



# **A Local Place Plan for Dumfries Town Centre Dynamically Different**

# Foreword by Robin Wishart, formerly Chair of Loreburn Community Council and Dumfries Partnership Action Group

The story of Dumfries is one of change. Older residents remember a different place from that experienced by young people today. The energy of these young people and the many new residents who will come to our town will create a Dumfries, Dynamically Different from the place we know today.

This Local Place Plan for Dumfries Town Centre describes the aspiration of the citizens of Dumfries across the whole town and surrounding area. We aim for a better Dumfries Town Centre, dynamically changing to meet the challenges and opportunities of a changing future.

Loreburn Community Council (LCC) and Dumfries Partnership Action Group (DPAG) have together prepared this Local Place Plan, building on the document “Dynamically Different Dumfries” published in 2022 and based on extensive community consultation.

The Local Place Plan is not a blueprint for what will happen but rather, a roadmap describing where we as a community would like to go and a range of possibilities that may change, dynamically over time.

Fundamental to the whole Local Place Plan for the Town Centre is the importance of People.

People working in the place, People living in the place, People enjoying the place.

People will make Dumfries Dynamically Different and for ever, **Queen of the South.**



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# Key Drivers

Our vision is of a Dynamically Different Dumfries, where a wealth of history meets a bright sustainable future. A welcoming place with a vibrant, and connected low carbon town centre, which celebrates its rich heritage, arts, culture, and diversity.

## Dumfries a place to



<b>Live and Belong</b>	Repurposed town centre buildings	Opportunities for town centre living.	A well-maintained and managed town centre.	Enhanced and protected historic buildings and townscape.
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<b>Visit and Experience</b>	A thriving leisure and entertainment economy with wonderful places to eat, drink and socialise.	A vibrant programme of festivals, activities, and events throughout the year.	Experiences and festivals that focus upon the town's rich heritage, arts, and culture.	Enhanced river frontage and corridor.
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<b>Work, Learn and Do Business</b>	Dynamic independent businesses.	State of the art digital connectivity and infrastructure.	Adaptable and flexible spaces to accommodate new ways of working.	A range of opportunities to learn, train, work and progress.
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<b>Connect</b>	Inclusive streets and spaces that are accessible for all with a safe attractive pedestrianised environment.	Active travel infrastructure that encourages walking and cycling.	Flexible, efficient low carbon transport options.	Effective and coordinated wayfinding.
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<b>Grow and Play</b>	Enhanced green and public spaces where a wide range of activities can be enjoyed by all.	Informal space for young people to interact with friends in a fun and safe environment.	Enhanced biodiversity and greening of public spaces.	Renewable energy opportunities.
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# Our Town



Dumfries, the regional capital for Dumfries and Galloway and known as “the Queen of the South,” is an ancient market town located beside the River Nith. With a population of 38,400, it is the largest town in the South of Scotland.

Over the centuries Dumfries became a focus for trade and enterprise, initially as a bustling trading port, and then as the key centre for Scottish textile manufacturing. As our town grew in affluence, it flourished as a cultural centre with strong links to Robert Burns and J M Barrie. Our town played a significant role in the history of Scotland and is inextricably linked to Robert the Bruce and his campaign to secure the Scottish Crown.

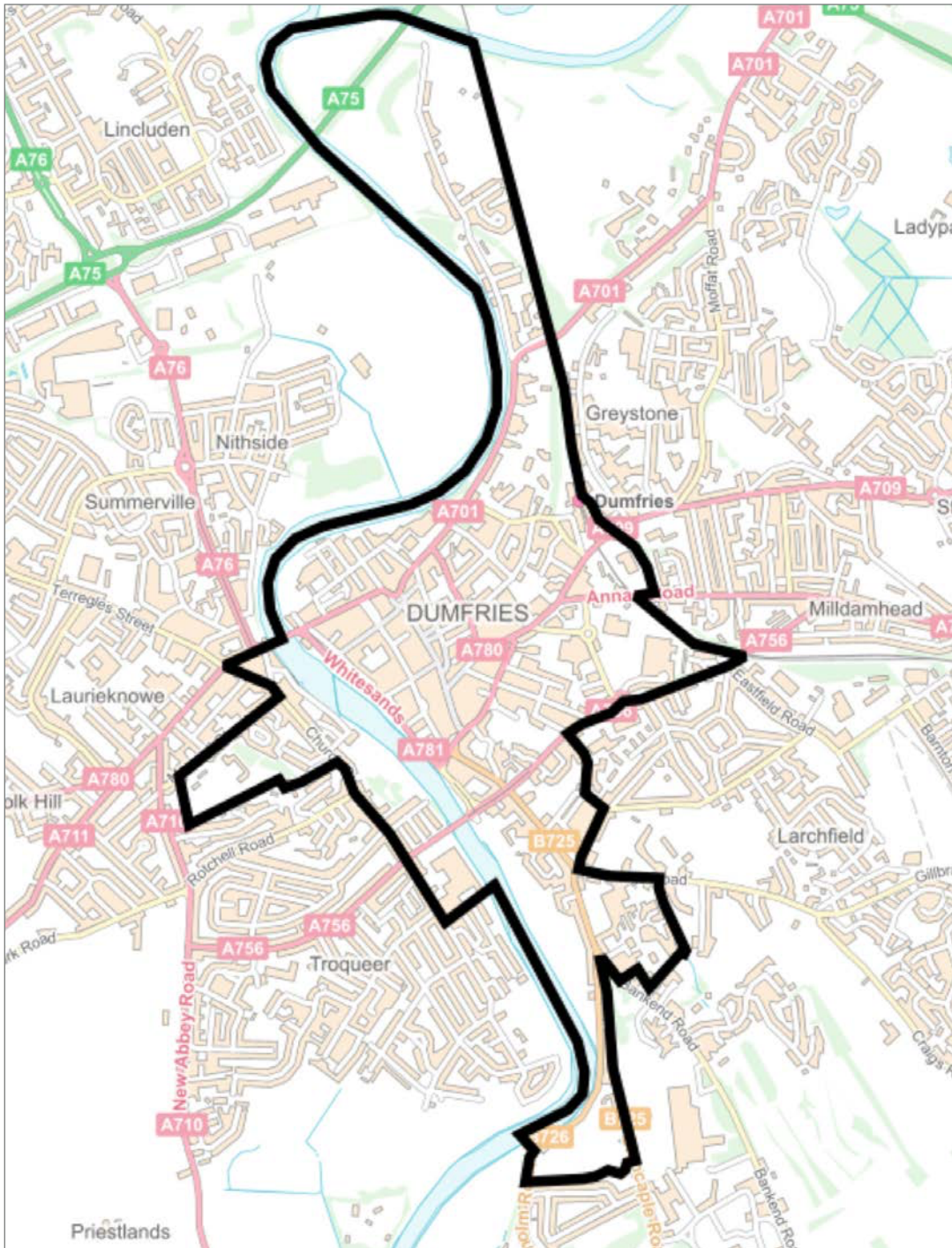
Dumfries is a “Learning Town,” delivering an innovative whole town approach to education making use of all resources to deliver the best and most effective learning opportunities to improve life chances for all young people.

The sustainability and growth of Dumfries is enhanced by the Crichton Campus and Business Park, with its higher and further education partners, growing number of students and international reach and over 100 businesses and innovation partners.

As with towns across Scotland, the town centre has been impacted by changing shopping habits as people migrate to shopping online resulting in the loss of national retail chains. Work patterns have also changed with more people working from home or hybrid working. We therefore need to reimagine our retail offer and how we use and develop our town

centre in the future. Despite the challenges, the people of Dumfries value highly the culture and heritage of their town, our independent retail offer and at the same time celebrate innovation and our own way of doing things.

The Third Sector organisations in Dumfries and wider have committed and highly able activists who are leading the way. Today the town is attracting a national reputation with groundbreaking projects such as the Midsteeple Quarter, The Stove Network, the People’s Project, Dumfries Partnership Action Group, and a momentum that is driving a “dynamically different” view of the town’s potential. It has been clear through the engagement around Dynamically Different Dumfries and the process of developing this Local Place Plan that the residents, businesses, and visitors to Dumfries fully appreciate both our heritage and future potential.



## Our Local Place Plan Area

This map defines the Local Place Plan area. It includes the town centre, but extends beyond it in recognition that the Town Centre “is not an island” and depends on its relationship to the wider town when looking for development opportunities and sustaining a living town centre.





## Our Approach

While the original DDD process was led by Dumfries Partnership Action Group (DPAG) as a unique collaboration of Dumfries based businesses, community organisations and social enterprises, this Local Place Plan (LPP) is the result of a partnership working between DPAG (which is now an OSCR registered charity and membership organisation with a volunteer board of trustees) and Loreburn Community Council (LCC). The result is an enhanced view of the strengths, needs and potential of our town.

While the power of community-led action is clearly evident in Dumfries, DPAG and Loreburn Community Council recognise that more can be done to support the growth of our small businesses and encourage dynamic enterprises that support our town's economy. The very existence of this Local Place Plan can be used as a framework for dialogue with potential investors who share our vision of a dynamic and thriving forward-looking town at the heart of our region: a place to do business. The Local Place Plan therefore includes a listing of potential sites for development or improvement which can act as a catalyst for discussion on the future of our town.

Dumfries and Galloway Council and other key partners have continued to work in practical terms with DPAG through the provision of officer support focusing on the development of this plan and engaging with DPAG trustees in the preparation of their Active Travel plans, Digital Connectivity proposals and other meaningful actions. This shared approach to developing Dynamically Different Dumfries and this Local Place Plan builds upon a record of accomplishment of successful community-led initiatives in and around the town centre.



# Shaping Our Local Place Plan

Our Local Place Plan for the town centre builds upon the extensive community engagement undertaken to produce Dynamically Different Dumfries (March 2022) and subsequent consultation through the Local Place Plan Process. Our community knows Dumfries Town Centre, understands what needs to be done and what they would like to see happen.



# The Strategic Context: Sustaining Our Place and People

Our plan has been developed within the framework of national and regional policies and initiatives which we appreciate will continually change and evolve throughout the life of our plan. Appendix 1 of our LPP highlights the key strategies we are currently working to. We recognise that Dumfries has a key role to play as a regional hub serving communities, businesses and visitors. Our plan particularly takes account of the following policy areas:



## The Notion of Place

The Scottish Government defines “Place” as “where people, location and resources combine to create a sense of identity and purpose and is the heart of addressing needs and realising the full potential of their communities.”

The Town Centre First Principle asks that “government, local authorities, the wider public sector, businesses and communities put the health of our town centres at the heart of decision making, adopting an approach to decisions that considers the vibrancy of town centres as a starting point.” Our Council supports this approach in the Local Development Plan. Our focus is to attract new residents, businesses and investment to our town centre in preference to out of town locations.

The National Planning Framework 4 from the Scottish Government aims to create “Sustainable places, where we reduce emissions and restore and better connect biodiversity; liveable places, where we can live better, healthier lives; productive places, where we can have a greener, fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy and distinctive places, where we recognise and work with our assets. While the focus of this LPP is Dumfries Town Centre, DPAG and LCC are well aware that the town centre is “not an island”.



Partners and businesses have been clear that the connection between the town centre and its connected suburbs as well as wider afield is essential when looking at sustainable development solutions. This is key to identifying and tackling the needs of our businesses and community by working in partnership with others to build upon their ambition to realise the potential of our town centre.

These high-level principles are reflected in the approach and ambitions that have emerged through the development of Dynamically Different Dumfries. The Scottish planning system now enables communities to play a proactive role in shaping the places where they live. It is in this context that we have evolved the DDD document and made it our “Local Place Plan” for Dumfries Town Centre making a real contribution to the Local Development Planning Process.

## **Community-Led and Inspired**

Working with DPAG and LCC, Dumfries and Galloway Council is actively supporting and encouraging community decision making, empowering and enabling the people of Dumfries to participate in delivering local actions for local people around a shared vision and aligned to the Regional Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2023-2033 which sets out a vision of “Working in partnership to ensure a confident, ambitious, healthy and fairer Dumfries and Galloway for everyone who lives and works here”. Our Local Place Plan is as much about the people of Dumfries as it is about reimagining our town centre. The ideas, inspiration and aspirations of the people of Dumfries are reflected throughout this Local Place Plan as can be seen from the data on the community engagement that helped form the original Dynamically Different Dumfries Action Plan and the subsequent updates.

