

SANQUHAR & DISTRICT



LOCAL PLACE PLAN 2026-2036



Our Mission

To strengthen and empower The Town of Sanquhar & District to become a thriving, inclusive, and sustainable rural community that celebrates its rich heritage whilst embracing community-driven development, creating opportunities for the benefit of all.

Our Vision – We envisage Sanquhar as a vibrant and resilient place where:

- **Heritage and tradition are preserved and celebrated** – from our world's oldest working Post Office to our distinctive knitting patterns and annual Riding of the Marches, forming the foundation of our unique identity.
- **Community voices are empowered and heard** through active participation, inclusive engagement, and collaborative decision-making that shapes the town's future.
- **Sustainable growth enhances quality of life** with improved housing, employment opportunities, reliable infrastructure, and essential services that meet current and future needs.
- **Natural assets are protected and promoted** as we develop our reputation as a premier walking and cycling destination and celebrate our environmental heritage.
- **Local enterprise and innovation thrive** supported by community investment, tourism initiatives, and strategic use of our location and transport links.
- **Social and environmental sustainability guide our progress** towards ensuring long-term benefit for future generations.
- **Well-being and prosperity are prioritised** through community-first approaches that actively listen and respond to identified local needs.

Our Commitment – Working together through the Sanquhar Enterprise Company, Community Council, and local partnerships, we are committed to:

- **Preserving what makes us special** whilst adapting and revitalising our community to meet contemporary challenges.
- **Creating inclusive opportunities** for residents of all ages to live, work, and thrive locally through community-led planning and action.
- **Building sustainable projects** that provide lasting value and strengthen our community's resilience.
- **Maximising community assets** including our natural capital, strategic location, transport links, heritage, and community benefit funding.
- **Fostering collaboration** between Sanquhar Enterprise Company (SEC), residents, businesses, community and other organisations to achieve shared goals and drive positive change.
- **Empowering local voices** to lead projects and developments that reflect our community's needs, values, and aspirations
- **Ensuring growth and progress go hand in hand** with the preservation of our heritage and the strengthening of our community spirit, "On Sanquhar On".

Through this integrated approach, we are dedicated to creating a thriving, inclusive, and sustainable future for Sanquhar that celebrates our past whilst embracing the opportunities ahead.

Celebrate the Past, Embrace the Future.

Sanquhar & District Local Place Plan 2026 – 2036

Executive Summary

This summary is designed to give every resident a quick overview of the plan. The full plan follows.

What is this plan?

This is Sanquhar's Local Place Plan, a ten-year plan for the future of our town, covering 2026 to 2036. It sets out what the community wants to see improved and what Sanquhar Enterprise Company (SEC) and its partners will work to deliver over the next decade.

Once submitted to and registered by Dumfries and Galloway Council, this Local Place Plan has statutory status, meaning Dumfries and Galloway Council must take it into account when making planning decisions about Sanquhar.

How was it created?

The plan was developed through extensive consultation with local people in 2025. This included a community survey (86 responses), an online assessment of the town across 14 topics (112 responses), workshops with local organisations and businesses, focus groups with young people, and one-to-one conversations with residents. It was put together by Community Enterprise in Scotland (CEIS) working on behalf of SEC.

The plan builds on Sanquhar's Community Action Plans from 2015 and 2022.

What did people tell us?

Residents are proud of Sanquhar. The town's natural setting, community spirit, sense of safety and rich heritage, from the world's oldest working Post Office to the Riding of the Marches and the castle, are things people genuinely value.

But people also want action on:

- **Housing:** more homes that local people can afford, and better use of empty buildings
- **Jobs and the local economy:** more variety, better wages, and more for young people
- **Transport:** more reliable and affordable buses, and better connections
- **The town centre:** tackling derelict buildings, litter and poor pavements
- **Things to do for teenagers:** there is a clear gap in provision for older young people
- **The natural environment:** making the most of Sanquhar's greatest asset while protecting it

What are we going to do about it?

The plan is organised around 6 themes. Each theme has specific priorities and actions. Here is a plain English summary of each.

Theme 1: Sustainable Sanquhar – Building a community that will thrive for generations to come.

SEC is working to create more affordable homes in Sanquhar including at Whigham's Inn (4 homes above community space), Queens Crescent (up to 15 homes), and at Goosedubs (energy-efficient family homes on Common Good land). SEC is also buying and renovating key buildings so they are owned by the community and can generate income to fund future projects.

Theme 2: Local Facilities and Activities – Making sure there is something for everyone, especially young people.

Sanquhar is reasonably well served for a town its size, but there is a clear gap in provision for teenagers and young adults. The plan commits to developing new spaces and activities for this age group. SEC will also work with partners to maintain and improve existing facilities like the swimming pool and community halls.

Theme 3: Town Environment and Transport Links – Making Sanquhar look good and easy to get around.

The plan prioritises improving the High Street by tackling derelict buildings, improving shopfronts, sorting pavements and dealing with litter and dog fouling. It also includes new and improved walking and cycling routes, including the new riverside path from Blackaddie to Crawick Bridge, which will complete a 6.5km circular walk around Sanquhar.

Theme 4: Culture and Heritage – Protecting and making the most of what makes Sanquhar special.

Sanquhar has a rich heritage, the castle, the Post Office, the knitting tradition, A' the Airts, but not all of it is being fully used or well maintained. The plan focuses on stabilising and restoring key buildings (especially the castle) and improving signage, trails and information so that both residents and visitors can better appreciate what the town has to offer.

Theme 5: The Natural Environment – Looking after Sanquhar's greatest asset.

The natural environment scored highest in the community's assessment of the town. The plan aims to build on this through improved path surfaces, better signage and accessibility, more seating, and community involvement in keeping the environment clean and well maintained.

Theme 6: Tourism, Business and Employment – Creating more jobs and opportunities so people can build careers here.

The local economy is currently too dependent on a small number of large employers. The plan focuses on developing Sanquhar's tourism potential (heritage, walking, cycling, the Post Office, the castle, Tolbooth Museum, proximity to Crawick Multiverse and the Southern Upland Way), supporting existing businesses, and creating affordable workspace for new enterprises.

