07</b>                                 | The project would raise the standard of the physical environment in the town by restoring a historic building, which will help to preserve the town's architectural and cultural heritage and enhance the visual appeal of the conservation area for both residents and visitors. Providing a space for public use by locals and visitors alike at this location will contribute to a more vibrant and well-maintained town centre.   |



# Project Four

## Centre for Understanding Early Mediaeval Scotland

### In a nutshell...

A museum, research and archive centre located in Whithorn, a location which has one of the largest and most seminal archaeological collections and sites in the country, comprising 52,000 items and more dispersed across Scotland. The museum should act as a destination, with expanded galleries and signposting to the wider archaeological landscape. The spaces will be a combination of refurbishment of existing spaces, as well as new build to create a more cohesive and joined-up visitor experience.

### Benefits Overview:

The proposed project will bring significant benefits by creating a nationally important cultural and research hub that increases visitor numbers, boosts local employment, and strengthens the local economy. It will support skills development and education, particularly in archaeology and STEM, while improving health, wellbeing, and community cohesion through inclusive learning and engagement with Whithorn's rich heritage.

| Strategic Summary                               |   |  |   |   |   |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| Whithorn Place Plan:<br>Prioritised Initiatives |   | Whithorn Place Plan:<br>Guiding Principles |   | Borderlands Place<br>Programme: Strategic<br>Objectives |   |
| Initiative N.                                   | ● | Community Cohesion                         | ○ | S01   | ○ |
| Initiative A.                                   | ● | Cultivating Reasons to<br>Stay and Visit   | ● | S02   | ○ |
| Initiative P.                                   |   | Celebrating Whithorn's<br>Unique Assets    | ● | S03   | ● |
| Initiative O.                                   | ● | Alleviating Rural<br>Isolation             |   | S04   | ● |
| Initiative J.                                   |   | Cost of Living                             |   | S05   |   |
| Initiative E.                                   |   |  |   | S06   | ● |
|   |   |  |   | S07   | ● |

○ - Potential to meet with further options appraisal or community engagement

● - Item met

## Timeline and Delivery

The project is planned for phased delivery between 2026 and 2030, with funding applications targeted for completion by autumn 2025 and construction beginning shortly after.

It will be delivered by The Whithorn Trust, with potential support from a wide network of partners including Historic Environment Scotland, Building Futures Galloway, SOSE, and multiple academic institutions. Specialist advisors in architecture, archaeology, and business planning are also involved, with proposed governance managed through dedicated project boards reporting to the Trust's main board.

## Outcomes, Outputs and Performance Evaluation

The project will result in physical outcomes including 830 m<sup>2</sup> of new build space for the museum with joined-up access to the archaeological site, and 520 m<sup>2</sup> of renovated space in the existing building to form a research and learning centre with full disabled access. It will enable the reunification of the 52,000-item Whithorn collection currently dispersed across Scotland, providing fit-for-purpose galleries, a new café, and digital experiences.

Potential performance evaluation indicators include:

- Visitor numbers and dwell-time increases (targeting 27,300 annual visitors post-project)
- Economic impact metrics such as GVA and visitor spend (with a projected visitor expenditure impact of £9.7 million over 30 years)
- Educational engagement data, such as participation in STEM and archaeology programmes and attainment improvements in local schools
- Employment figures related to the museum and associated services
- Qualitative feedback from visitors, academic partners, and local stakeholders on experience quality and community benefits

## Costs

The total estimated cost of the project is £6.275 million, comprising £5.655 million for the new museum and £620,000 for the research centre. Previous investments include over £226,000 in improvements to the existing building.

Funding support has already been received from SOSE, Museums Galleries Scotland, and Dumfries and Galloway Council, with high-level discussions underway with additional potential funders such as Historic Environment Scotland and the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