The visions and actions you will see in this document reflect what our community values and what it says it needs to fulfil its aspirations for the future.

Our community-led approach to delivery includes a wide range of practices and initiatives. Common to all of these is the principle that the communities have knowledge, skills and assets and are best placed to bring about lasting change.

## **Reducing Poverty and Inequality**

Our community recognises it is important that by investing in and regenerating our town centre, we also work together to improve life chances and help to secure healthier lifestyles for those in our town living with inequality, poverty and exclusion.

A dedicated report on Deprivation in Dumfries and Galloway which was commissioned and subsequently published in December 2020, highlighted that areas within the Dumfries Nith Ward (which includes the Dumfries Town Centre area) are within the 10% most deprived areas in Scotland identified in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD).

We are of the firm belief that Dumfries is a place where no one should be left behind. Poverty, addiction, domestic violence, or difference should not mean that someone does not feel welcome in their home place and our community supports that principle.

Projects, developments and building proposals that address the wellbeing and inclusion of the community are and should continue to be encouraged and supported.

Dumfries is a place that is open to exploring ways of community wealth building. Our community supports the idea of buying local, of seeking locally based businesses and organisations to perform work for our public bodies and increasing the prosperity and employment opportunities within the town.

This Local Place Plan recognises and supports the work of the Dumfries and Galloway Poverty and Inequalities Partnership and its professed aims to deliver “a Dumfries and Galloway in which local action has driven poverty as low as possible and has mitigated as far as possible the impact of poverty when experienced.”

### **Growing Our Local Economy**

The South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy and Delivery Strategy sets out the economic ambitions for “a region of opportunity and innovation where natural capital drives green growth, ambition and quality of life rivals the best in the UK, communities are empowered and cultural identity is cherished, enabling those already here to thrive and attracting a new generation to live, work, visit learn and invest in the South of Scotland.” Our ambitions for Dumfries town centre reflect this and aim to build our community’s wealth, and delivery inclusive growth.

“attracting a new generation to live, work, visit learn and invest in the South of Scotland”



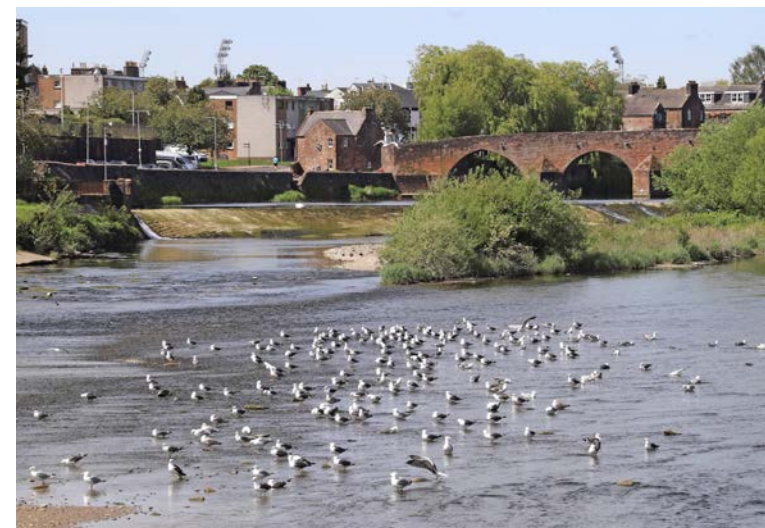
### **Climate Emergency and Transition to Net Zero Emissions**

Climate Change and sustainability issues have emerged as increasingly important for the public and communities alike throughout engagement processes leading to the drafting of the LPP. The Scottish Government committed to pursuing net zero emissions of all greenhouse gases as has the UK government. In response, Dumfries and Galloway Council has declared a climate emergency and recognised the importance of tackling climate change. Our Council will work in partnership to use the towns assets and resources to restore nature and transition our town centre to becoming net zero.

Our community expressed a clear desire to respond to climate change through the promotion of active travel in and around the town centre and the greening of public spaces. This feedback was particularly strong from young people and families who saw our town setting and environment as something special and good progress is being made through local action groups.

### **Tackling the Nature Emergency**

We have a wonderful array of wildlife in the town of Dumfries itself with birdwatchers coming for miles to watch the herons, ducks and gulls on the Nith. We have butterflies, songbirds and our parks and gardens are busy with visitors. Residents put out bird tables and cultivate high pollen flowers to encourage them. We are concerned about biodiversity loss. We have lost the colonies of Small Tortoiseshell and Orange Tip butterflies that used to live in Greensands and our otters are now very rarely seen. We applaud the work of community organisations like Incredible Edible, the People’s Project, IncludeUs, and the Dumfries Adoptive Railway group for the invaluable work they do in encouraging and enhancing our greenspaces across Dumfries. The Local Place Plan supports all efforts to help our wonderful wild creatures thrive here.





## Strengths and Opportunities

The following strengths provide a powerful base for us to invigorate our town centre.

### A Proactive Community

Dumfries has a positive track record of successful and nationally significant community-led projects including:

- Midsteeples Quarter, actively bringing this part of the town back into community ownership, renovating and developing the buildings and finding new uses for them.
- The People's Project with a long-term record of supporting significant voluntary town centre improvements

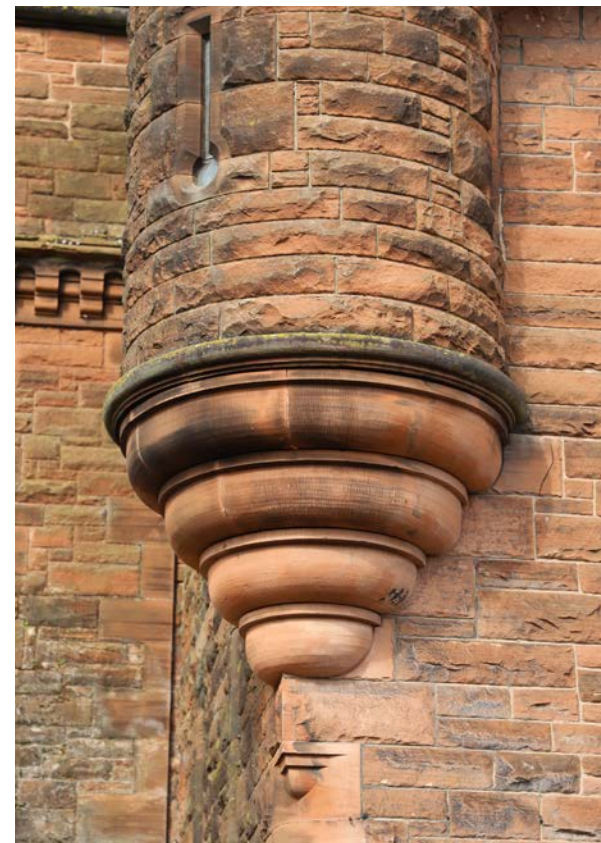
- Renovation of the Theatre Royal Scotland's oldest continually working theatre.
- The award-winning Stove Network which provides a hub for Creative Arts and community involvement in and beyond the town.
- The Usual Place an award-winning community café which employs young people with additional support needs.
- The Catherine Street Inclusive Play Park and Community Garden
- The renovation of the Fountain on the High Street
- Upgrading and redevelopment of Dock Park
- The multi award winning Queen Street regeneration project

### Heritage and Culture

The historic origins of our town as a medieval marketplace have left a legacy of generous public spaces on our High Street, and we have stunning architecture with many red sandstone buildings which lend the town a distinctive character. As the Queen of the South, our town plays a significant role as the regional capital and civic centre. We will make the most of our town centre's natural, cultural and historical assets to highlight Dumfries.

Encouraging investment in the fabric of buildings and the repurposing of those which are vacant and underused will contribute to a positive town centre experience.

The character of our historic conservation area should be preserved. Conservation area status does not mean that new development is unacceptable, but care must be taken to ensure the new development will not harm but will preserve or enhance character and appearance.





### **The River Nith**

Our community, local businesses and visitors consistently and enthusiastically highlighted the River Nith as a major and under-utilised asset for the town centre. The river teems with wildlife and gives our town centre its picturesque setting, but it was seen that much more can be done to celebrate it. In recent years, an annual “Nithraid Festival” celebrating the river’s place in the town has proved a great success. The extensive River Corridor also provides accessible connectivity between the town centre to Dock Park, Rosefield Mills, the Crichton Quarter, and other key riverside locations in the town. The Local Place Plan is supportive of the positive work delivered through and by the Nith Catchment Fisheries Trust; Scottish Environment Protection Agency and the Nith District Salmon Fishery Board in all they do to protect and enhance the river.



### **Arts and Culture**

Dumfries is an area rich and varied in its history with a bold and vibrant artistic heritage. One of the key strengths of our Town Centre is its historic links to internationally recognised characters such as King Robert the Bruce, Robert Burns and J M Barrie. The trio are already the foundation for many of the attractions, festivals and events held throughout the region, and we want to build upon this to promote our town centre as a quality tourist destination.

Today’s town retains a strong cultural heartbeat, with a variety of creative hubs nurturing the artistic potential of the community in the town centre and a calendar of festivals bringing this to our streets. Bands, choirs, and young people rehearse in a variety of different spaces while artists, crafters and poets sketch new ideas in pop-up studios and galleries. Our pubs and venues host a heady roster of nights out which give the town its distinctive character. All this also adds to the region’s growing international reputation as an area for quality artistic, cultural, and natural assets.



### **Events, Markets and Festivals**

Events and Markets create experiences that encourage footfall and people to stay longer in the town centre. Throughout the year the town centre hosts a range of different events, including the Big Burn’s Supper, Guid Nychburris, a traditional festival which features the crowning of the Queen of the South and Youthbeatz, Scotland’s largest free youth festival.

Our town centre has the facility and tradition of hosting regular markets, previously on and along the Whitesands and over recent years, a variety of market stall provision has been supported on the High Street, Queensberry Square, Fountain Square and at Dumfries train station.

## Our Ambitions

Through the extensive engagement leading to this plan, 5 Key Drivers were identified as being the main areas of action that you wanted to see.

- A Place to Live and Belong
- A Place to Visit and Experience
- A Place to Learn, Work and Do Business
- A Place that is well Connected
- A Place to Grow, and Play

There are also 5 themes that it is important to bear in mind as we take the plan forward and design our projects around, particularly if we want to attract Scottish and UK Government funding as well as tap into funds such as the National Lottery and other sources of support. These 'cross-cutting' themes are: -

- Inclusion & Diversity
- Innovation
- Net Zero Transition
- Creativity.
- Health and Wellbeing



## A PLACE TO LIVE AND BELONG

We aim to improve the experience of the town centre by attracting new uses, improving the appearance, and creating a vibrant environment where people want to live, spend time and money.



## Our community wants:

### Opportunities for town centre living

All involved in the engagement process for this LPP have recognised the critical importance of having a living town centre. Central to this is the need for more people living there. You would like to see a diversity of housing stock and more people living in the town centre, as this helps to create vibrancy and increase footfall. The vacant spaces above the town centre units, along with other sites within walking distance are currently underutilised. These spaces could provide development opportunities to create a range and choice of town centre homes. Our groundbreaking Midsteple Quarter Project has been nationally recognised as a community-led capital project of real significance and provides a living example of what communities can achieve when supported and empowered to think big and act locally. It is suggested that student accommodation could be developed in the town centre for students studying on the Crichton Campus, as well as accommodation for professionals working at the campus site and hospital. There is interest too in developing models of inter-generational living.

### Next Step:

Dumfries Urban Capacity Study provides a co-ordinated picture of the potential for the provision of new homes in Dumfries, including a particular focus upon the town centre, highlighting the potential for Town Centre Living.

We have identified a variety of sites (See Appendix 2) for future housing and wider development within the town centre, many of which are also reflected in the Dumfries Urban Capacity Study. DPAG is already in conversation with partners exploring opportunities for town centre student accommodation.

“creating a vibrant environment”

## Repurposed town centre buildings.

The way in which we shop and use our town centres has changed, so we now need to find new and exciting purposes for the vacant and underused properties that will encourage people to visit and spend time in our town centre.

### Next Step

There are already exciting initiatives such as the Midsteeple Quarter, the Dumfries Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) and the Town Centre Living Fund which can help address some of these issues in the town centre. The Dumfries Urban Capacity Study identifies a range of buildings in the town with the potential to be repurposed. We will collaborate with partners to tackle empty or underused properties and bring vibrancy back to our town centre, as well as with tourist organisations like the South of Scotland Destination Alliance and the Burns Quarter.