Who will deliver it?

SEC is the lead organisation, working alongside Sanquhar and District Community Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council, South of Scotland Enterprise, and a range of other local and national partners. SEC's board of local volunteers provides oversight, and progress will be reported to the community every year.

When will things happen?

Progress will be reviewed every year and reported at SEC's Annual General Meeting. A more detailed evaluation will take place at year five (2031) and at the end of the plan period (2036). Not everything can happen at once. Priorities will be shaped by available funding, project readiness and community demand.

How can I get involved?

SEC is a community organisation. Anyone who lives in Sanquhar can become a member and have a say in how it is run. If you have ideas, questions or would like to get involved in a specific project, please get in touch with SEC at 106 High Street.



Summary Table: 6 Themes at a Glance

Theme	What It's About	Key Priorities	First Steps	Who Leads
1. Sustainable Sanquhar	More affordable homes and buildings owned by the community	Build homes at Whigham's Inn, Queens Crescent and Goosedubs; expand community asset ownership	Feasibility work ongoing; Whigham's Inn acquired June 2025	SEC with SOSCH, DG Council, SOSE
2. Local Facilities and Activities	Better services and spaces for all ages, especially young people	Develop youth facilities; maintain swimming pool, halls and other venues	Feasibility for youth facility 2026; Bell Crescent Play Park complete	SEC with DG Council, youth organisations
3. Town Environment and Transport	A better-looking, easier-to-get-around town centre	Improve High Street; tackle dereliction; create new walking and cycling routes	Blackaddie pathway complete March 2026; High Street survey underway	SEC with DG Council, private owners
4. Culture and Heritage	Protect and promote what makes Sanquhar special	Restore Sanquhar Castle and other heritage buildings; improve signage and visitor information	Castle negotiations ongoing; HES survey complete 2024	SEC with HES, A' the Airts, DG Council
5. The Natural Environment	Make the most of Sanquhar's outstanding natural setting	Improve paths, accessibility and signage; support community clean-up and planting	Blackaddie pathway underway; further route scoping 2026	SEC with Paths for All, NatureScot
6. Tourism, Business and Employment	More variety in the local economy and better job opportunities	Develop tourism offer; support existing businesses; create affordable workspace	Tourism strategy 2026–27; Queensberry Square commercial units operational Aug 2025	SEC with SOSE, VisitScotland

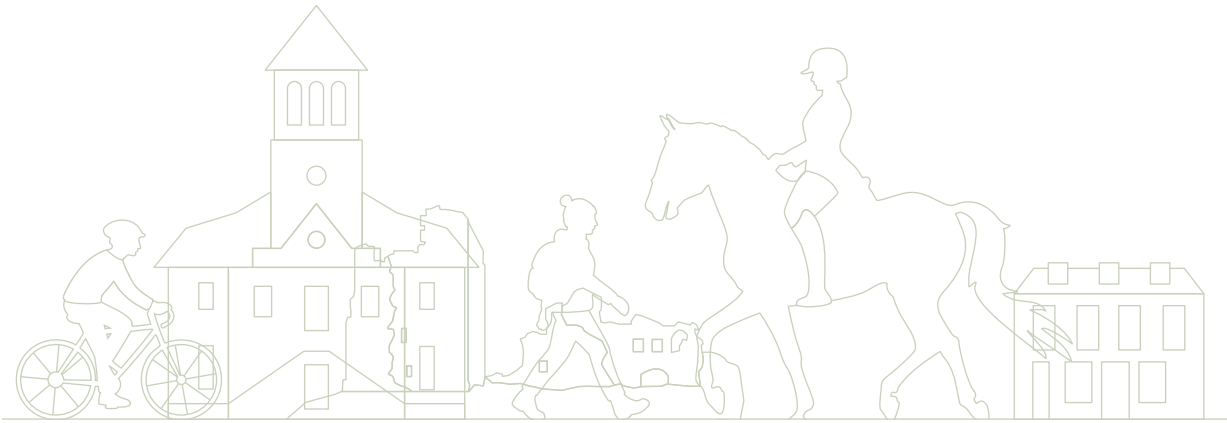
The full plan, including detailed actions, monitoring arrangements and background information, follows this summary. A glossary of terms and acronyms is also available as a separate document.



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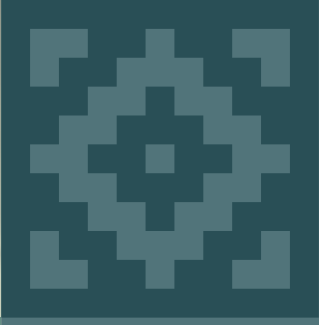
On behalf of Sanquhar Enterprise Company (SEC), I am delighted to introduce the Sanquhar Local Place Plan. This document reflects the dedication and collaborative effort of local residents, community organisations, businesses, and both statutory and voluntary agencies working together for Sanquhar's benefit.

Within these pages, you will find our aspirations for the years ahead. The Place Plan provides our community with an exceptional platform to secure investment across diverse initiatives that will support sustainable regeneration whilst celebrating our cultural heritage and assets. Together, we can create a thriving place where people choose to live, work and visit.

My sincere thanks go to everyone who has participated, our strategic partners, consultants, and every individual who participated in the consultation process. Your continued commitment has made this plan possible.

Jim Dempster
Chair, Sanquhar Enterprise Company





This foundation of this Place Plan has been laid by Sanquhar's 2015-2020 Community Action Plan, which established Sanquhar Enterprise Company as the community's vehicle for change, and the 2022-2026 Community Action Plan, which set out priorities that have guided project development over recent years.



Part 1: A Vision for Change

1.0 Introduction

This foundation of this Place Plan has been laid by Sanquhar's 2015–2020 Community Action Plan, which established SEC as the community's vehicle for change, and the 2022–2026 Community Action Plan, which set out priorities that have guided project development over recent years.

This plan is different in one important respect. It is being prepared as a Local Place Plan under the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, which means it will be submitted to Dumfries and Galloway Council for formal registration and taken into account in the preparation of Local Development Plan 3. For the first time, Sanquhar's community priorities will have statutory weight in planning decisions affecting the town.