## Next Steps

- Updated cost appraisals with BTIP to engage future works.
- Further community and stakeholder engagement for options appraisal identifying existing or new opportunities to engage local community members.
- Progress to RIBA Stage 1 works with audit of procurement planning and cost refinement

| Benefits under Whithorn Place Plan   |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Initiative N.</b><br>Improvement,<br>Reinstatement &<br>Care of Buildings | The existing building will house the 52,000 items of the collection, currently in Stranraer, stored in less than ideal conditions which threaten the condition of the artefacts and archaeological human remains. It will enable us to repatriate items which are dispersed throughout Scotland while a new build will allow us to reflect recent research, including Whithorn's potential tantalizing links with the Galloway Hoard.  |
| <b>Initiative A.</b><br>Intergenerational<br>Upskilling and<br>Training      | Archaeological field skills are in short supply across the country, largely due to a lack of non-academic entry routes, and the profession remains lacking in diversity—with only one accredited provider currently based in Orkney. Whithorn is well placed to address this gap, with its strong reputation as a nursery of archaeological talent, a vast archive, and its location in the Machars peninsula, which contains over 3,000 uninvestigated archaeological sites. The development of a learning centre will create a high-quality training opportunity, offering accredited learning in class and in the field. This will benefit the local economy through student stays at facilities like the Whithorn bunkhouse and off-season spending. Visiting academics will bring income through bench fees and increase the site's profile through publications and media exposure. The centre will also support STEM learning and achievement in local schools, aligning with advances in archaeological science. |
| <b>Initiative O.</b><br>Safeguarding<br>Existing Heritage<br>Assets          | Post-Covid, visitor demographics have changed: to enable the museum not only to survive but to thrive, there is need to offer all the digital products we have developed and may create. Unifying our collection with the carved stones will create a regionally and nationally significant centre for the understanding of early mediaeval Scotland and its origins, with the potential for year-long opening and national visiting exhibits. South of Scotland Enterprise and the South of Scotland Destination Alliance have created a new pan-South focus on the assets of the Roman Iron Age in the region, with the purpose of increasing the visibility of the string of outstanding sites, and the economic purpose of benefiting remote areas: Whithorn is ideally positioned to exploit this increasing interest in prehistory and the Dark Ages.  |



| Benefits under Borderlands Place Programme |   |
|--|---|
| <b>S03</b>                                 | The project will increase visitor numbers by creating a nationally significant museum that acts as a destination rather than a local attraction. By offering immersive digital experiences, unified interpretation of Whithorn's unique heritage, and year-round access, it will attract more high-spending and international visitors. The development of an archaeology campus and linked outdoor experiences will extend dwell-time, encourage spending in local businesses, and support a critical mass of attractions that benefit the wider town centre.  |
| <b>S04</b>                                 | The project will deliver new jobs through museum operations, café services, and increased tourism, while also creating training and volunteering opportunities in archaeology, heritage, and hospitality. It will support local businesses by boosting visitor numbers and encouraging longer stays. Educational programmes and accredited training will provide new pathways into employment, especially for young people and those not in academic routes, fostering greater social inclusion and community engagement.   |
| <b>S06</b>                                 | This project supports the increase and retention of the working age population by creating new employment opportunities within the museum, research centre, and wider tourism sector, making Whithorn a more attractive place to live and work. By providing accredited training and upskilling in archaeology, STEM, and heritage-related fields, particularly for young people and non-academic learners, it opens alternative career pathways locally. The project also aims to revitalise the town centre and stimulate new business growth in accommodation, retail, and experiential services, helping to reverse youth out-migration and support long-term community resilience. |
| <b>S07</b>                                 | The project will raise the standard of Whithorn's physical environment by transforming outdated facilities into a modern museum and education centre. It will repurpose the existing building and construct a new, accessible, and digitally equipped space that unifies key heritage assets. This will enhance the town centre, attract visitors, support local businesses, and contribute to a more vibrant and attractive place to live and visit.   |



## Project Five

# Aet Hwitan-Aerne: ReBuilding Whithorn's Anglian Minster

### In a nutshell...

Reconstruct Whithorn's Northumbrian church and burial chapel at full scale, led by a team of archaeologists, architects, and craftspeople. The project will offer training for young people from Building Futures Galloway and Douglas Ewart High School, along with public outreach in skills like clay masonry, mural art, and stained glass. Filmed from the start, it will spotlight Whithorn's emergence around 700CE as a pilgrimage centre and aims to increase visitor footfall throughout the live build.