## Enhanced and protected historic buildings and townscape.

You value the distinctive character that the buildings, monuments, spaces, and the medieval street pattern contribute to the attractiveness of our town centre. The community is concerned about their current condition and wants them to be restored, enhanced and protected for the future.

### Next Steps

We work with private, public and community stakeholders to effectively address the condition and use of the buildings and spaces in our town centre. (See Appendix 2). The Dumfries Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) is helping to provide a focus to do this, alongside community led initiatives. such as the Midsteeple Quarter and Rosefield Mills. In addition, the restoration of the "B" Listed Fountain on the High Street and the specialist cleaning of Burns Statue has helped to provide an early indication of positive change.

## A well maintained and managed town centre

How our town centre looks and feels impacts on whether it is a place people want to spend time. You told us that the town is incredibly attractive, but better maintaining the streets and buildings is an absolute priority for improving the town centre experience for all. Through previous engagements we know people in Dumfries want to see a clean High Street with less derelict buildings and the removal of bushes from the sides of the buildings. We have a significant population of urban gulls which means that the High Street needs to be washed frequently. A variety of voluntary groups are involved in litter pick up and clean up initiatives which are growing in popularity.



### Next Step

Introduce a proactive system of town centre management – a system that ensures a high standard of street cleanliness, tidiness and safety. Install rising bollards and vehicle number recognition cameras to stop abuse of the pedestrian area, restricting all vehicle speeds to 5 mph on those pedestrian areas to prioritise safety. Develop a facelift scheme to clear vegetation from building fronts, gutters and roofs.

Take forward the early work on the establishment of a Town Centre Management Group. An initial, mainly DG Council-led group has been identified, and these discussions should be taken forward alongside any aspirations and proposals from the newly established Dumfries Town Board. Membership of this group should also be extended to include active community groups where appropriate.



## A PLACE TO VISIT AND EXPERIENCE

A key aim of this Local Place Plan is to create a reason and purpose for people to come into and visit Dumfries town centre by creating a range of attractions, activities and experiences. We recognise too that while the region's reputation has grown as a world-class tourist destination, more can be done to package and promote Dumfries the regional capital as a destination in its own right. Many of the actions in this plan will improve the town's appeal as a destination and we will work with tourism promotional groups to align our common interests.



### Our community wants:

#### A thriving leisure and entertainment economy with a range of places to eat, drink and socialise.

The traditional role and function of town centres has changed, and so we need to create alternatives, such as leisure and entertainment for people to want to come into the town centre. You told us that you would like to see Dumfries as a regional entertainment centre with facilities such as a modern cinema, a bowling alley, more restaurants, and a café culture. In addition, there are a wide range of facilities in and around our town centre which offer programmes of fun and interesting activities that people can get involved in. These include Gracefield Art Gallery, various museums, The Crichton, the Ewart Library, and the Theatre Royal to sports facilities at DG1 and the Ice Bowl, Dance, Gymnastics and Martial Arts Studios and the Loreburn Hall, local gyms and Boulderover Climbing Wall.

#### Next Step

To encourage investment in new activities and experiences in the town centre and raise awareness of the facilities and activities that are already on offer.



## A vibrant programme of festivals, activities and events throughout the year.

Festivals, activities and events create a vibrant town centre that people can enjoy. Whilst there are festivals, activities and events that currently take place including Youth Beatz, Big Burns Supper and Guid Nychburris there is room for this to grow and be professionally programmed and packaged.

### Next Step

To work together to develop an annual programme and online platform of events and activities throughout the year that the whole region can get behind and actively support. Establish a town Entertainments and Culture Group which includes local businesses to help coordinate and promote a town-focused programme of key events for locals and visitors alike.



## Experiences that focus upon the town's rich heritage, arts and culture

Our town has a strong historical and cultural heritage together with flourishing creative art, performing arts and literary scene. You told us we should capitalise on our rich heritage as a substantial undervalued asset that can contribute to the attractiveness of the town and attract tourists. Dumfries Town Centre can capitalise on its strong connections to Robert Burns to grow as a world class tourist destination. Creating and developing experiences around the town's heritage, arts and culture will bring a vibrancy to the town centre, encouraging people to use it more.

### Next Step

To work together to explore how we can boost our heritage, arts, and cultural assets to develop year-round attractions which create experiences that encourage people to visit the town centre, an example of this is reflected in the recent work being taken forward by the Burns Tourism Partnership, a group with cross sector representation and a defined focus on enhancing visitor experience around the life and times of Robert Burns in Dumfries and Ellisland.



## Enhanced river frontage and corridor

The scope for "Green Tourism" given our exceptional natural assets in and beyond the town is tremendous. The River Nith is considered by many in the community to be the greatest asset to the town. You see the Whitesands as a possible physical events space, important green space, and natural extension to the High Street. An enhanced river frontage and corridor would provide widespread leisure opportunities such as walking and cycling, and an important link to Dock Park, the Crichton Quarter, Rosefield Mills, and other riverside locations within the town.

### Next step

To work together to identify how more can be made of the Whitesands and the River Corridor, to help regenerate the town centre.

“improve the town's appeal as a destination”

## A PLACE TO LEARN, WORK AND DO BUSINESS.

We aim to ensure our town is a competitive, inclusive and adaptable place in which to do business, attract investment and encourage rewarding fair work and training opportunities.



### Our community wants:

#### Dynamic independent businesses

Our independent businesses, retailers and markets provide a different offering and experience and are usually owned and run by local people who have more invested in the town. Whilst the nature of our High Street is changing and we need to attract new uses, we recognise it is essential to work with the independent businesses in the town centre. It is therefore important that we focus upon the independent shopping streets as areas for improvement in addition to the High Street.

#### Next Steps

To support existing businesses and encourage new businesses in the retail, hospitality and service sectors to locate and start up in the town centre. Looking to establish a Town Centre Business Group to better coordinate events and joint ventures that enhance the whole town experience.

To work together to create an experiential shopping environment that brings more people into our town centre, highlights our local offer, encourages them to stay longer and gives a reason for them to come back again.



## State of the art digital connectivity and infrastructure

Fast, reliable high speed internet access is essential for people to work, learn and do business in our town centre. The way in which we are now working, learning and interacting has changed. We recognise that our town centre needs to respond to these changes. Town centre-wide 5G access would draw more people to the town for meetings and help visitors to more easily find amenities and promote their visits via social media.

### Next step

To work in partnership to eliminate dead zones in the mobile internet coverage and invest in online content that promotes businesses, services and events in town. Ensure that there are no barriers to all properties in the town centre having fibre-level internet access if they require it.

“ a competitive, inclusive and adaptable place ”



## Adaptable and flexible spaces to accommodate new ways of working

As the way in which we work changes, the need for work and meeting spaces that are easily adapted to suit new and changing demands is becoming more important. Some of the empty properties in the town centre could be reused to provide an adaptable, flexible work environment. There is a need to attract and encourage start-ups, innovation hubs and co-working opportunities to the town centre.

### Next Step

We have identified many sites (See appendix 2) and there will be more, where these new workspaces may be located within the town centre. Further studies will be required to assess their suitability



## A range of opportunities to learn, train work and progress

Dumfries is already a Learning Town which is an innovative approach that brings all the schools across Dumfries together to deliver education on a whole town basis. The Bridge a purpose-built learning facility acts as a "bridge" between the senior phase of Secondary School and the towns further and higher education offer on the Crichton Campus, as well as opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship for young people. The current phase of Dumfries Learning Town focuses upon Dumfries Academy, Dumfries High School and Loreburn Primary School and so directly relates to the town centre. Our community see providing educational, creative and digital opportunities and aspirational employment opportunities to attract and retain skilled and talented people to our town as important.

### Next Step

We would like to work in partnership with key partners to ensure that opportunities and activities in Dumfries town centre can be linked to learning, training and aspirational employment opportunities. It is also vital that there are strong links between the developments within the Crichton Quarter and the regeneration of the town centre.

## A PLACE TO CONNECT

We should encourage active travel in and around our town, to make sure that our town is accessible for everyone and easy to navigate, to remove barriers to becoming active, and to maximise opportunities to support the transition of our town centre to net zero carbon.

### Our community wants to see:

#### Inclusive streets and spaces that are accessible for all with a safe attractive pedestrianised environment.

We want to ensure our town centre is accessible to everyone and easy to navigate. Narrow, poorly maintained pavements, badly dropped kerbs, uneven surfaces, narrow and multi-stage pedestrian and bike crossings, very short light cycles, illegal street parking and infrequent signage that assumes people already know where things are and inappropriately placed A-boards all present challenges to people that use wheelchairs, mobility scooters, child carers with buggies, the elderly, visually impaired and people with reduced mobility.



#### Next Step

To work together with elected members; roads and infrastructure officers, planners and to advocate on behalf of those that face accessibility challenges in our centre to identify the issues you face and find ways to address them. Individuals who have first-hand experience of these challenges should be appointed to assess all new works and approve them as fit for purpose to avoid wasting resources. i.e. infrastructure should work for people with disabilities first as that means it can work for everyone.

“remove barriers to becoming active”

## Active Travel Infrastructure that encourages walking and cycling.

Many neighbourhoods within Dumfries are less than a 20-minute walk or 10-minute cycle from the town centre. Safe and better-connected walking and cycling routes to the town centre will help to encourage people to walk and cycle more. Cycling Dumfries have undertaken an important piece of work identifying the “Missing Links” in the cycling network to be addressed. The sections of this document that are relevant to our area have been adopted as part of our Local Place Plan. In addition, you told us you would like to see dedicated cycle lanes, with more covered, secure cycle storage areas, cycle racks and electric bike hire. More initiatives like “Beat the Street” which were fun, participative, and encouraged people to be active.

### Next Step:

To work together with local groups promoting cycling and walking to create an environment that better connects our town centre to its surroundings, helps reduce congestion on roads, and reduces the need for some car journeys and promotes walking and cycling routes that suit all abilities and help to address the effects of climate change. We want every child in Dumfries to be able to cycle to school along safe routes that don't put them in conflict with other vehicles and pedestrians. The “Better Streets” engagement by SWESTrans, Dumfries and Galloway Council and DPAG has highlighted a series of potential projects which are under consideration in 2025 for prioritisation and development.

## Flexible, efficient low carbon public transport options

You want to see more flexible and reliable low carbon public transport options across our town centre and Dumfries to better connect our local suburban and rural communities and to act against climate change. To do this, we will need to look at how we can increase the frequency, timing, responsiveness, and affordability of public transport to encourage people to use public transport and reduce the number of journeys by car. This will need to be closely linked to plans to create a safe town centre that is accessible to all.

### Next Step:

To work together to provide a range of reliable, cost-effective low carbon public and private transport options and ensure that the infrastructure is in place to support them.



## A PLACE TO GROW, AND PLAY

We aim to support the greening of our town centre and to ensure that the town centre is a fun place to be for all generations, with lots of things to do and enjoy. This will attract local people and visitors to come into the town centre and linger longer.



## Our community wants to see:

### Enhanced green and public spaces where a wide range of activities can be enjoyed by all

You told us you would like to see greener public spaces in the town centre, and more to be made of them. The spaces could be identified for clear purposes such as leisure, play, events, gardens, gathering, and supporting biodiversity. We need to improve and redesign our public spaces including where appropriate sheltered seating, canopies, and lighting.

#### Next steps

Work together with the community to identify which green and public spaces our community would like to develop and enhance. Our community has already made good progress in this area including community gardens and local food growing initiatives.



### Enhanced biodiversity

Nature and wildlife will both help our town to be proactive in addressing climate change and in promoting the well-being of our community. We are lucky that our town centre features a range of accessible, welcoming, beautiful, and functional green and public spaces and you want to celebrate and build upon this. You told us you want greener public spaces in the town centre through the planting of trees, flowers, and edible plants. This will help to soften and bring more colour into the town and respond to the impacts of global warming. More perennials should be planted that support pollinators and reduce the need for planting and watering. Smaller, lighter vehicles should be used in and around the town for plant maintenance to reduce emissions and damage pedestrianised areas. This fleet could be made up of small electric vehicles and electric cargo bikes. There is also a desire to enhance the experience and quality of the green spaces along the River Nith corridor.

#### Next Steps

Promote, collaborate and assist in funding bids for projects and groups that support, develop and enhance our town's biodiversity and access to green spaces.