The plan sets out a 10-year vision for Sanquhar, covering the period from 2026 to 2036. It is organised around 6 themes that reflect what matters most to local people:

1. **Sustainable Sanquhar**
2. **Local Facilities and Activities**
3. **Town Environment and Transport Links**
4. **Culture and Heritage**
5. **The Natural Environment**
6. **Tourism, Business and Employment**





These themes are consistent with previous themes, but the priorities within them have been updated to reflect what the community told us during consultation in 2025.

Sanquhar faces challenges common to many small Scottish towns: an ageing population, limited employment opportunities, pressure on services, and housing that does not always meet local needs. But the town also has real strengths. It has a distinctive identity rooted in its history, heritage and landscape. It has an active community with a track record of getting things done. It has access to community benefit funding from local windfarm developments. And it has SEC, a community-owned organisation with staff capacity and a growing portfolio of projects already in delivery.

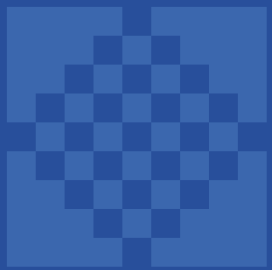


This plan is not a wish list. It is grounded in evidence from community consultation and shaped by what is practically achievable. The priorities set out here build on work already under way and focus resources where they can make the greatest difference.

The plan will be delivered by SEC, working in partnership with Sanquhar and District Community Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council, South of Scotland Enterprise, and other local and regional partners. Progress will be reviewed annually, with a formal mid-term evaluation at Year 5 and a full evaluation at Year 10.







Vision Statement

"We want Sanquhar to be a thriving community where people are proud to live, excited to work, and inspired to build their future."



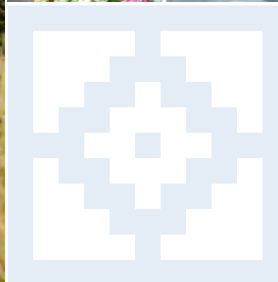


2.0 A Vision for Sanquhar

Over the next ten years, SEC will work with the Community and Strategic Partners to ensure that Sanquhar has the housing, jobs and services that allow families to put down roots and young people to build futures here. We will protect and make better use of our heritage, our landscape and our community spaces. We will improve how people move around the town and connect to opportunities beyond it.

Sanquhar's strength lies in its people, its history and its setting in Upper Nithsdale. We are a community that looks out for one another, takes pride in where we live, and is prepared to work together to make things happen.

By 2036, Sanquhar will be a well-cared-for town with a more diverse local economy, better housing options, and stronger connections to the places and opportunities that matter. It will remain a safe, welcoming and distinctive place, able to meet the challenges ahead.





2.1 Investment Themes

The plan is organised around six themes. These reflect the priorities identified through community consultation and provide a framework for action over the next decade.

Theme	Focus
Sustainable Sanquhar	Housing, community assets, community ownership
Local Facilities and Activities	Services, community spaces, opportunities for all ages
Town Environment and Transport Links	Public realm, improved accessibility, safe environment
Culture and Heritage	Historic buildings, arts and crafts, identity
The Natural Environment	Green spaces, paths, environmental stewardship
Tourism, Business and Employment	Thriving economy

Each theme contains specific priorities and actions, set out in Section 3.0.

2.2 Strategic Objectives

Each theme is guided by a strategic objective that describes what we want to achieve.

Theme 1: Sustainable Sanquhar

To build a resilient community through increased affordable housing, community ownership of key assets, and sustainable income for local reinvestment.

Theme 2: Local Facilities and Activities

To maintain and improve services, spaces and activities that support residents of all ages, with particular attention to provision for young people.

Theme 3: Town Environment and Transport Links

To improve the condition of the Townscape, the public realm, increase active travel and transport options, making Sanquhar easier and safer to navigate for everyone and increase its attractiveness to work, live and enjoy.

Theme 4: Culture and Heritage

To protect, restore and actively use Sanquhar's heritage and cultural assets, strengthening local identity and supporting sustainable tourism.

Theme 5: The Natural Environment

To enhance access to and stewardship of Sanquhar's natural environment, supporting health, wellbeing and sustainable enjoyment of the landscape.

Theme 6: Tourism, Business and Employment

To diversify the local economy, support existing businesses, and create new opportunities for sustainable employment that allows people to work and build careers locally.

2.3 Guiding Principles

The following principles will guide how we work:

Community-led: Local people's priorities drive what we do. Decisions are made transparently, with opportunities for residents to be involved.

Evidence-based: Actions are grounded in consultation findings and socio-economic data, not assumptions.

Deliverable: We focus on what can realistically be achieved with available resources and capacity.

Partnership-focused: We work collaboratively with public agencies, funders and other community organisations.

Building on success: We learn from what has worked before and build on the progress already made.





Riding of the Marches Massed Pipe Bands



Identification of local priorities have been routinely captured through Sanquhar's Community Action plans in 2015–2020 and 2022–2026. This Local Place Plan updates these priorities and has been identified through community consultation conducted in 2025.

This included a community survey, Place Standard assessment, stakeholder interviews and public engagement sessions.





3.0 Interventions and Investments

Identification of Local priorities have been routinely captured through Sanquhar's Community Action plans in 2015–2020 and 2022–2026. This Local Place Plan updates these priorities and has been identified through community consultation conducted in 2025. This included a community survey, Place Standard assessment, stakeholder interviews and public engagement sessions. The findings were consistent: residents value Sanquhar's character, community spirit and natural setting, but want action on housing, jobs, transport and the condition of the town centre.

Each theme contains priorities that respond directly to what people told us. Where SEC already has projects in development, these are highlighted as case studies to show how the plan connects to practical delivery.

accessing homes that meet their needs. Young people and families spoke of long waiting times for social housing and limited options to buy. Older residents wanting to downsize locally often cannot find suitable properties. There is a widespread view that housing availability is directly linked to whether Sanquhar can retain its population and sustain local services.