### Benefits Overview:

The project will deliver long-term economic and social benefits by increasing visitor numbers, supporting local businesses, and providing hands-on training in endangered heritage skills. It will improve wellbeing through community involvement and engagement, while offering young people meaningful opportunities to gain qualifications, build confidence, and access employment pathways.

| Strategic Summary                               |   |  |   |   |   |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| Whithorn Place Plan:<br>Prioritised Initiatives |   | Whithorn Place Plan:<br>Guiding Principles |   | Borderlands Place<br>Programme: Strategic<br>Objectives |   |
| Initiative N.                                   | ● | Community Cohesion                         | ○ | S01   | ○ |
| Initiative A.                                   | ● | Cultivating Reasons to<br>Stay and Visit   | ● | S02   |   |
| Initiative P.                                   |   | Celebrating Whithorn’s<br>Unique Assets    | ● | S03   | ● |
| Initiative O.                                   | ● | Alleviating Rural<br>Isolation             | ○ | S04   | ● |
| Initiative J.                                   |   | Cost of Living                             |   | S05   |   |
| Initiative E.                                   |   |  |   | S06   | ● |
|   |   |  |   | S07   | ● |

○ - Potential to meet with further options appraisal or community engagement

● - Item met



## Timeline and Delivery

The project would begin in late 2025 or early 2026 with the creation of a temporary medieval workshop and toolmaking, while planning applications are progressed. The build is phased over five years, with work taking place each spring to autumn to maximise visibility, visitor engagement, and seasonal tourism benefits.

Delivery will be led by the Whithorn Trust in partnership with Building Futures Galloway, with oversight from a joint project board and an advisory research committee of archaeologists, architects, and crafts specialists. Local young people, schools, and community members will be actively involved, supported by external partners including Historic Environment Scotland, National Museums Scotland, and Douglas Ewart High School.

## Outcomes, Outputs and Performance Evaluation

The proposal will result in the full-scale reconstruction of Whithorn's Northumbrian Church and burial chapel, creating a 271 m<sup>2</sup> heritage structure using traditional materials and skills. It will also establish a programme of accredited training in heritage crafts, increase visitor numbers to an estimated 15,000 per year, and enhance Whithorn's profile as a cultural destination.

Potential performance evaluation indicators include:

- Number of visitors and length of stay
- Visitor spending and economic impact
- Number of young people and community members trained or accredited
- Employment outcomes for trainees
- Community engagement levels in workshops and volunteering
- Media coverage and reach of the documentary and social media campaign
- Feedback from partners, educators, and participants
- Progress on sustainability goals such as use of local materials and reduction of carbon impact through traditional construction methods.

## Costs

Combined estimated costs are £650,000 for general construction, team fees and specialist materials etc. Additional cost, such as those for filming and outreach, are estimated to be £150,000-170,000.

Funding discussions are ongoing with the National Lottery Heritage Fund and South of Scotland Enterprise, both of which have expressed support in principle.

## Next Steps

- Updated cost appraisals with BTIP to engage future works.
- Further community and stakeholder engagement for options appraisal identifying existing or new opportunities to engage local community members.
- Options appraisals for continued engagement with wider stakeholders and potential partners in delivery, with additional audit of funding streams.

| Benefits under Whithorn Place Plan                                     |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Initiative N.</b><br>Improvement, Reinstatement & Care of Buildings | By training young people in endangered heritage skills such as stonemasonry, lime plastering, and traditional joinery, the proposal directly contributes to the improvement and care of Whithorn's historic building stock, over half of which dates from before 1830. It helps address urgent repair needs and the shortage of skilled retrofitters required to meet carbon reduction targets, ensuring that traditional buildings are maintained using appropriate, sustainable methods.  |
| <b>Initiative A.</b><br>Intergenerational Upskilling and Training      | Our project seeks to address head-on and simultaneously the critical shortages afflicting the heritage construction sector and the issue of systemic youth unemployment which has afflicted the rural economy of the South Machars for decades, worsened by the pandemic.   |
| <b>Initiative O.</b><br>Safeguarding Existing Heritage Assets          | Training throughout this project will enable young people to enter craft professions which are endangered: The heritage focus of our project are the at-risk skills identified in the Skills Investment Plan (HES), particularly trades suffering critical shortages: masonry and lime-based skills, traditional carpentry, stained glass and leadwork. The impacts of climate change will intensify the need for repairs and compatible retrofit; our project therefore focusses on heritage skills transmission to young people who can fill these specialised roles, and use what they have learned to repair and safeguard other local heritage assets in future. |