## Renewable Energy Opportunities

The river Nith offers the chance to harness natural resources in the town centre such as the renewable energy regeneration from water sources and the potential opportunities of the geothermal aquifer. In the past Maxwelltown's electricity was supplied from a small hydro plant by the mill. Many of the commercial buildings in the town are flat roofed and if surveyed and shown to be load bearing, could have solar panels installed on them creating a local mini grid that local businesses could benefit from. This is often done through local energy co-ops who rent the roof space from businesses. In other cases, the local authority is the customer consuming the electricity which benefits the local authority in terms of cost savings and sustainable goals while providing direct cash investment into town improvement plans.

### Next Step:

To work together to look at the ways we can green the public spaces in our town centre, maximise the potential of our river corridor and utilise its potential to create sources of renewable energy. Support the formation of energy co-ops that work with local businesses and property owners to deploy more rooftop solar in town and help reduce business energy costs.



## Informal Space and Activities for Young People to interact with friends in a fun and safe environment

Our young people feel there is a lack of places in the town centre for them to safely meet and hang out with friends. To make the town centre a more appealing place for young people to visit and socialise you suggested creating sheltered seating areas with free wi-fi and charging points. Other ideas you suggested were to build more activity and leisure centres like a cinema, an indoor or outdoor skate park, and bowling complex, an arcade and a trampoline park where you can be active and spend time with friends.

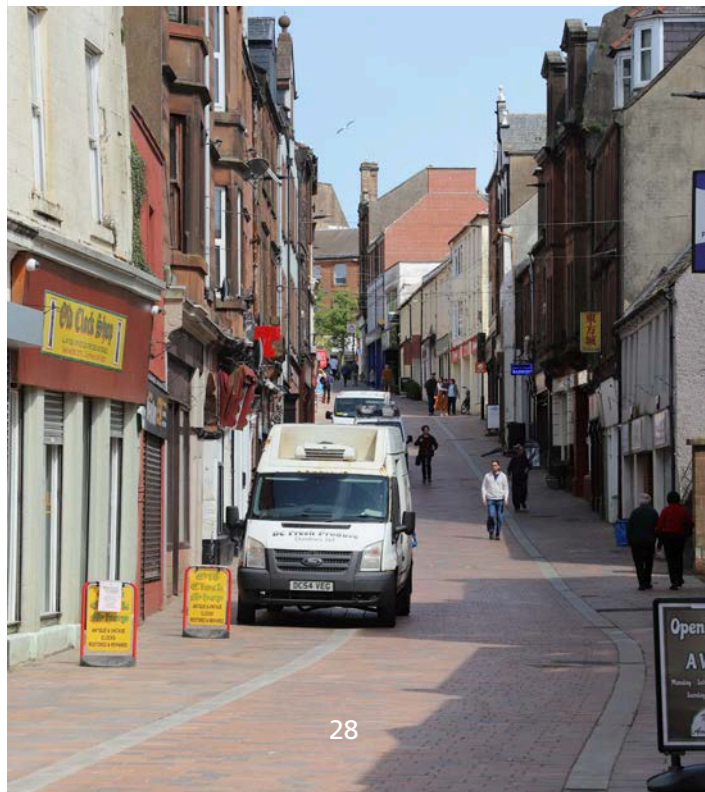
### Next steps:

We will work together with our young people to transform the town centre to meet the needs of the younger generation.

## Priority Areas

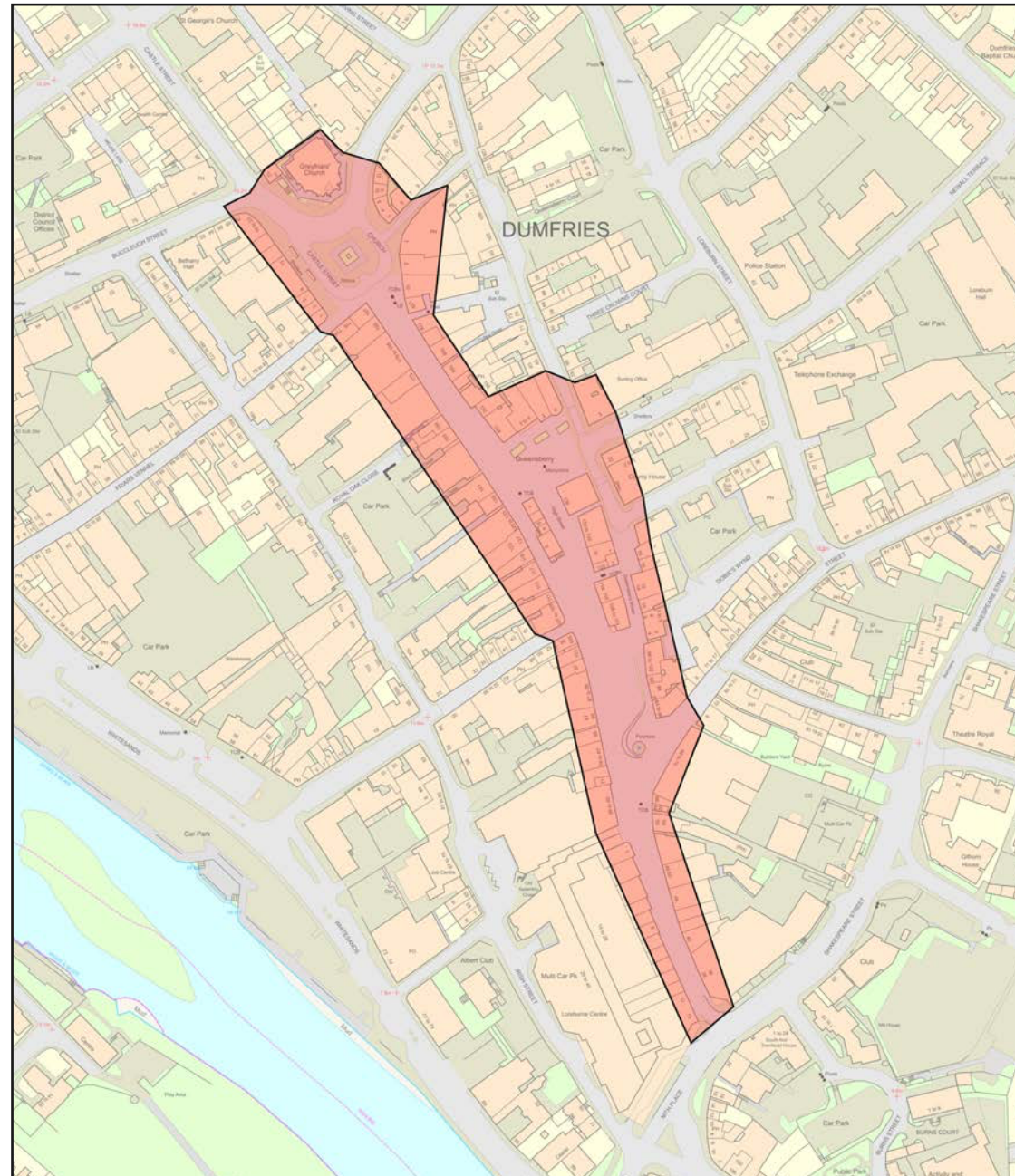
To focus investment and delivery, six priority activity areas have been identified. These areas are all significant but should also be viewed as interconnected when considering development opportunities in any given priority area. Waymarking within and between these areas would be beneficial, particularly when seeking to inform visitors or tourists.

Further engagement is required with town centre stakeholders to develop short, medium and long-term actions that will lead to transformational change in each of these areas. This will not exclude any strategic initiatives that may emerge in other parts of the town during the lifetime of the plan but does help identify and establish a sense of prioritisation and early focus for action.



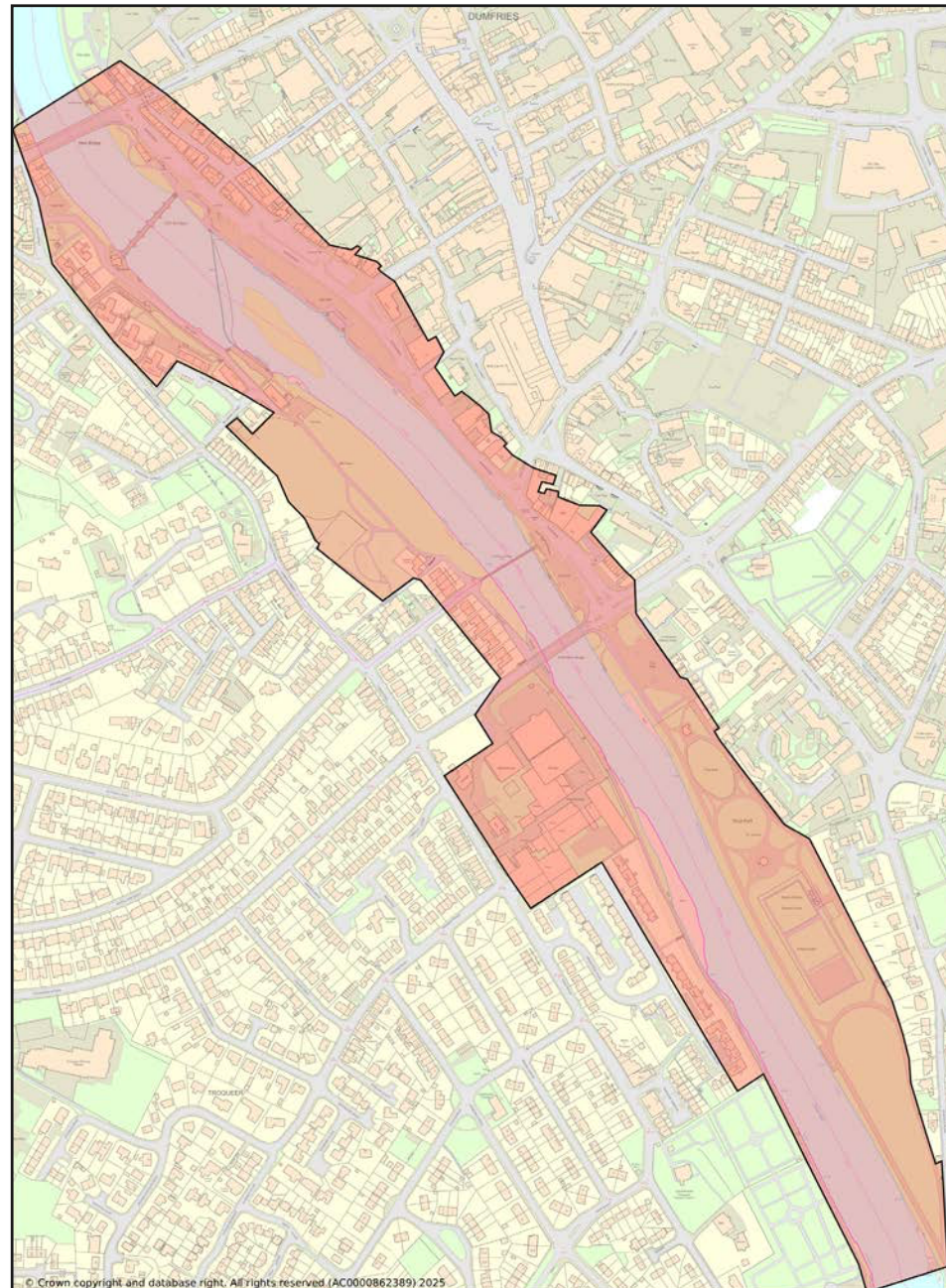
## A- High Street

The High Street is the core of the town centre and a focus of transformational change. This can be achieved through the repurposing of existing vacant units for a range of new uses, the reimagining and greening of open spaces as social and events spaces, along with the restoration of the buildings, and monuments that give our High Street its distinctive character.