3.1 Theme 1: Sustainable Sanquhar

Strategic Objective: To build a resilient community through increased affordable housing, community ownership of key assets, and sustainable income for local reinvestment.

Context

Housing was the most consistently raised concern in consultation. While Sanquhar has a reasonable mix of housing types and relatively affordable prices compared to larger towns, many residents described real difficulties



Linked to this are the underutilised and vacant upper floor accommodation within the high street which create a significant opportunity for residential use and increased regeneration within the high street.

Consultation respondents also emphasised the importance of community ownership. There is strong support for using windfarm community benefit funding to acquire and develop assets that will generate long-term value for Sanquhar, rather than spending solely on short-term projects.

Priority 1: Affordable and community-led housing

Sanquhar needs more homes that local people can afford, including smaller properties, family homes and housing suitable for older residents. SEC is pursuing several housing projects that aim to increase supply while keeping homes in community ownership or in partnership with registered social landlords.

Current housing projects include Goosedubs (Passivhaus standard community housing on Common Good land), Queens Crescent (a

potential 15-unit joint venture with South of Scotland Community Housing, Dumfries and Galloway Council and The landowner, and Whigham's Inn (4 affordable housing units as part of a mixed-use restoration).

SEC is also undertaking survey work to identify the owners of unused properties on the high street and potential development opportunities.

What does this mean for me?








If you are struggling to find a home in Sanquhar that suits your needs, whether you are a young person trying to get on the housing ladder, a family on the waiting list for a social home, or an older resident looking to downsize, this theme is about changing that. SEC is working to build new, genuinely affordable homes in the town and to bring empty buildings back into use. If you are a community member, this also means that key buildings in Sanquhar will increasingly be owned by local people, not outside landlords, so any income they generate stays in the town.

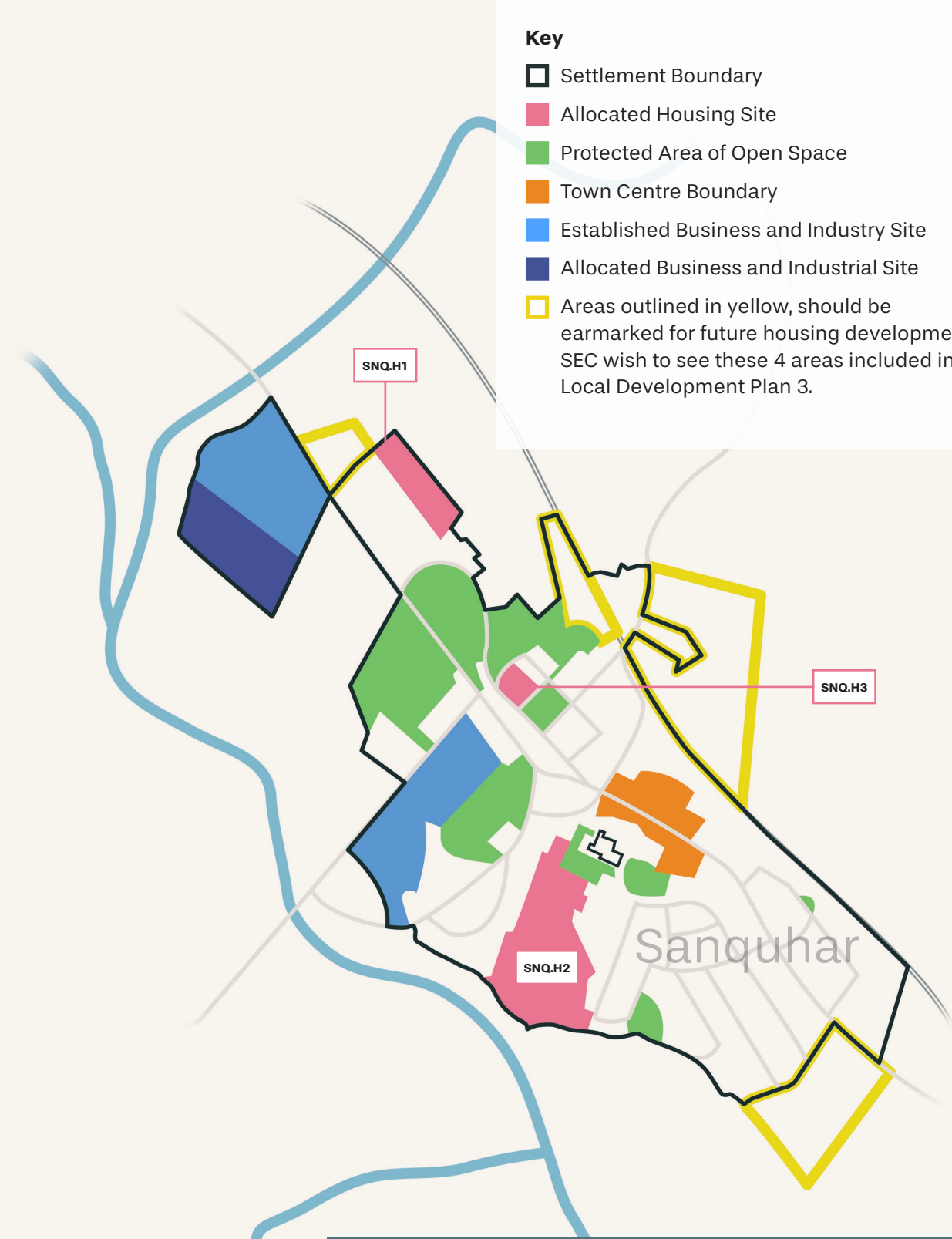


Goosedubs Site



Key

-  Settlement Boundary
-  Allocated Housing Site
-  Protected Area of Open Space
-  Town Centre Boundary
-  Established Business and Industry Site
-  Allocated Business and Industrial Site
-  Areas outlined in yellow, should be earmarked for future housing development. SEC wish to see these 4 areas included in the Local Development Plan 3.



The map shows Sanquhar's settlement boundary and its key land use designations, including allocated housing sites, protected open spaces, the town centre, and established business and industrial areas. SEC is additionally seeking to have four sites, outlined in yellow, included in Local Development Plan 3 as future housing development areas.