## Benefits under Borderlands Place Programme

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| <b>S03</b> | With decreasing revenue support available to independent museums, it is critical that the Trust, as the main economic driver for Whithorn, creates new compelling reasons for visitors to come and spend. Over the five years of the project, the Northumbrian Church reconstruction will offer a live visitor spectacle during the peak season from late Spring to early Autumn, and promote confidence and a positive public image for young people, who may then choose to become involved in the management and strategic planning for the future. From experience of our building of the Roundhouse, a relatively smaller reconstruction project, visitor numbers increased by 75% during and after the reconstruction. We would aim to build in high profile publicity into our project, creating the footage for a public broadcaster from the start, and a professionally managed social media campaign to drive increased visitor numbers. |
| <b>S04</b> | The associated engagement programme will involve a broad section of the community, attracted to participate in learning skills, art, and by the wellbeing benefits of collaborative working; this will enable us to reach wider segments of the community, who may be encouraged to participate at different levels in volunteering and in the Trust's management.  |
| <b>S06</b> | This proposal increases and helps retain the working age population by creating pathways into employment through accredited training in heritage construction skills, specifically targeting young people aged 14–28. By offering local, high-quality opportunities in a sector facing national skills shortages, it encourages young residents to stay and work in the area rather than leave for education or jobs elsewhere. The project also supports the growth of social enterprises and local businesses, generating employment and strengthening Whithorn's appeal as a place to live and build a future.   |
| <b>S07</b> | This project raises the standard of the physical environment by creating a high-quality, full-scale reconstruction using traditional materials such as stone, lime, clay, oak, and early pigmented paints, all sourced locally. It showcases early sustainable architecture while addressing urgent repair needs in Whithorn's historic built environment through skills training that directly supports the care of pre-1830 housing stock. The project also contributes to placemaking by creating a visually striking, culturally significant destination that enhances the town centre and draws in increased footfall.   |



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



# Project Six

## Townscape Improvements at the Heart of Whithorn

### In a nutshell...

A blanket project to fill gaps in the prioritised initiatives of the Whithorn Place Plan not wholly met by the five prior identified projects. This would see the town centre of Whithorn assessed for the potential to have general improvement works, with the addition of prioritised initiatives such as places to wait and rest, sheltered gathering spaces for general use and while waiting for public transport, and the formalising of key wayfinding routes connecting central Whithorn to the surrounding area.

### Benefits Overview:

Enhancing the everyday experience for residents and visitors, encouraging longer stays and greater use of local services. Signature heritage-sensitive structures and creative route markers would strengthen Whithorn's identity, support active travel, and make the town a more attractive and accessible hub for cycling and walking tourism, boosting footfall and local economic activity.

| Strategic Summary                               |   |  |   |   |   |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| Whithorn Place Plan:<br>Prioritised Initiatives |   | Whithorn Place Plan:<br>Guiding Principles |   | Borderlands Place<br>Programme: Strategic<br>Objectives |   |
| Initiative N.                                   | ○ | Community Cohesion                         | ○ | S01   | ● |
| Initiative A.                                   |   | Cultivating Reasons to<br>Stay and Visit   | ● | S02   | ● |
| Initiative P.                                   | ● | Celebrating Whithorn's<br>Unique Assets    | ● | S03   | ● |
| Initiative O.                                   | ○ | Alleviating Rural<br>Isolation             | ○ | S04   | ○ |
| Initiative J.                                   | ● | Cost of Living                             |   | S05   | ○ |
| Initiative E.                                   | ● |  |   | S06   |   |
|   |   |  |   | S07   | ● |

○ - Potential to meet with further options appraisal or community engagement  
● - Item met

## Timeline and Delivery

This project requires further options appraisals and feasibility analysis to understand what improvements and initiatives within the town would be required and could be carried out within the context of Borderlands (or other) funding. Work on this further audit and study to inform the project could start immediately and take place prior to the end of the 2025-2026 financial year.

Delivery of the project would require a community vessel to for the funding and to engage with those carrying out the work. This may also require a further element of options appraisal to understand the potential partnerships within the town, in the event an appropriate community vessel cannot be identified with cross-town support. Alternatively, Dumfries & Galloway Council could explore with Borderlands options to receive the funding as a first party, to then allocate accordingly, considering the unique absence of a town team and the potential large scale of this project.