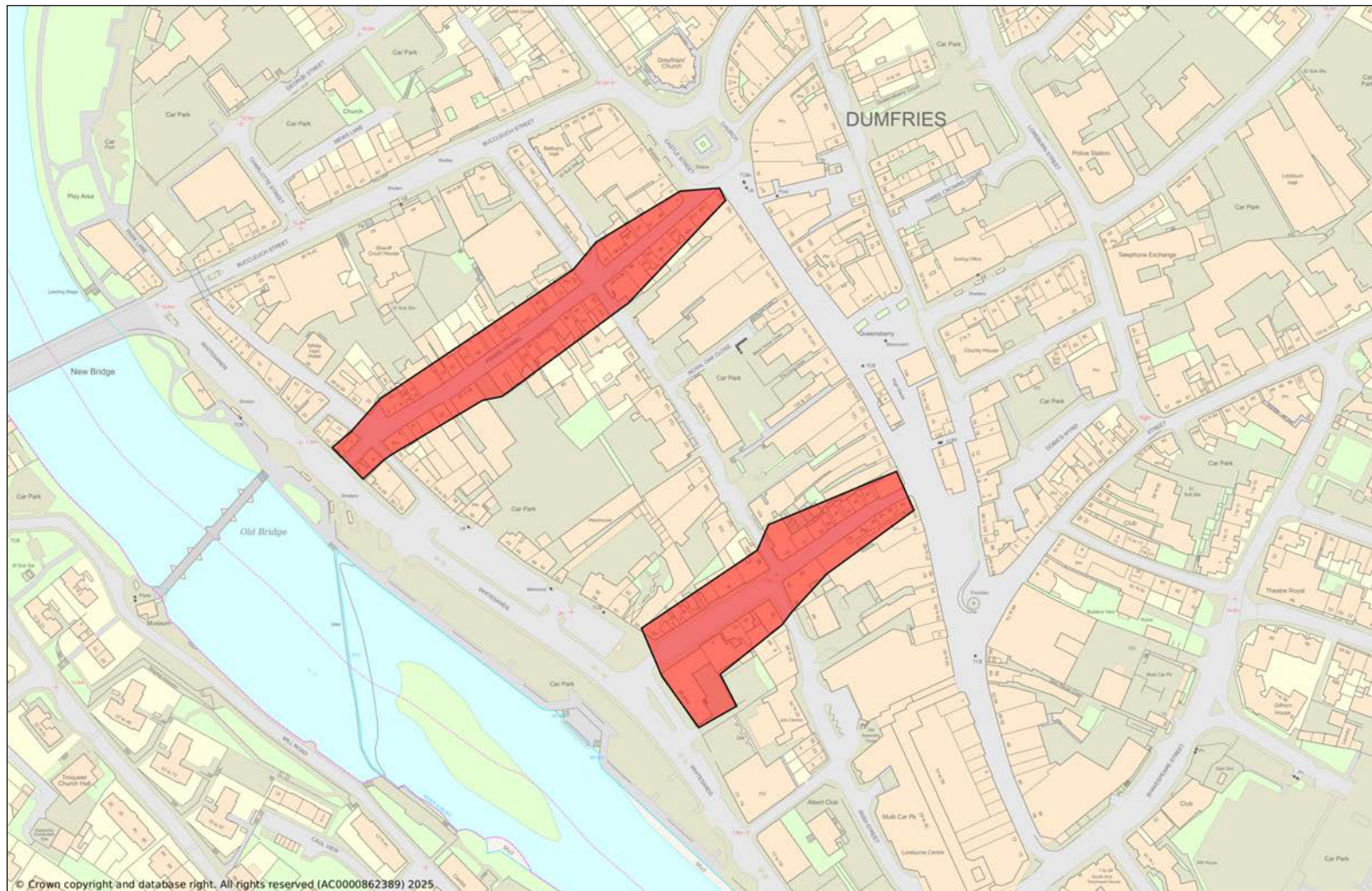
## B- The river and Whitesands

Realising the full potential of the river and the role it can play in attracting people to the town centre, as a physical and visual link to the area's history and landscape including The Crichton and Rosefield Mills is key to improving the potential of our town centre. The Whitesands has the potential to become a major focus for activity and could become a vibrant area to enjoy for leisure, culture, performance, play and relaxation. This emerged as a major and consistent message from all phases of engagement.



# C-Friars Vennel and Bank Street

Enhancing the experience of moving between the town's key destinations: the High Street and the river, by creating a distinctive and coherent retail, leisure and café culture along the existing streets. In doing so helping to establish Dumfries a sophisticated day and night time destination.

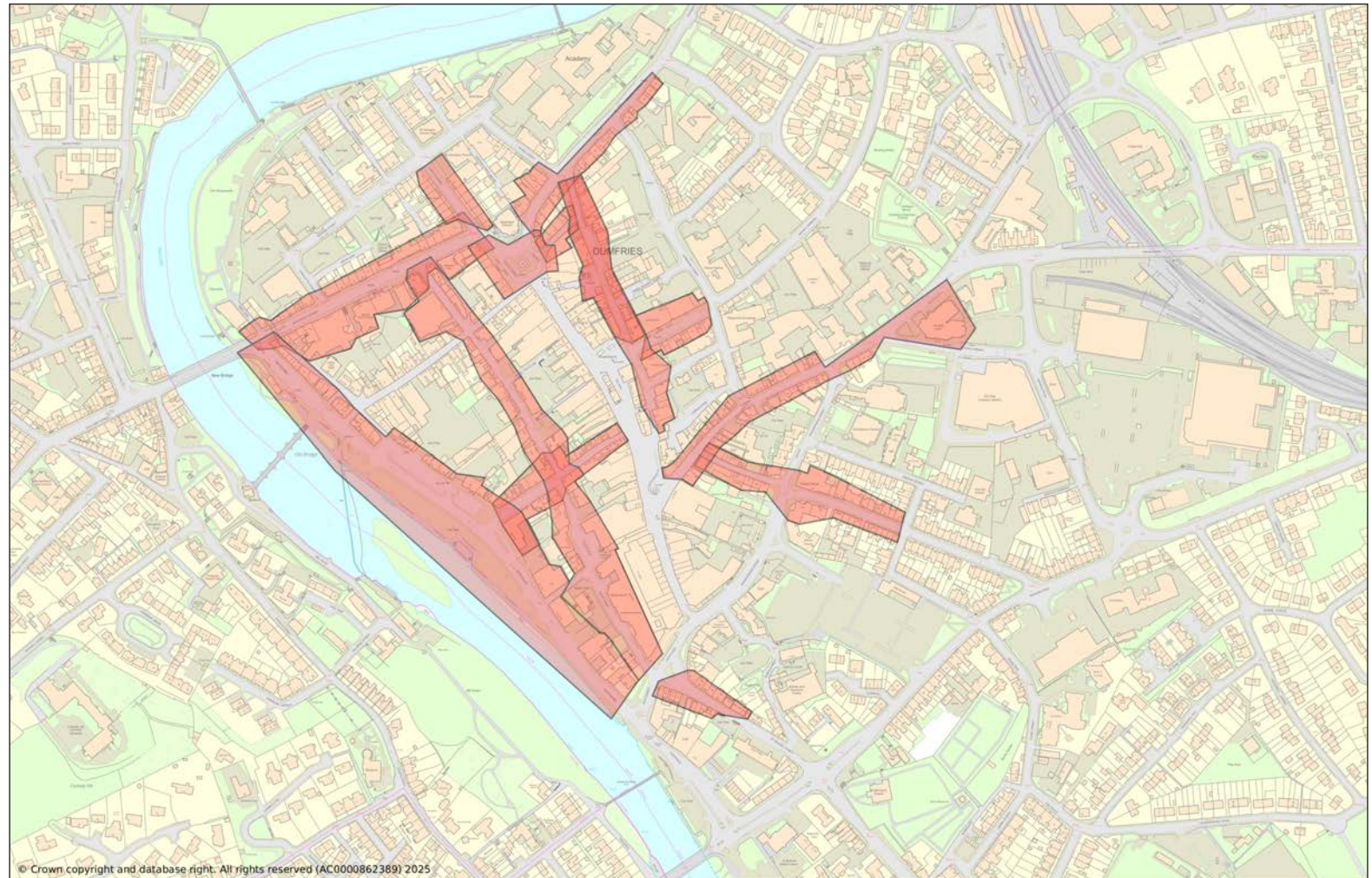


# D-Independent Shopping Streets

Future retailing in the town centre will lie in developing a unique independent shopping and café experience. There are a range of independent shops in the streets around the High Street and our community recognises we are unique in having Barbour's, one of the last family-owned department stores in Scotland.

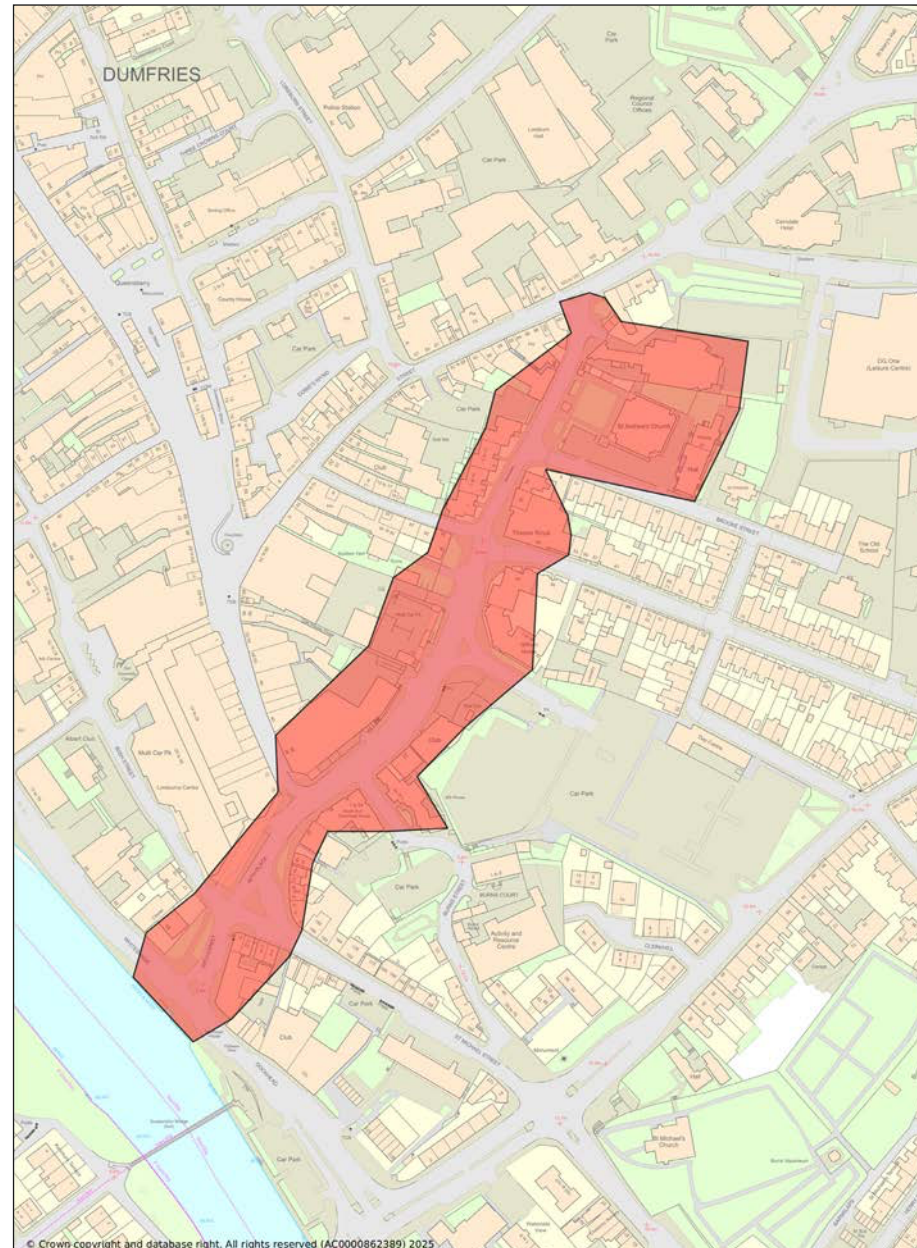
The Independent Shopping Streets are:

- Buccleuch Street
- Castle Street
- Church Crescent,
- Academy Street,
- St Andrews Street,
- Queensberry Street
- Great King Street,
- English Street
- Irish Street
- Friars Vennel,
- Bank Street
- Nith Place
- Queen Street
- Whitesands