Case Study- Castle Crescent, Closeburn

Scotland's First Community-Owned Passivhaus Homes

Project: 3 Passivhaus certified family homes developed by Nith Valley LEAF Trust in Closeburn, Dumfries and Galloway. Completed December 2019 by John Gilbert Architects and Stewart & Shields contractors.

Challenge: Rural Closeburn faced critical housing shortages forcing young families to leave, threatening local services including the primary school. Upper Nithsdale experiences severe fuel poverty with no mains gas access and reliance on inefficient heating. The community sought housing addressing both immediate needs and long-term climate objectives.

Solution: Community-led development delivering Passivhaus standard homes through super-insulation, exceptional airtightness, triple glazing, and mechanical ventilation with heat recovery. Land secured through Community Asset Transfer with sustained support from South of Scotland Community Housing.

Funders: Scottish Government's Rural Housing Fund (primary capital grant), Scottish Land Fund (land purchase and project officer), windfarm community benefit funds (ANCBC and SSE Clyde), and Ecology Building Society (development loan). 3-year funding package assembly demonstrated commitment to community-led sustainable housing.

Impact: 3 families with 5 children now have secure, affordable homes with dramatically reduced heating costs and year-round comfort. Children attend Closeburn Primary, supporting school roll sustainability. Project shortlisted for 2020 SURF Awards, demonstrating community-led housing can deliver exemplar environmental performance whilst addressing rural depopulation.

Significance: Castle Crescent pioneered community-owned Passivhaus delivery years before Scotland's commitment to introduce Passivhaus-equivalent standards (mandatory from 2028). This demonstrates rural communities can successfully deliver ultra-low energy housing addressing fuel poverty, population sustainability, and climate imperatives when supported by appropriate partnerships and funding mechanisms.





Case Study - The Standard at 135-139 High Street

Community-Led Town Centre Regeneration, Dumfries

Challenge: By 2017, Dumfries High Street faced significant decline with 135-139 and surrounding properties empty or derelict through absentee owners' neglect. Community consultation identified urgent need to bring buildings back into use for housing and enterprise, but lack of town centre living and local control over development hampered regeneration efforts.

Solution: Community-led development through Community Benefit Society model, securing asset transfer from Dumfries and Galloway Council. Meanwhile use period (2018-2020) tested demand for creative spaces before comprehensive redevelopment. Design incorporated high insulation, air source heat pumps, MVHR, photovoltaics, and car-free approach. Residential rental income subsidises affordable community/enterprise spaces including hot-desking hub, meeting rooms, event areas, retail unit, and co-working space.

Funders: Scottish Government Regeneration Capital Grant Fund, South of Scotland Enterprise, Dumfries and Galloway Council via Place Based Investment Programme, Hollywood Trust, and Midsteeples Quarter. Total project cost £7.3 million.

Impact: Transformed derelict eyesore into architectural landmark whilst repopulating High Street with residents bringing natural surveillance and vitality. Affordable enterprise spaces support entrepreneurship and cultural activity. Local contractor maximised economic benefit. Generated significant community confidence, positioning Dumfries at forefront of community-led town centre regeneration.

Significance: First phase of multi-building masterplan demonstrating community ownership provides viable framework for town centre regeneration. Model potentially replicable across Scotland. Proves concept that repopulating town centres with quality affordable housing above enterprise spaces can create sustainable, vibrant neighbourhoods under democratic community control.



Priority 2: Community asset ownership

SEC continues to build a portfolio of community-owned assets that can generate income and provide facilities for local benefit.

This may include The Library at 106 High Street (SEC's current headquarters, with a future Community Asset Transfer planned for an Affordable Housing project), and Queensberry Square Garages, purchased by Community Asset Transfer from Dumfries & Galloway Council which has seen the renovation of 7 self-contained storage units for local community groups and local businesses. Funding received from Community Benefit funding.



Whigham's Inn

Whigham's Inn is a prominent building on Sanquhar High Street that had stood derelict for years, becoming a symbol of neglect that residents repeatedly raised in consultation. In June 2025, SEC completed the purchase of the building with support from Upper Nithsdale Community Trust and Sanquhar & District Community Council.

The project will restore the building to provide up to four affordable housing units alongside potential bunkhouse accommodation, office and heritage space. SEC is now updating its feasibility study and business plan, working in partnership with South of Scotland Community Housing, South of Scotland Enterprise and Dumfries and Galloway Council.

The renovation and repurposing of Whigham's Inn will address one of the most visible signs of decline on the High Street while contributing to housing supply and the tourism offer.



3.2 Theme 2: Local Facilities and Activities

Strategic Objective: To maintain and improve services, spaces and activities that support residents of all ages, with particular attention to provision for young people.

Context

Sanquhar is relatively well provided with facilities for a town of its size. Residents value the swimming pool, library, schools, community venues and the range of clubs and societies that operate locally. Recent investment in play parks has been widely welcomed.

However, consultation identified clear gaps. The lack of provision for teenagers was one of the strongest messages in the data. While younger children are now well served by upgraded play facilities, older young people described having nowhere to go, particularly in evenings and in poor weather. Parents and youth workers reinforced this concern, linking boredom to antisocial behaviour and to young people's desire to leave the area.

Access to healthcare was also a significant concern. While this plan cannot directly address NHS service provision, residents' frustration about GP and dental access affects how they feel about living in Sanquhar and should be acknowledged.

Priority 1: Facilities and activities for young people

There is a clear need for age-appropriate spaces and activities for teenagers and young adults. This could include indoor social spaces, structured activities, and facilities such as a multi-use games area or covered outdoor space. Any development should involve young people in its design.

Priority 2: Maintaining and improving community facilities

Sanquhar's existing facilities need continued investment to remain fit for purpose. This includes supporting community venues, ensuring accessibility improvements, and working with partners to sustain services that might otherwise be at risk.



Bell Crescent Play Park

The Bell Crescent Play Park was a joint project between SEC and Dumfries and Galloway Council, completed in April 2025. The £250,000 development created a multi-ability, educational play facility designed to be one of the best outdoor play spaces in the region.