## Outcomes, Outputs and Performance Evaluation

Through further options appraisal of town centre works, potential outcomes would centre on improvements to conditions underfoot for accessibility, flexible external event space which doesn't impede existing agricultural traffic, creative places to wait and rest from standard benches to central heritage-sensitive structures for all-weather cover and bus-users, heritage-sensitive signage for general wayfinding, formalisation of key leisure and tourist routes through the town with creative wayfinding to improve connections beyond Whithorn (in addition to creative connections to wider networks such as the NCN).

Potential performance evaluation indicators are dependant on identified and progressed schemes from any options appraisal process, but could include:

- Percentage of town centre surfaces upgraded for accessible use
- Footfall counts in key areas before and after intervention
- Number of new or improved resting points
- Any uptake in public transport use with new waiting spaces
- Number of users on marked cycling and walking routes through and beyond Whithorn
- Feedback from local businesses on perceived tourist engagement and increase
- Feedback from key user groups such as bus users, cyclists, and walking groups

## Costs

Potential costs for this project vary greatly depending on scale, and require the further options appraisal process to inform any decisions on progressed BTIP processes. Windows of £50,000 to £1.5 - 2 million could be expected depending on scale of selected project.

## Next Steps

- Focus attempts to identify or create a community vessel for funding and to progress any further processes, or identify opportunities for the local authority to lead project in the most immediate stages before a community vessel can be created.
- Appoint required consultants and teams to carry out an options appraisal of potential improvement works for the town centre based on the ambitions of this project and the wider initiatives missed within the identified projects, considering any joined-up efforts to include non-prioritised initiatives of the Place Plan.
- Carry out further community engagement to inform options appraisal process.

| Benefits under Borderlands Place Programme |   |
|--|---|
| <b>S01</b>                                 | Enhancing Whithorn's town centre through accessible design, heritage-sensitive structures, and improved public spaces strengthens the role of the community in shaping its own future. By addressing local needs—such as places to wait and rest, better walking and cycling routes, and inclusive public areas—it builds pride, ownership, and everyday engagement. Involving local people alongside regional and national partners ensures that the community's voice is central to the town's regeneration, increasing confidence and long-term capacity for leadership.                         |
| <b>S02</b>                                 | Potential to safeguard existing businesses by increasing footfall, dwell-time, and overall visitor experience in the town centre, making it a more attractive place to shop, eat, and explore. Improved accessibility, signage, and creative public spaces encourage locals and tourists to spend more time—and money—locally. By enhancing the town's appearance and functionality, the project creates a welcoming environment for new enterprises, particularly those in tourism, hospitality, and creative sectors, helping to build a more resilient and vibrant local economy.                |
| <b>S03</b>                                 | Such improvements would maintain and increase visitor numbers by creating a more attractive, accessible, and engaging town centre, encouraging people to stay longer and explore more. Features like heritage-sensitive shelters, creative wayfinding, and connections to major walking and cycling routes enhance the visitor experience and support active travel. By providing flexible outdoor spaces for events and improving year-round usability with covered waiting areas, the project also helps extend the visitor season and boost spend per visit in local shops, cafés, and services. |
| <b>S07</b>                                 | This would maintain and raise the standard of the physical environment by upgrading surfaces for accessibility, introducing well-designed resting areas and shelters that are sensitive to local heritage, and improving the visual coherence of the town through coordinated signage and creative wayfinding. These enhancements not only preserve the town's historic character but also create a cleaner, safer, and more welcoming environment that supports everyday use, encourages civic pride, and reinforces Whithorn's identity as a destination.   |



## 8. Prioritised Initiatives

The identified projects in the previous section were informed primarily by the initiatives from the Whithorn Place Plan which were ranked as top priorities by the community in our final stage of consultation; two simple questions were asked to do this. Please see the questions and the results below.