## E - Shakespeare Street Nith Place Updated.

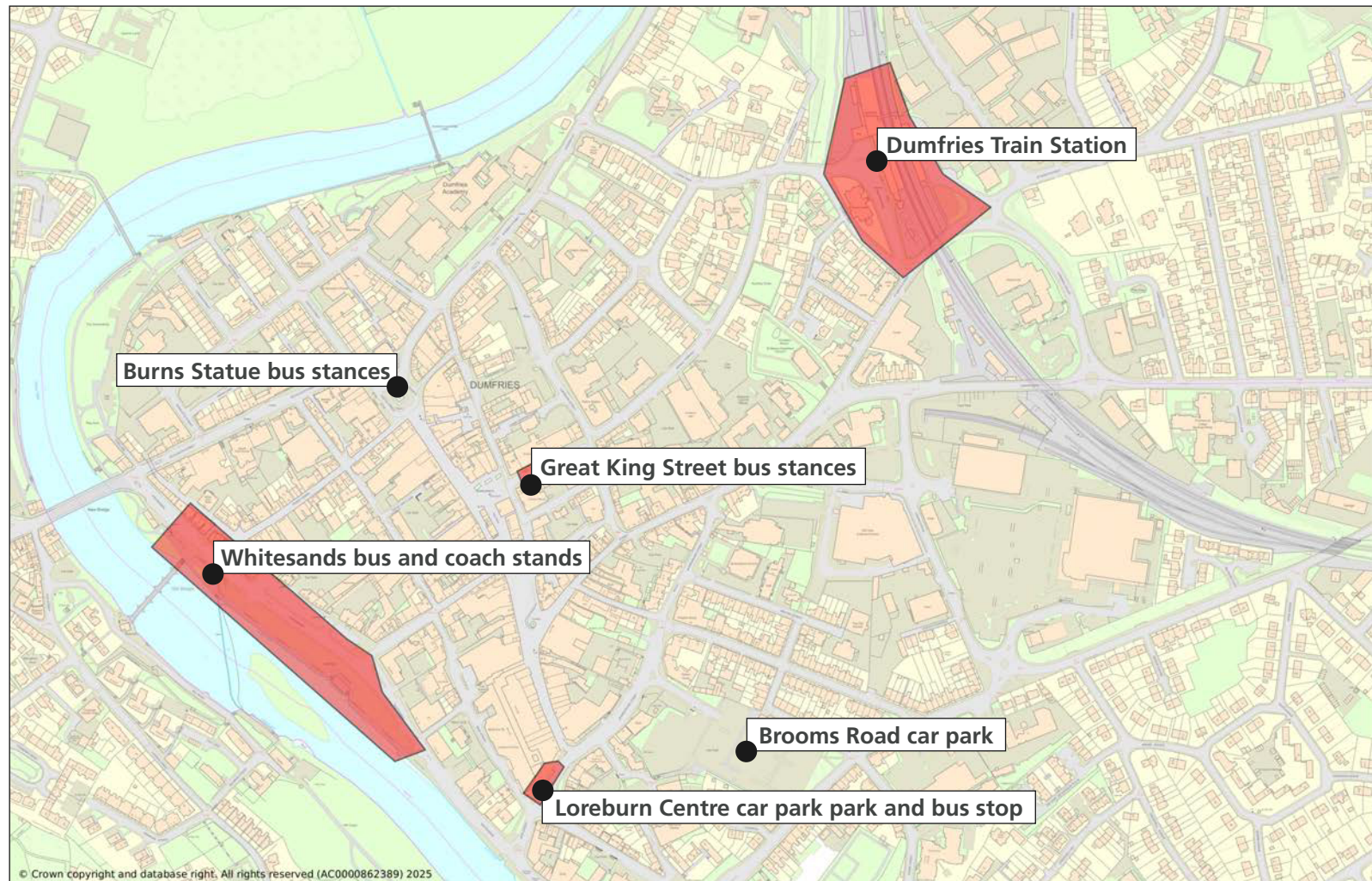
This area was seen as having considerable potential for innovative change through creating a green, distinctive, colourful, and welcoming connection with the river, High Street, Burns House and Brooms Road car park. Seeking to establish a new liveable corridor that can offer attractive options for town centre living.



## F Arrival points and connections

Establishing enhanced arrival points to the town centre, such as the railway station can promote active forms of travel as well as becoming a dynamic launchpad for how the town is experienced and enjoyed. The key arrival points in the town centre include:

- Dumfries Train Station,
- Whitesands bus and coach stances,
- Loreburn Centre car park and bus stop,
- Brooms Road Carpark,
- Burns statue bus stances
- Glasgow Street carpark.



# Delivery Strategy



Delivery of our vision and realising our collective ambitions requires collaborative action from the public, private and third sectors and the wider community. As illustrated, our plan sets out five thematic areas which identify our broad priorities and the key drivers that we are working towards over the 10-year lifespan of the Local Place Plan.

This Local Place Plan and Dumfries Partnership Action Group a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) is now up and running and through working alongside the recently formed Dumfries Town Board, Loreburn Community Council, and other statutory and non-statutory organisations, we now have the means to drive the process forward. Responsibility for implementing and delivering the action plan will lie with a wide range of partners, stakeholders and support services working collaboratively. It is perhaps this whole town partnership approach that is the distinctive feature of this place plan, one that makes the plan special.

This presents an ideal opportunity for individuals and organisations passionate about Dumfries town centre who want to make a difference to work in partnership with others to deliver change.

If you are reading this wondering how you can take part or if you have missed the opportunity to get involved, then consider this your open invitation to participate in the future of our incredible place.

Everyone is welcome.

## Tracking our Progress

We will work with public, private, third sector and community partners to develop a clear baseline and monitoring framework for Dynamically Different Dumfries-the Local Place Plan for the Town Centre. This will have clear outcomes and performance indicators that can be used to measure the progress, impacts and success of our local place plan. A Statistical Profile of the Town Centre has been developed which will assist with this.



# Appendix 1

## Key Strategies

The list below details the local, regional and national strategies, policies and plans that provide the framework for this Local Place Plan.

[National Planning Framework 4](#)

[Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan 2 October 2019](#)

[Dumfries Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Plan.](#)

[Dumfries and Galloway Council Plan 2023-2028](#)

[Dumfries and Galloway Local Housing Strategy](#)

[Dumfries & Galloway Poverty & Inequalities Strategy 2021-2026](#)

[South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy Delivery Plan 2022-2025](#)

[Dumfries and Galloway Responsible Tourism Strategy](#)

[SWestrans Regional Transport Strategy 2023-2042](#)

[Dumfries and Galloway Active Travel Strategy 2 and Delivery Plan 2022-2032](#)

[Dumfries and Galloway Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy](#)

[Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045](#)

[A Cultural Strategy for Dumfries & Galloway 2022-2030](#)

[Community Wealth Building – Good Practice – Our Work – Scottish Land Commission](#)

[Community empowerment – gov. scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

[The National Standards – VOICE \(www.voicescotland.org.uk\)](#)

[Missing Links – Cycling Dumfries <https://missinglinks.scot/download>](#)

[Dumfries Urban Capacity Study](#)

## Appendix 2 - Place Plan Potential Sites

These sites, which have been identified on the basis of local knowledge and considerable community discussion, are listed as examples of opportunities for residential, office and other development within the Town Centre and nearby walkable areas.

No formal proposals have been made in respect of these sites.

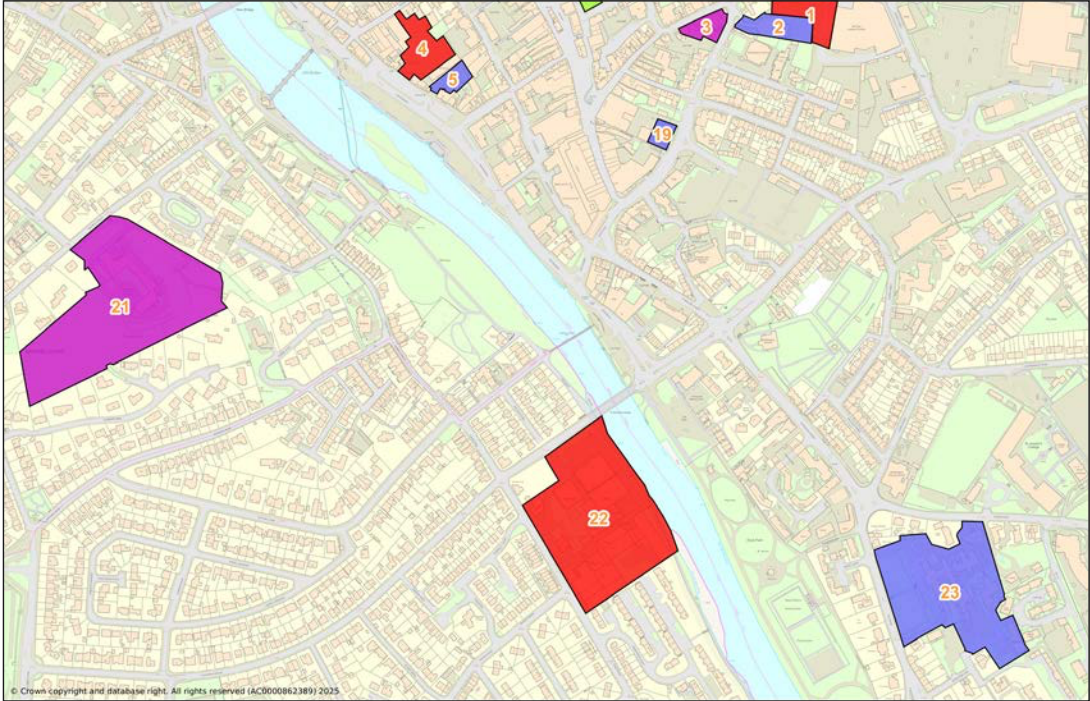
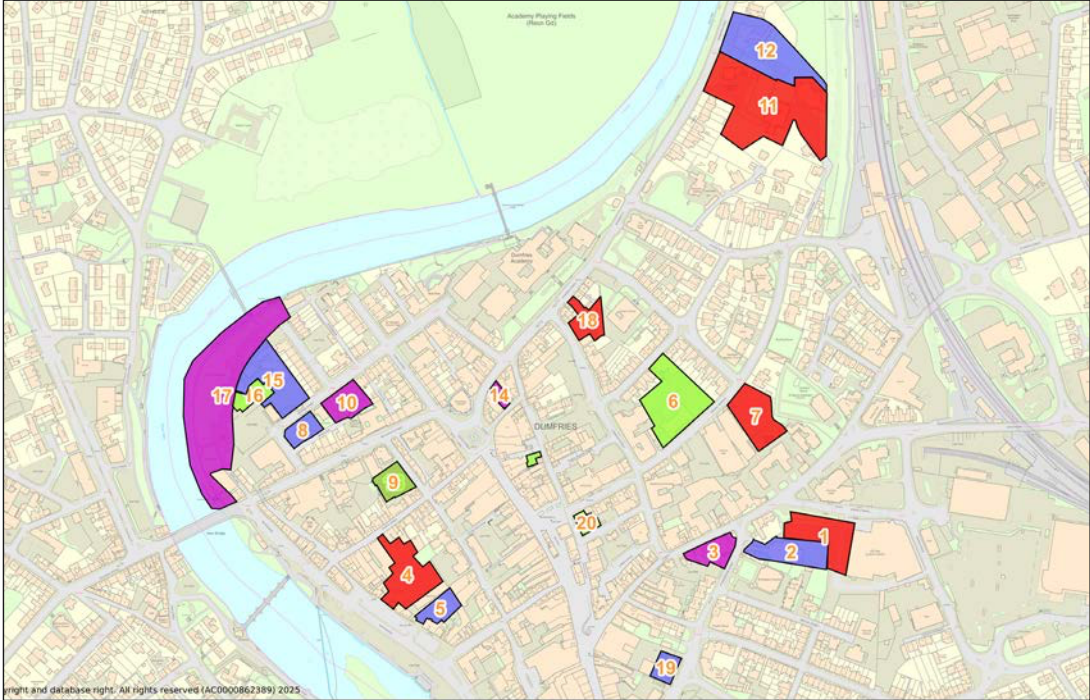
Development would be subject to owner support, full consultation and assessment of suitability.

Place Plan Potential Sites							
Site ID	Site Name	Current /Former Use	Potential Development	Alternative	Commentary	Notes	
1	DG One car park, Hoods Loaning	Car park	New cinema/ entertainment centre linked to adjoining DG One		Closer to DG One than old Regal. Easier to integrate & share reception facilities. Site already clear and in public ownership so could be developed quickly	Commercial operators are looking at potential sites for cinema. It is not known what is the preferred site. DGC may not agree to changes to DG One car park	
2	Regal, Shakespeare Street	Unused - For sale - Previously Cinema & Bingo hall	Temporary car parking pending housing	New cinema/ entertainment centre, subject to private funding (dependent on commercial viability) - linked to adjoining DG One		Commercial operators are looking at potential sites for cinema. It is not known what is the preferred site.	
3	English St South	Mixed retail and flats	New build housing		Existing site includes property in poor condition and collapsed		
4	Whitesands Big Market	Car park	Flatted mid-market housing, above flood proof car parking		Development of housing on land subject to flooding conflicts with NPF4. A satisfactory solution to the flooding would be required prior to development.		
5	Whitesands Small Market	Car park	Flatted mid-market housing, above flood proof car parking		Development of housing on land subject to flooding conflicts with NPF4. A satisfactory solution to the flooding would be required prior to development.		