Funding came equally from Dumfries and Galloway Council and Upper Nithsdale Community Trust (£125,000 each). The park includes inclusive equipment accessible to children with different abilities and has been an immediate success with families.

The project demonstrates what can be achieved through partnership between community organisations and the local authority and

provides a model for future facility development. It also shows SEC's capacity to deliver capital projects on time and on budget.

What does this mean for me?

If you have a teenager who has nowhere to go on a wet evening, or if you are worried about cuts to local services like the swimming pool or community halls, this theme is for you. The plan commits to creating new spaces and activities for older young people and to doing that with young people, not just for them. It also means SEC working hard alongside the Council to protect and improve the facilities that make Sanquhar a good place to live.



3.3 Theme 3: Town Environment and Transport Links

Strategic Objective: To improve the Townscape, the public realm and active travel options, making Sanquhar easier and safer to navigate for everyone.

Context

The condition of Sanquhar's streets and public spaces was one of the most emotionally charged issues in consultation. Many residents described the town as having strong underlying character but being let down by poor maintenance, litter, dog fouling, uneven pavements and derelict buildings. The High Street, in particular, was seen as both the heart of the town and a source of frustration.

Transport was equally prominent. Residents described significant barriers linked to the cost, frequency and reliability of public transport. While Sanquhar has a railway station and bus services, many people feel these do not adequately support everyday life, particularly for young people, older residents and those without access to a car. Within the town, concerns about traffic speed, pavement condition and parking behaviour were frequently raised.

Priority 1: Town centre improvement

Visible improvements to the High Street and public spaces would have a significant positive impact on pride and confidence. This includes addressing derelict buildings, improving shopfronts, tackling litter and dog fouling, and ensuring pavements are accessible. SEC will work with Dumfries and Galloway Council and property owners to identify practical interventions which will look to further



regenerate vacant properties above high street shops and increase residential opportunities within the town centre.

Priority 2: Active travel and pathway connections

Better active travel routes within and around Sanquhar can improve everyday movement, support health and wellbeing, and enhance the town's appeal to visitors. SEC is progressing pathway projects that will create new connections and has already upgraded and extended 2 existing routes that were in urgent need of repair, the Euchan and Braeheads Core Paths.

Multi-Modal Transport Hub - Simpson Road Car Park

Dumfries and Galloway Council is developing a multi-modal transport hub at Simpson Road car park in Sanquhar, funded by the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund. Planned facilities include e-bikes for hire, secure cycle storage, a cycle repair station, and electric vehicle charging points.

The hub will make it easier for residents and visitors to travel sustainably around Sanquhar and beyond and supports the active travel and connectivity priorities in this plan. SEC will work with the Council to ensure the hub connects well with planned pathway improvements and the wider active travel network.

See Section 7.0 for further information on this and other complementary initiatives.

Blackaddie to Crawick Bridge Pathway

This project will create a new riverside pathway along the Nith, with potential for a 6.5km circular route around Sanquhar. It will connect the Southern Upland Way to the existing Town Walk at the western end of Sanquhar, improving access to the river corridor for residents and visitors.

With over £59,000 of funding secured, contractors appointed and permissions in place, works started in January 2026 and will be completed by end March 2026. Additional features include planting of native tree species and seating provision along the route.

The pathway will support further active travel, outdoor recreation and tourism, while enhancing access to one of Sanquhar's most valued natural assets.

What does this mean for me?

This theme is about the everyday things that affect how proud you feel walking down the High Street, the state of the pavements, the empty buildings, the litter. It is also about making it easier to get around Sanquhar on foot or by bike and improving connections to the beautiful countryside on your doorstep. The new riverside path from Blackaddie to Crawick Bridge will give everyone including those with limited mobility a safe, accessible circular walk around Sanquhar. While the plan cannot directly fix bus and rail services (those decisions are made elsewhere), it will make Sanquhar's case louder to those who can.



Blackaddie to Crawick Bridge Path

3.4 Theme 4: Culture and Heritage

Strategic Objective: To protect, restore and actively use Sanquhar's heritage and cultural assets, strengthening local identity and supporting sustainable tourism.

Context

Sanquhar has a rich heritage that residents consistently identified as central to the town's identity. The castle, the Tolbooth Museum, the world's oldest working Post Office, the world's oldest Curling Club on record, the Sanquhar Pattern Designs knitting tradition, A' the Airts arts centre, the Riding of the Marches and the town's former Royal Burgh status all feature prominently in how people describe what makes Sanquhar special.

However, consultation also revealed frustration that these assets are not fully realised. Heritage buildings remain at risk, visitor infrastructure is limited, and promotion could be stronger. There is a shared desire to move beyond preservation alone, towards active use of heritage as part of Sanquhar's economic and social future.

Priority 1: Heritage building restoration

Key heritage buildings need investment to secure their future. Sanquhar Castle, Castle Mains and Steadings, and other historic properties require stabilisation, restoration or sensitive redevelopment. SEC has made contact with owners, commissioned condition surveys and consulted with Historic Environment Scotland to inform future action.

Priority 2: Heritage interpretation and promotion

Better interpretation, signage and promotion would help residents and visitors understand and appreciate Sanquhar's heritage. This includes improved information at key sites, digital resources, and stronger links between heritage assets and the tourism offer.

Sanquhar Castle

Sanquhar Castle dates from the eleventh century and is one of the town's most significant heritage assets. The ruins overlook the River Nith and form part of the valued Southern Upland Way walking route. However, the castle is in private ownership and requires substantial investment to stabilise the structures and make them safe for visitors.

SEC is in dialogue with the owners with a view to unlock funding for stabilisation works. A condition survey funded by Historic Environment Scotland was completed in early 2024. Discussions continue, with the aim of enabling the castle to become both a community, and more significant heritage tourism asset.

What does this mean for me?

If you are proud of where you live, of the castle, the Post Office, the knitting tradition, the Riding of the Marches, this theme is about making sure those things are properly looked after and that more people, both in the town and visiting it, know about them. Better signage, trails and information will help you explore your own town differently and help bring more visitors (and visitor spending) to local businesses.