**Out of the 19 initiatives in the Whithorn Place Plan, which do you rate as your top five? (69 people responded)**

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| <b>N.</b> Improvement, Reinstatement & Care of Buildings | 65.2% |
| <b>A.</b> Intergenerational Upskilling and Training      | 59.4% |
| <b>P.</b> Improve Connections Within & Beyond Whithorn   | 56.5% |
| <b>O.</b> Safeguarding Existing Heritage Assets          | 52.2% |
| <b>J.</b> Places to Wait and Rest                        | 29%   |
| <b>M.</b> Heritage Sensitive Signage                     | 27.5% |
| <b>E.</b> 'Filling the Gaps' in the Bus Service          | 26.1% |
| <b>K.</b> Shop Front Improvements                        | 24.6% |
| <b>C.</b> MUGA Improvements with Micro-Hub               | 18.8% |
| <b>B.</b> Community Greening and Growing                 | 18.8% |
| <b>I.</b> Ground Surface Renovation Scheme               | 17.4% |
| <b>H.</b> Whithorn Street Market                         | 17.4% |
| <b>G.</b> Mobility Hub                                   | 17.4% |
| <b>D.</b> Community Renewable Energy Grid                | 17.4% |
| <b>F.</b> Rethinking Car Parking                         | 15.9% |
| <b>S.</b> Diversify Whithorn's Tourist Offering          | 13%   |
| <b>L.</b> Flexible High Street Community Space(s)        | 13%   |
| <b>Q.</b> A Creative Wayfinding Strategy                 | 7.2%  |
| <b>R.</b> Formalise a Town Brand                         | 2.9%  |

The wider list of initiatives should be considered for wider projects in Whithorn, and as a backup resource of community ambitions should wider projects for Borderlands be required. The complete set of initiatives are available in the appendices, and is outlined in summary in the following section.

**From the five initiatives you chose in the previous question, please tell us which one of them is your favourite and top priority initiative for Whithorn. (69 people responded)**

- O.** Safeguarding Existing Heritage Assets  33.3%
- N.** Improvement, Reinstatement & Care of Buildings 11.6%
- E.** 'Filling the Gaps' in the Bus Service  10.1%
- A.** Intergenerational Upskilling and Training 8.7%
- C.** MUGA Improvements with Micro-Hub 7.2%
- J.** Places to Wait and Rest 5.8%
- H.** Whithorn Street Market 5.8%
- P.** Improve Connections Within & Beyond Whithorn 2.9%
- L.** Flexible High Street Community Space(s) 2.9%
- F.** Rethinking Car Parking 2.9%
- S.** Diversify Whithorn's Tourist Offering 1.4%
- Q.** A Creative Wayfinding Strategy 1.4%
- K.** Shop Front Improvements 1.4%
- G.** Mobility Hub 1.4%
- D.** Community Renewable Energy Grid 1.4%
- B.** Community Greening and Growing 1.4%
- R.** Formalise a Town Brand
- M.** Heritage Sensitive Signage
- I.** Ground Surface Renovation Scheme

**Out of the participants that have a physical or mental health condition or illnesses (lasting or expected to last 12 months or more), initiative 'E' and 'O' were ranked highest with 30.8% of votes each.**

**All participants 18 years old or under ranked initiative 'E' as their top priority initiative.**

# 9. Initiative Summaries

## Strategic Objectives of the Borderlands Place Programme

1. Empower local communities to imagine and then build a long-term future for the towns they live in, firmly in partnership with local, regional and national governments.
2. Safeguard existing businesses and attract new businesses to our towns and town centres.
3. Maintain and increase the number of visitors who spend time and money in our towns and town centres, increasing spend per visit and extending the visitor season.
4. Safeguard existing employment and deliver new jobs and opportunities for economic and social participation, including education and training opportunities.
5. Maintain and increase the number of people living in our towns and town centres.
6. Retain and increase our working age population.
7. Maintain and raise the standard of the physical environment in our towns and town centres.

**Refer to appendices for full details on the wider initiatives of the Whithorn Place Plan.**

## Key



Further public engagement recommended



Initiative is close to a deliverable stage



Further work required to get the initiative close to a deliverable stage



A considerable amount of work required to get the initiative close to a deliverable stage



Predicted to be a higher cost initiative



Predicted to be a mid cost initiative



Predicted to be a lower cost initiative

### Relevant Policy

Related policies in Local Development Plan (LDP2) or in National Planning Framework (NPF4).

### Change to Policy

Potential changes to policy required in Local Development Plan (LDP2) or in line with National Planning Framework (NPF4).