Place Plan Potential Sites						
Site ID	Site Name	Current /Former Use	Potential Development	Alternative	Commentary	Notes
6	Old Loreburn School at Newall Terrace/Rae Street	Various incl studio and Oasis youth centre	Primary School		In the long term, building a new primary school on this site, fit for the 21st century could be a better solution than repairs and adaptations to the 19th Century Minerva building. It would release the Minerva building for better use as an Art Centre.	Minerva Building has been approved by DGC as the location for Loreburn Primary School. Nothing new is likely to happen on this site in the near future.
7	County buildings Car Park	Car park	Offices (covered car parking at ground level)		A scheme for the development of this site was prepared but not implemented. The development of this site would enable the relocation of large number of workers back into the town centre. This would have a huge positive impact on other business within the town	
8	Charlotte St Car Park	Car park	Offices (basement car parking)			
9	Former Factory Shop, 167 Irish Street.	Clothes and goods store. Once a garage	Flatted mid-market housing			
10	Car Park between 32 George St and Church	Car park	Offices	Flatted mid-market housing		
11	Gracefield, Edinburgh Rd	Art Gallery	Premium Exec housing			
12	Woodbank, Edinburgh Road	Empty/ (Local Gov office; School pupil residence; Hotel)	Premium Exec housing			
13	Queensberry Street, behind bookmakers	Gap site -informal car park/ (housing)	Infill Mid Market flatted housing			

Place Plan Potential Sites						
Site ID	Site Name	Current /Former Use	Potential Development	Alternative	Commentary	Notes
14	18-26 Church Crescent	Carpet shop (class 1 retail)	Class 1 retail	Offices	large space with lift - good accessibility. In need of extensive maintenance. On market for sale by Auction	
15	Loreburn Primary	Primary School	Clear site for Housing			
16	Art college	Derelict	Flatted housing conversion			
17	Greensands	Swimming pool	recreational green space			
18	Autocentre at Academy Street/ Loreburn Street	Tyre fitting & vehicle repair	Housing			
19	Shakespeare St Multi level carpark	Unused - deteriorating	Car park			
20	County House, 2 Great King Street	Local Government offices	Student accommodation	Offices	Planning consent was granted for Student accommodation several years ago. Not implemented. Property currently empty and deteriorating	
21	Benedictine Convent, Corbelly Hill	Convent/ School	Hotel/Leisure centre	High quality architect individual design Premium residential		
22	Rosefield	Mixed uses	Mid-Market Housing and possibly Premium residential		This large site extends from the river to Troqueer Road on West and St Michael's Bridge Road on North. It is within easy walk of Town Centre. A high quality development would help deal with the shortage of such accommodation in a way that contributes to town centre regeneration.	Attractive brick façade of former woollen mill at southern corner of the site has resulted in ambitious and challenging development proposals. Desirable to incorporate old façade into new development, if it can be sensibly financed.
23	Nithbank	Hospital	Mid-Market Housing and possibly Premium residential		Large and potentially very attractive site within easy walk of town centre	

# Appendix 3 - Place Plan Potential Sites Mapped



## Appendix 4

### Progress made with action plan in the original DDD document 2022-2024

- Midsteeples Quarter Phase 1 the redevelopment of 135-139, High Street to 2 floors of enterprise/community space and 7 flats completed by The Midsteeples Quarter. Dumfries Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) is underway supporting shopfront improvements for example Cancer Research Shop on the Vennel and working with several larger priority property owners.
- Restoration of the Fountain on the High Street was completed in June 2023
- Initial Cinema Feasibility Study completed and now looking at the next stage of market testing.
- Whitesands Flood Protection Scheme has been given approval by Dumfries and Galloway Council and is now progressing. High Street Challenge introduced three new retail businesses to the town centre. Learning Town 2 work progressing on the upgrading of Dumfries Academy and Dumfries High School and the relocation of Loreburn Primary School progressing.

- Key stakeholders working together to develop and promote Robert Burns in Dumfries and at Ellisland Farm to bring more footfall to the town centre and spend.
- Traffic speeds in the town centre reduced to 20mph in many places.
- A second fully electric bus is now operating in Dumfries (only 4 across the region).
- Launch of the Love Dumfries App as a business and events directory
- Christmas Lights and Light of Hope Project.
- Initial discussions in relation to a Town Centre Management Group.

It is important that those individuals, groups and organisations in our community that are passionate about the town centre and have a particular area of interest can become involved and where appropriate lead on the development and delivery of projects. A separate document that outlines the operational plan is available as part of this Local Place Plan.



# A Local Place Plan for Dumfries Town Centre Dynamically Different

**Part 2: The Operational Plan**

# Dumfries Town Centre Local Place Plan: Dynamically Different

## Part 2: The Operational Plan

This operational plan is a live working document that will evolve and change as we go through the delivery process and prioritise actions with partners, key stakeholders and the community. The current stage of projects is shown as follows:

- Projects and Initiatives that have been completed or are currently underway
- Projects and initiatives that are in the planning and feasibility stages
- Projects and Initiatives identified through the engagement process that are yet to be explored.

The actions listed range from large capital projects requiring further development and investment, to smaller projects all of which will make a difference to the experience of the town centre. By having both together we can see the links and opportunities that can be made between projects. We are also aware that there are existing initiatives that are not listed here that are and will continue to make a difference to the town centre. The aim is that the approach outlined here will help us all to co-ordinate what is happening more effectively, so there are conversations to be had around joint working.




It is important that those individuals, groups and organisations in our community that are passionate about our town centre and have an interest in a particular area can become involved and where appropriate lead on the development and delivery of those projects.

### Cross Cutting Themes:

All the projects and initiatives below should be considering the following during their development and implementation.

Inclusivity and diversity	Innovation
Net Zero Transition	Creativity

## Managing and supporting the delivery of the plan

Previous Status	Current Status	No.	Activity	Description	Lead Organisation	Other Partners	Funding Secured	Timescales	Update
		A1	Staffing and resourcing	For DPAG to play an effective role leading the partnership process, it will need to secure funding for a development officer and other resources such as a Town Centre Ambassador.	DPAG	Not applicable	No	Short Term	No development officer in place yet
		A2	Ensure the needs of equality and diversity groups are recognised and addressed.	Work closely with equality and diversity groups.	DPAG and collaborating partners.		No	Ongoing Programme	DPAG has an equalities and diversity policy.



## A Place to live and belong

We aim to improve the experience of the town centre by attracting new uses, improving the appearance and creating a vibrant environment where people want to live, spend time and money.

Previous Status	Current Status	No.	Activity	Description	Lead Organisation	Other Partners	Funding Secured	Timescales	Update
<b>Repurposed town centre buildings</b>									
●	●	B1a	Midsteeples Quarter Phase 1	Redevelopment of 135-139 High Street to two floors of enterprise/ community space and 7 flats	Midsteeples Quarter	Variety of funders including Scottish Government, Dumfries and Galloway Council and South of Scotland Enterprise.	Yes	Completed	Midsteeples Phase 1 completed.
●	●	B1b	Midsteeples Quarter Phase 2	Ongoing acquisition of properties and meanwhile use.	Midsteeples Quarter		Yes	Ongoing Programme	Midsteeples Quarter has now acquired 6 properties, with some street level retail temporary lets.
●	●	B1c	Midsteeples Quarter Phase 3	Redevelopment of Phase 2 properties.	Midsteeples Quarter		Part secured	Ongoing Programme	One of properties is a CARS Priority Property.
●	●	B2	Tackle empty and underused properties.	Bring key partners together to explore further what needs to be done to address this issue in Dumfries. Some projects already underway.	Dumfries and Galloway Council.		No	Ongoing Programme	DGC adopted a Derelict Land and Property Strategy in March 2023, which identifies potential funding sources and opportunities to bring vacant properties back into use.

		B3	Rosefield Mills	<p>Redevelopment of the Riverfront building at Rosefield Mills to be a vibrant and economically sustainable catalyst for the regeneration of the whole of the Rosefield Mills site.</p>	Dumfries Historic Buildings Trust	<p>South of Scotland Enterprise, Dumfries and Galloway Council and owners of assets at Rosefield Mills.</p>	Part secured	Ongoing Programme	<p>SOSE is supporting DHBT with the riverfront building and liaising with other owners on the site. Dumfries Historic Build Trust's Project Co-ordinator and consultants are carrying out a series of ongoing community engagement activities with a view to identifying viable and sustainable uses for the riverfront building. Feedback to date suggests the development should be "for the benefit of the community". Capital works have been completed to open up the northern bay of the Riverfront Building for letting. Now looking to secure National Lottery funding for the next step</p>
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### Opportunities for Town Centre Living

		B4	Town Centre living	Identify potential sites and opportunities to develop a diverse range of accommodation. Explore and co-ordinate the provision of student accommodation and facilities both on the Crichton Campus and in the Town Centre.	Dumfries and Galloway Council	Crichton Trust, Dumfries Partnership Action Group	No	Short term	Dumfries Urban Capacity Study complete and identifies redevelopment opportunities in the Town Centre. DPAG has had initial discussions with the Crichton Trust about possible student accommodation in the town centre.
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### A well maintained and managed town centre

		B5	Town Centre Management Group	Establish a partnership group of those dealing with operational matters such as street cleaning, management of traffic within the town centre, signage, policing, community safety, access for all, community-led town centre clean ups as through the community engagement process.	Dumfries Partnership Action Group, Dumfries and Galloway Council	Dumfries Partnership Action Group, Dumfries and Galloway Council and The Town Board. DumfriesTown Board	Not applicable	Ongoing programme	An initial meeting of the Town Centre Management Group has been held. This will provide an opportunity for partners to develop solutions to long term operational issues in the town. This will be subject to discussions with the new Town Board.
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		B6	Regional Parking	A Regional Parking Strategy (RPS) was approved at Communities Committee in April 2024. This included an agreement to proceed with a formal Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) application to Transport Scotland.	Dumfries and Galloway Council			Ongoing Programme	The Council is preparing RPS Delivery Plans which will support with implementation of actions, recommendations and measures detailed within the RPS. Standalone Delivery Plans will be prepared for each of the four areas within the region which will allow a bespoke package of measures to be identified that are most suited to each area, depending on local context. RPS Delivery Plan (Nithsdale) to be presented to Nithsdale Area Committee for approval in 2025.
		B7	Provide more "changing places" publicly accessible toilets and disabled friendly cafes and meeting spaces.	Establish the provision of publicly accessible toilets and disability friendly cafes and meeting places in the town centre as the basis of exploring future provision.	Dumfries and Galloway Council	Town Centre Management Group, Retailers, Cafes, Organisations.	No	Short Term	In April 2025 there are 5 changing places toilets in and around Dumfries Town Centre. The Usual Place, The Bridge, Dumfries Baptist Church Centre, Mountainhall Treatment Centre and Crichton Central. <a href="https://www.changing-places.org/find">https://www.changing-places.org/find</a>

		B8	Dumfries Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS)		Dumfries and Galloway Council	Historic Environment Scotland and Private Sector		Ongoing Programme	<p>As of May 2025, the scheme officer is in discussions with property owners to ensure the capital projects for are on track. Alongside this, efforts are being made to develop training and education session built upon the skills gap from the findings and recommendations from the Traditional Skills Audit. This will look to involve partnerships with other organisations to empower locals with the historic importance of Dumfries.</p>
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		B8a	CARS Priority Projects	The CARS Scheme supports a small number of priority projects as larger restoration schemes.	Dumfries and Galloway Council	Dumfries and Galloway Council, Historic Environment Scotland	Yes	Ongoing Programme	Priority projects have progressed with one soon to be starting on site within the next month. Others are progressing through the design stage whilst remaining projects are finalising feasibility. A list of reserve priority projects was identified and agreed by DGC, should any of the priority projects not proceed, though with the short timeframe left on the project any remaining priority project funding can be used for the projects that are going ahead.
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		B8b	CARS Small Grants Scheme	The small grants scheme is targeted towards projects that improve shopfronts.	Dumfries and Galloway Council	Dumfries and Galloway Council, Historic Environment Scotland	Yes	Ongoing Programme	The small grants scheme is continuing to enable property owners to repair their historic buildings. The scheme funded the Cancer Research Charity Shop at the top of Friars Vennel. Recent window repairs and refurbishments have taken place on Irish Street and Bank Street as well as other projects that are currently at the development stage.
		B8c	CARS Closes and Vennels	A public realm improvement scheme focussed upon the enhancement of closes and vennels.	Dumfries and Galloway Council	Dumfries and Galloway Council, Historic Environment Scotland	Part Secured	Short Term	A closes and vennels scheme focussed upon the installation of art and creative history telling is in discussion between the Stove Network and CARS officer. This includes a feasibility study and initial design framework based upon historical/ cultural figures of significance to Dumfries. Explorations are ongoing as to possible partners and funding streams.