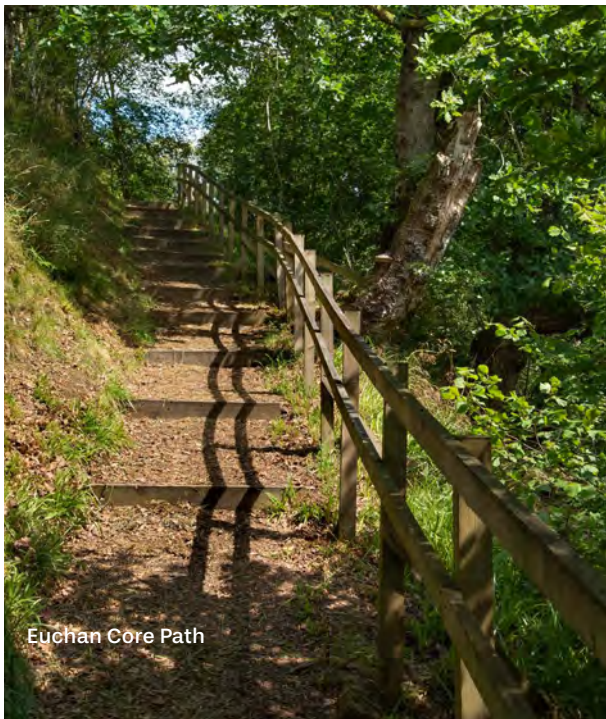
3.5 Theme 5: The Natural Environment

Strategic Objective: To enhance access to and stewardship of Sanquhar's natural environment, supporting health, wellbeing and sustainable enjoyment of the landscape.

Context

Natural space emerged as one of Sanquhar's greatest strengths in consultation. The Place Standard theme for Natural Space scored the highest of all categories, reflecting widespread appreciation of the surrounding countryside, rivers, walking routes and green spaces. Residents described being able to reach open countryside within minutes of their homes as a major quality of life benefit.

At the same time, there is concern that these assets should not be taken for granted. Respondents highlighted issues with litter, dog fouling and sporadic maintenance that risk undermining otherwise excellent natural spaces. There were also calls for better accessibility, improved path surfaces and more seating to enable people of all abilities to enjoy the outdoors.



Euchan Core Path

Priority 1: Path network enhancement

Sanquhar's walking routes are well used and valued, but there is scope to improve surfaces, signage, accessibility and connections. New routes can extend the network and create circular walks that encourage longer visits.

Priority 2: Environmental stewardship

Maintaining the quality of natural spaces requires ongoing attention to litter, vegetation management and biodiversity. Community involvement in environmental care, building on the work of groups like Brighten Up Sanquhar, should be supported and recognised.

Queensberry Square Garages

While not a natural environment project in itself, the restoration of the Queensberry Square Garages demonstrates SEC's approach to sustainable development and asset management.

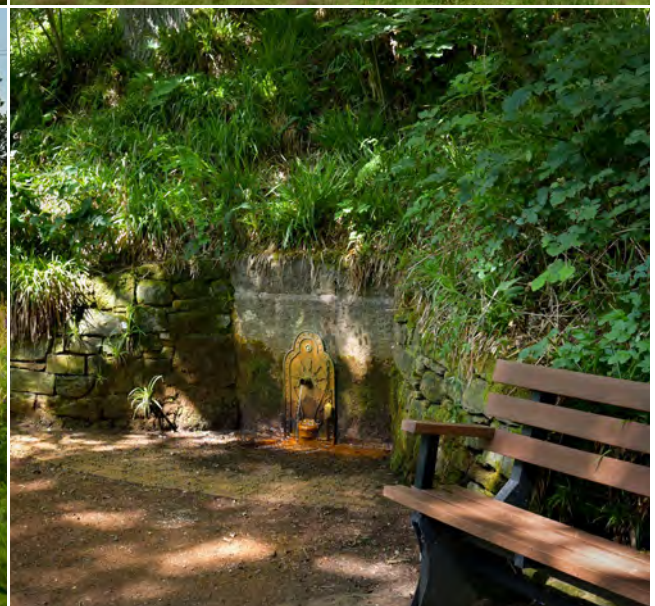
SEC completed the Community Asset Transfer of 3 dilapidated buildings and restored them to create seven secure storage units, returning them to their former condition using a blend of natural and modern sustainable materials. The project was completed in August 2025, funded by Community Windpower, Upper Nithsdale Community Trust, Whiteside Hill Windfarm, Foundation Scotland and Propel.



Two units are retained for community use, with five available for commercial rent, generating income for SEC to reinvest in community projects. The restoration also improves an area adjacent to the churchyard. The project shows how SEC can deliver capital works that combine heritage restoration, sustainable materials and community benefit.

What does this mean for me?

Sanquhar's natural environment, the river, the hills, the walking routes, is the thing residents value most about living here. This theme is about protecting and improving it: better path surfaces, more seating, clearer signage, and action on litter and dog fouling. Whether you walk for health, take your children out at weekends, or simply enjoy looking out over the Nith, this work will make a real difference to everyday life in Sanquhar.



3.6 Theme 6: Tourism, Business and Employment

Strategic Objective: To diversify the local economy, support existing businesses, and create new opportunities for sustainable employment that allows people to work and build careers locally.

At the same time, consultation identified significant untapped potential. Sanquhar's heritage, landscape and cultural assets could support a stronger tourism economy. The town's relative affordability and improving digital connectivity creates opportunities for remote working and (entrepreneurial) small business development. There is an appetite for economic diversification that builds on local strengths.

Context

Residents and stakeholders consistently described Sanquhar's economy as narrow and vulnerable. Employment is concentrated in a small number of sectors, including manufacturing, health and social care, and retail. While these employers are valued, there is widespread concern about limited choice, low wages and lack of progression opportunities. Young people, in particular, described feeling that they would need to leave to build careers.