Please refer to p48 for supporting information (e.g. key and abbreviations)

| Initiative  |   | Strategic Objectives |   |   |   |   |   | LDP Policies                                      | Cost | Timescale (years)    |
|---|---|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|------|----------------------|
| Theme One - Community Safeguarding and Enrichment |   |                      |   |   |   |   |   |   |      |                      |
| A   | Intergenerational Upskilling and Training | 1                    |   | 4 |   | 6 |   | LDP: CF1<br>NPF: 31                               | ££   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| B   | Community Greening and Growing            | 1                    |   | 4 |   | 7 |   | LDP: CF3<br>NPF: 21                               | ££   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| C   | MUGA Improvements with Micro-Hub          | 1                    |   | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 | LDP: CF1 & 3<br>NPF: 31 & 21                      | £££  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| D   | Community Renewable Energy Grid           | 1                    | 2 |   |   | 5 | 6 | LDP: NE1 & 2, IN1, 2 & 5<br>NPF: 4c & 4d, 11 & 12 | ££££ | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| E   | 'Filling the Gaps' in the Bus Service     |                      | 2 | 3 |   | 5 | 6 | LDP: T1 & 2, ED9<br>NPF: 13, 30                   | ££   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
|   | E1 Night Bus                              |                      |   | 3 |   | 5 | 6 |   | £    | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
|   | E2 Community Bus                          | 1                    |   | 3 |   | 5 | 6 |   | £    | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
|   | E3 Bus Shelter                            |                      |   |   |   |   | 7 |   | £    | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| F   | Rethinking Car Parking                    |                      | 2 | 3 |   | 5 | 7 | LDP: ED7, T2<br>NPF: 13                           | £££  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| G   | Mobility Hub                              |                      | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | LDP: T2, CF1<br>NPF: 13, 31                       | ££   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |

## Ready to go?

## Overlaps

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
|   | H, K, M, N, Q |
|   | H, R, S       |
|  |               |
|   |               |
|   | P             |
|   | "             |
|   | "             |
|   | "             |
|   |               |
|   | H, I, Q       |
|   |               |

Please refer to p48 for supporting information (e.g. key and abbreviations)

| Initiative                        |  | Strategic Objectives |   |   |   |   |   |   | LDP Policies                               | Cost | Timescale (years)    |
|-----------------------------------|--|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|------|----------------------|
| Theme Two - A Vibrant Town Centre |  |                      |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |      |                      |
| H                                 | Whithorn Market  | 1                    | 2 | 3 | 4 |   |   |   | LDP: ED1, 2, 5 & 9<br>NPF: 26, 29, 27 & 30 | ££   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| I                                 | Ground Surface Renovation Scheme                                 | 1                    | 2 | 3 |   |   |   | 7 | LDP: CF3, T2, OP2<br>NPF: 21, 13, 14       | £££  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
|                                   | I1 Beautifying Whithorn  | 1                    |   | 3 |   |   |   | 7 |  | ££   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| J                                 | Places to Wait and Rest  |                      |   |   |   |   |   | 7 | LDP:T1,CF3<br>NPF:13,21                    | £    | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| K                                 | Shopfront Improvements   | 1                    | 2 | 3 | 4 |   | 6 | 7 | LDP: ED5 & 9, OP2, HE2<br>NPF: 27,30,14,7  | ££   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| L                                 | Flexible High Street Community Space(s)                          | 1                    | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | LDP: CF3<br>ED5<br>NPF: 21, 27             | ££   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| M                                 | Heritage Sensitive Signage                                       |                      | 2 | 3 |   |   |   | 7 | LDP:HE2,OP2<br>NPF:7,14                    | £    | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| N                                 | Improvement, Reinstatement and Care of Buildings                 | 1                    |   | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | LDP: HE1 & 2, OP2<br>ED9<br>NPF: 7, 14, 30 | £££  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
|                                   | N1 Facade Upkeep Scheme  | 1                    | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |  | ££   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
|                                   | N2 Enhanced Liveability in Historic                              | 1                    |   | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |  | £££  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
|                                   | N3 Re-purpose, Retrofit or Reoccupy Empty and Derelict Buildings | 1                    | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |  | £££  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |

| Ready to go? | Overlaps         |
|--------------|------------------|
|              | A, B, F, I, R, S |
|              | F, H             |
|              | F, H             |
|              |                  |
|              | A, M             |
|              |                  |
|              | A, K, Q          |
|              | A, O             |
|              | "                |
|              | "                |
|              | "                |