## A Place to Visit and Experience

We aim to create a reason and purpose for people to come into and visit Dumfries town centre by creating a range of attractions activities and experiences.

Previous Status	Current Status	No.	Activity	Description	Lead Organisation	Other Partners	Funding Secured	Timescales	Update
<b>A thriving leisure and entertainment economy with a range of places to eat, drink and socialise</b>									
●	●	C1	Cinema Feasibility Study	To carry out a feasibility study into the market and possible locations for a multi screened cinema with related leisure uses in the town centre.	Dumfries and Galloway Council		Yes	Short Term	Feasibility Study completed, concluding that the market in Dumfries is well placed to support a new cinema. Market testing underway.
●	●	C2	Loreburn Hall	Develop it as a community and culture focussed venue.	Drill Hall Initiative		No	Long Term	The Drill Hall Initiative have now taken on a long term lease for the property, and in the short term are getting it up and running as a community and cultural space. Once it is established they will focus on their more ambitious medium to long term plans.

**A vibrant programme of festivals, activities and events throughout the year**

		C3	Dumfries Events Programme	To promote the range of high quality events, festivals, markets, activities and attractions in the town centre. This can be achieved through better programming, co-ordination and publicity around what is happening, where and when.	Dumfries Partnership Action Group,	Those promoting events, festivals, markets, activities and attractions	No	Short Term	See 3a) below
		C3a	Encouraging investment and promotion of activities and experiences in the Town Centre.	To encourage investment in new activities and experiences in the town centre and raise awareness of the facilities and activities that are already on offer.	Dumfries Partnership Action Group,	in partnership with other groups and organisations.	No		New "Love Dumfries" app to be launched in Summer 2025 with facility to upload forthcoming events. There are now social media sites focussed on local and regional events.
		C3b	Christmas Lights and Lights of Hope	Deliver a new Christmas lights event that extends lights more areas of the town centre and carries on through January as Lights of Hope	Dumfries Partnership Action Group,	DG Chamber of Commerce, Jardines Funerals, Dervogilla Rotary Club, DGC, Scottish Power Energy Networks, Police Scotland and others.	Yes	Short Term	DPAG has successfully taken on the Christmas Light Switch on and Lights of Hope which has taken place in 2023 and 2024. Attendances highest reported.





Experiences that focus upon the town's rich heritage and culture									
		C4	Burns Tourism in Dumfriesshire	This initiative covers the Robert Burns offering across Dumfriesshire with a particular focus upon Ellisland Farm and the "Burns Quarter" in Dumfries Town Centre.	Burns Tourism Partnership / South of Scotland Destination Alliance	Range of organisations included on the Burns Tourism Partnership	Part secured	Ongoing Programme	SSDA invited to develop a 6 month pilot action plan to start the process of promoting Burns Tourism on behalf of the Burns Tourism Partnership. This has proved successful and it is now agreed to progress this further.
		C5	Wayfinding	Effective signage, interpretation and promotion of the Town's heritage, arts, cultural and environmental assets.			No	Short Term	This needs to be linked to Council and partner initiatives in order to get a consistent approach and avoid the clutter of signs we have at the moment.
Enhanced river frontage and corridor									
		C6	Whitesands and River Frontage	Unlock the potential of the Whitesands to become a major focus for recreation and a vibrant area to enjoy for leisure, culture, performance, play and relaxation.	Dumfries and Galloway Council		Part secured	Long Term	The Whitesands Project (Flood Protection Scheme and Public Realm Improvements) was approved to go ahead by full council on 4th October 2023.

## A Place to Learn, Work and Do Business

We aim to ensure our town is competitive, inclusive and adaptable place to do business, attract investment and encourage rewarding fair work and training opportunities.

Previous Status	Current Status	No.	Activity	Description	Lead Organisation	Other Partners	Funding Secured	Timescales	Update
<b>Dynamic independent business</b>									
●	●	D1	Proactively attract inward investment to the town centre.	Work in partnership to target and attract inward investors and grow new businesses in the town centre	Dumfries Partnership Action Group	Dumfries and Galloway Council, South of Scotland Enterprise, Business Gateway, town centre businesses	No	Long Term	DPAG and this operational plan could act as a catalyst and contact point for early dialogue with inward investors, and existing property owners within the town centre.
●	●	D2	Work together to create an experiential shopping environment.	Independent and national businesses work together to improve the experience and promotion of the High Street and independent shopping streets.	Retailers & Businesses	DPAG	No	Short Term	"Shop local" campaigns and new Love Dumfries app designed to increase footfall and business sustainability due for relaunch Summer 2025. Good support locally.
<b>State of the art digital connectivity</b>									
●	●	D3	Digital Working Group	Establish a Digital Working Group to progress the digital offering in Dumfries and ensure digital supports all aspects of the action plan.	SOSE/DGC	Various organisations including DPAG		Long Term	SOSE currently focussed on regional infrastructure priorities.

### Adaptable and flexible spaces to accommodate new ways of working

		D4	Innovative and adaptable paces for business and training.	MSQ Phase 1 will include an Enterprise Manager to assist and advise new enterprise creation. MSQ 2 demonstrates the popularity of pop up use of empty High Street shop units and rear spaces for a variety of uses including new enterprises, events and exhibitions.	Midsteeples Quarter			Short Term	An enterprise manager has now been appointed for phase 1 of the Midsteeples Quarter. There may be other opportunities for co-working spaces and other business spaces within the town centre.
		D5	Build upon the strong links between the Town Centre and the Crichton Campus.	The Crichton and the town centre are inextricably linked. It is important that we build close links between the new Strategic Planning Framework for the Crichton and Dynamically Different	DPAG/ Crichton Trust/ Crichton Campus				Scottish Futures Trust produced an initial strategy in collaboration with partners and discussions have taken place between the Crichton Trust and DPAG.

### A range of lifelong learning opportunities to learn, train, work and develop

		D6	Learning Town 2	Upgrading Dumfries Academy, Dumfries High School and the relocation of Loreburn Primary School.	DGC		Yes	Medium Term	Project progressing.
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## A Place to Connect

We should encourage active travel in and around our town, to make sure that our town is accessible for everyone and easy to navigate, to remove barriers to becoming active, and to maximise opportunities to support the transition of our town centre to net zero carbon.

Current Status	No.	Activity	Description	Lead Organisation	Other Partners	Funding Secured	Timescales	Update
	E1	Inclusive Streets and spaces that are accessible for all.	Ensure that the needs of those who face accessibility challenges in our town are considered in all of our projects and programmes.	Dumfries Partnership Action Group				A register of groups and individuals to be included in all consultations to be created.
	E2	Dumfries Active Travel Links	Developing a programme of active travel projects with DPAG and other stakeholders.	SWESTrans	Dumfries and Galloway Council, Dumfries Partnership Action Group, Cycling Dumfries	Yes	Ongoing Programme	Consultants engaged who have worked closely with partners in the development of concepts and a regional transport model. This contract will deliver projects to RIBA stage 2- development of concept design. Public consultation completed 16 Dec 24

●	E3	Promotion of cycle routes	There are good cycling links between the town centre and the Crichton on both sides of the river due to the KM bridge. These links need to be effectively promoted along with the promotion of the town, what's on , existing and new themed trails with an interactive/ digital element.	SWESTrans	Dumfries and Galloway Council, Dumfries Partnership Action Group, Cycling Dumfries	Applications submitted	Short Term	Programme being developed between the DGC and SWESTrans .
●	E4	River Nith	Independent study to improve accessibility and recreation opportunities along the river corridor, connecting to the town centre and key amenities (eg The Crichton). Opportunity for off road cycle route to Caerlaverock.	Dumfries and Galloway Council		No		

●	E5	Centralised Transport Hub for Buses	DGC and other partners exploring options.	DGC	SWESTrans	Yes	Ongoing Programme	Technical assessment being carried out.
●	E6	Electric Vehicles & Infrastructure	Increase the number of electric buses operating in Dumfries, as well as electric charging points in and around the town centre. Provide e-bike charging within the town centre.	DGC		Yes	Ongoing Programme	There are now 2 electric buses operating in Dumfries, of a total of 5 operating across the region. Over 100 electric vehicle charging bays have been installed to date in and around Dumfries town centre all of which are available for public, residential and workplace use.

	E7	<p>Improve signage and wayfinding in and around the town centre.</p>	<p>Clear signage and wayfinding around the town including walks and trails, cycle routes and attractions. Removal of unnecessary signage.</p>	<p>SWESTrans, Dumfries and Galloway Council</p>	<p>South of Scotland Destination Alliance, Burns Tourism Partnership, Dumfries Partnership Action Group.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Short Term</p>	<p>Need to commission of a wayfinding strategy for provision of signage for pedestrians and cyclists and people visiting the town centre. develop a strategy of new improved signage which considers the links to town centre carparks, key amenities, entertainment, leisure, heritage and cultural attractions, existing active travel routes, facilities for people with disabilities. Needs to be linked with the promotion of the town, what's on , existing and new themed trails with an interactive/digital element. Needs to be linked to other initiatives in the town such as C4 above.</p>
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## A Place to Grow and Play

We aim to support the greening of our town and to ensure that the town centre is a fun place to be for all generations, with lots of things to do and enjoy. This will attract local people and visitors to come into the town centre and linger longer.

Previous Status	Current Status	No.	Activity	Description	Lead Organisation	Other Partners	Funding Secured	Timescales	Update
<b>Enhanced green and public spaces where a wide range of activities can be enjoyed by all</b>									
		F1	Public Open Space Phase 1	Undertake an assessment of public open spaces across all of the priority areas to identify what is available, current use, potential use opportunities to green spaces and accessibility requirements.	Dumfries and Galloway Council, Dumfries Partnership Action Group		No	Short Term	No funding currently available to take this forward.
		F2	Public Open Space Phase 2	Following an assessment of public open spaces identify a prioritised programme for improvement, redesign and greening of our open spaces including opportunities for covered areas to promote all weather use.	Dumfries and Galloway Council, Dumfries Partnership Action Group		No	Long Term	No funding currently available to take this forward.

Informal space for young people to interact with friends in a fun and safe environment.									
		F3	Informal spaces & activities for young people	Work with young people to transform spaces in the town centre into spaces they feel welcomed and able to socialise i.e shelters and seating.	Young People, Dumfries and Galloway Council, Dumfries Partnership Action Group		No	Medium Term	Dedicated youth centres such as Oasis Youth Centre and the Youth Enquiry Service will continue to provide a range of universal and targeted support for 12-25 Year olds within the town centre, in addition to detached youth work and sessions on the High Street using the mobile youth centre (My Pod)
Enhanced Biodiversity and Greening of Public Spaces									
		F4	Improve, green and redesign our public spaces.	More focus upon perennials to reduce the need for continual replanting. Reduce the need to transport water to planting areas, or at least make the vehicles smaller and electric.	Dumfries and Galloway Council, Dumfries Partnership Action Group.	potentially community groups already operating in and around the town	No	Short Term	There are already a number of community groups within the town already positively working on their own projects who should be included in this

## Renewable Energy Opportunities

		F5	Dumfries District Heating Network	A Feasibility to provide the opportunities and options of a heat network within Dumfries Town Centre.	Dumfries and Galloway Council	South of Scotland Enterprise	Yes	Short Term	Awaiting results of feasibility study being funded by Scottish Government's Heat Network Support Unit. Delivered by Zero Waste Scotland
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