Please refer to p48 for supporting information (e.g. key and abbreviations)

| Initiative                                       |  | Strategic Objectives |   |   |   |   |   |   | LDP Policies                            | Cost | Timescale (years)    |
|--|--|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------|----------------------|
| Theme Three - Nurturing Whithorn’s Unique Assets |  |                      |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |      |                      |
| O  | Safeguarding Existing Heritage Assets          | 1                    | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | LDP: HE1 & 2, ED9,OP2<br>NPF:7,30,14    | £££  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| P  | Improve Connections Within and Beyond Whithorn |                      | 2 | 3 | 4 |   |   | 7 | LDP: T1 & 2, ED9 CF4<br>NPF: 13, 30, 20 | ££   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
|  | P1 Map and Visitor Kiosk                       | 1                    | 2 | 3 | 4 |   |   | 7 |   | £    | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| Q  | A Creative Wayfinding Strategy                 |                      | 2 | 3 | 4 |   |   | 7 | LDP: ED9 T1, OP2<br>NPF: 30, 13, 14     | £    | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
|  | Q1 Map and Visitor Kiosk                       | 1                    | 2 | 3 | 4 |   |   | 7 |   | £    | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| R  | Formalise a Town Brand                         | 1                    | 2 | 3 | 4 |   |   |   | LDP:OP2, ED9<br>NPF: 14, 30             | £    | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| S  | Diversify Whithorn’s Tourist Offering          | 1                    | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | LDP: ED5 & 9, OP2<br>NPF: 27, 30, 14    | ££   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |

| Ready to go? | Overlaps         |
|--------------|------------------|
|              | N, R, P, Q       |
|              | E, O, Q          |
|              | E, O, Q          |
|              | A, F, M, O, P, R |
|              | "                |
|              | B, H, O, Q, S    |
|              | B, H, R          |

# 10. Conclusion

## With Thanks

Thank you to all community members who took time out of their personal schedules to speak to us, or to complete a survey. Your feedback and the reflections or anecdotes you shared about your experience of living in Whithorn, have all helped to shape the Place Plan.

We would like to extend a thank you to all the businesses, community groups, and organisations that supported our engagement events and helped to spread the word. Including, but not limited to:

- All Roads Lead to Whithorn
- Building Futures Galloway
- Costcutter
- Douglas Ewart High School
- Dumfries & Galloway Council's Youth Work Service
- G&C Galloway
- Historic Environment Scotland
- Southern Machars Practice
- South Machars Community Centre
- The Jolly Laundry Room
- The New Town Hall
- The Priory Veterinary Centre
- The Railway Inn
- The Whithorn Trust
- Whithorn Library
- Whithorn Newsagents and Post Office
- Whithorn Pharmacy & the Perfect Gift
- Whithorn Playpark Initiatives
- Whithorn Primary School
- Whithorn Rebuild

Thanks to Dumfries & Galloway Council's Chris Churms and Melinda Dolan for your support.

## Looking Forward

This document will be submitted to Dumfries and Galloway Council, to be carried forward with the required processes for the Borderlands Place Programme.

In addition to this, the document's use as a Local Place Plan within the local authority's planning context will be progressed separately. We look forward to seeing the community taking ownership of this document for its formal adoption, and in any further collaboration to bring forward the visions for Whithorn.

## Who are New Practice and Page\Park?

In October 2023, as part of the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, New Practice, with the support of Page\Park Architects, was commissioned to develop a Plan for Whithorn, drawing from a focussed community engagement process to understand the aspirations of the town, its key community stakeholders and wider local voices of the general public.

New Practice is an award winning RIBA & RIAS chartered architecture practice with offices in Glasgow and London, which exists to develop the community, creative and cultural capacity of places and to connect people with the decision making processes that underpin their lived experience. The team at New Practice have been working in collaboration with Page\Park Architects, a progressive and employee-owned design practice with offices in Glasgow and Leeds, operating across the UK, with a reputation for inventive contemporary design grounded in an understanding of history, people, and place.

This initiative is funded by the UK government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund aims to improve pride in place and increase life chances across the UK investing in communities and place, supporting local business, and people and skills.

For more information, visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus>



**Funded by  
UK Government**