Priority 1: Tourism development

Sanquhar has the assets to attract more visitors: heritage sites, walking routes, proximity to Crawick Multiverse, the Southern Upland Way, and distinctive features like the world's oldest Post Office and the world's oldest Curling Club on record. Realising this potential requires better visitor infrastructure, improved signage and information, coordinated marketing, and accommodation that meets walker and tourist needs.





Priority 2: Business support and workspace

Supporting existing businesses and enabling new enterprises requires appropriate workspace, business advice and access to funding. SEC's growing portfolio of commercial property can provide affordable space for small businesses and social enterprises.

The Old Library, 106 High Street

106 High Street is a former public library building in Sanquhar that SEC has occupied under a 5-year Right to Occupy lease from Dumfries and Galloway Council. Following renovation and conversion work, the building now serves as SEC's headquarters and offices.

The premises provide a visible base for SEC's operations and a point of contact for community members. Future plans include acquiring the property through Community Asset Transfer, potentially incorporating a housing development at the site.

The project demonstrates SEC's ability to bring underused public buildings back into productive community use and provides a template for future asset transfers.

What does this mean for me?

If you are a young person wondering whether you can build a career in Sanquhar without having to leave, or a local business owner looking for support to grow, this theme matters to you. The plan focuses on developing Sanquhar's tourism potential bringing more visitors to spend in local shops, cafés and accommodation and on creating affordable workspace for new businesses and social enterprises. The aim is a more varied local economy where more people can find good work close to home.





Sanquhar is one of Upper Nithsdale's oldest settlements. The town's name comes from the Gaelic for "old fort", reflecting a history that stretches back many centuries. A burgh existed here as early as the twelfth century, and in 1598 King James VI elevated Sanquhar to the status of Royal Burgh. That sense of civic identity remains today.



4.0 Our Community: Past, Present and Future

Sanquhar is one of Upper Nithsdale's oldest settlements. The town's name comes from the Gaelic for "old fort", reflecting a history that stretches back many centuries. A burgh existed here as early as the twelfth century, and in 1598 King James VI elevated Sanquhar to the status of Royal Burgh. That sense of civic identity remains today.

4.1 Our History

The town grew around agriculture, weaving and coal. Sanquhar became known for its distinctive 2-coloured knitted gloves, whose intricate patterns were exported across Britain and beyond. Coal had been mined locally since medieval times, and the industry expanded significantly in the nineteenth century, with deep mining centred on nearby Kirkconnel. At its peak, the mines employed over a thousand men, many of them Sanquhar residents.

The closure of Gateside Colliery in the 1960s marked a turning point. Manufacturing industries were attracted to replace lost jobs, including carpet production, which continues today through Shaw Industries and food production at Brown Brothers in Kirkconnel. Some of the earlier employers have since closed or moved, most notably Century Aluminium in 2003 and EME Furniture in 2017, along with earlier closures of Sanquhar Creamery and the Buccleuch Brickworks. The pattern is familiar across Scotland's former industrial communities: a narrowing of local employment, increasing reliance on travel for work, and pressure on younger generations to leave.

Yet Sanquhar retains assets that many communities lack. It has the world's oldest working Post Office, established in 1712 and still in operation.

It has an 11th-century castle overlooking the River Nith and the Tolbooth Museum showcasing the heritage artefacts of Sanquhar. It has A' the Airts, an arts and crafts centre that has helped revive the Sanquhar knitting tradition. It has an active community with a tradition of volunteering and civic engagement. And since 2019, it has SEC, a community-owned organisation with the capacity to turn plans into projects.



4.2 Current Active Projects Led by SEC

SEC was established to give Sanquhar the organisational capacity to take forward community development projects. Since its formation, it has built a portfolio of work spanning housing, heritage, pathways and community facilities. The following table summarises current activity as of January 2026.

Completed Projects

Project	Description	Status
The Library, 106 High Street	SEC headquarters established through 5-year Right to Occupy lease with Dumfries and Galloway Council. Future Community Asset Transfer planned.	Operational
Queensberry Square Garages	3 dilapidated buildings restored to create seven secure storage units. Two retained for community use, five for commercial rent.	Completed August 2025
Bell Crescent Play Park	£250,000 multi-ability educational play park, delivered in partnership with Dumfries and Galloway Council.	Completed April 2025
Braeheads Core Path	A 2.6km route along the river Nith, upgraded, widened and made safer plus new footbridge, summer seats and gates installed.	Completed March 2024
Euchan Core Path	Pathway upgraded and made safer.	Completed Autumn 2021



Projects in Progress

Project	Description	Status
Blackaddie to Crawick Bridge Pathway	New Nith riverside pathway linking with existing riverside and town walks with additional tree and shrub planting. Over £59,000 secured, contractors appointed, permissions in place.	Underway – January 2026
Goosedubs Community Housing	Passivhaus standard affordable homes on Common Good land. Phase 2 of Community Asset Transfer to be undertaken.	Business plan to be developed
Local Place Plan	This document. Community consultation complete, draft in final stages.	Submission April 2026
Strategic Development Plan	Additional document designed to provide a 10 year 'Blueprint' of future development plans.	Submission April 2026

Early-Stage Projects

Project	Description	Status
Whigham's Inn	Historic building acquired into community ownership. Now in feasibility phase for four-unit affordable housing plus community/bunkhouse/heritage/ office space.	Acquired June 2025
Queens Crescent Housing	Potential 15-unit mixed community/social housing in partnership with South of Scotland Community Housing (SOSCH), Dumfries and Galloway Council and landowner	Research and planning
Sanquhar Castle	In discussions with the owners regarding ownership change for stabilisation and heritage tourism projects. HES-funded condition survey completed 2024.	Ongoing process
Castle Mains and Steadings	Transfer request for buildings to create heritage/tourism space plus Community owned housing. Condition survey completed, architects consulted.	In negotiation
Old Glove Factory Site	Site beside Sanquhar Station with potential for community owned affordable housing/small business units.	In negotiation

This portfolio demonstrates SEC's ability to work across multiple projects at different stages of development, from early feasibility through to completed delivery. The mix of housing, heritage, pathways and community facilities reflects the breadth of priorities identified through consultation with community and stakeholders.

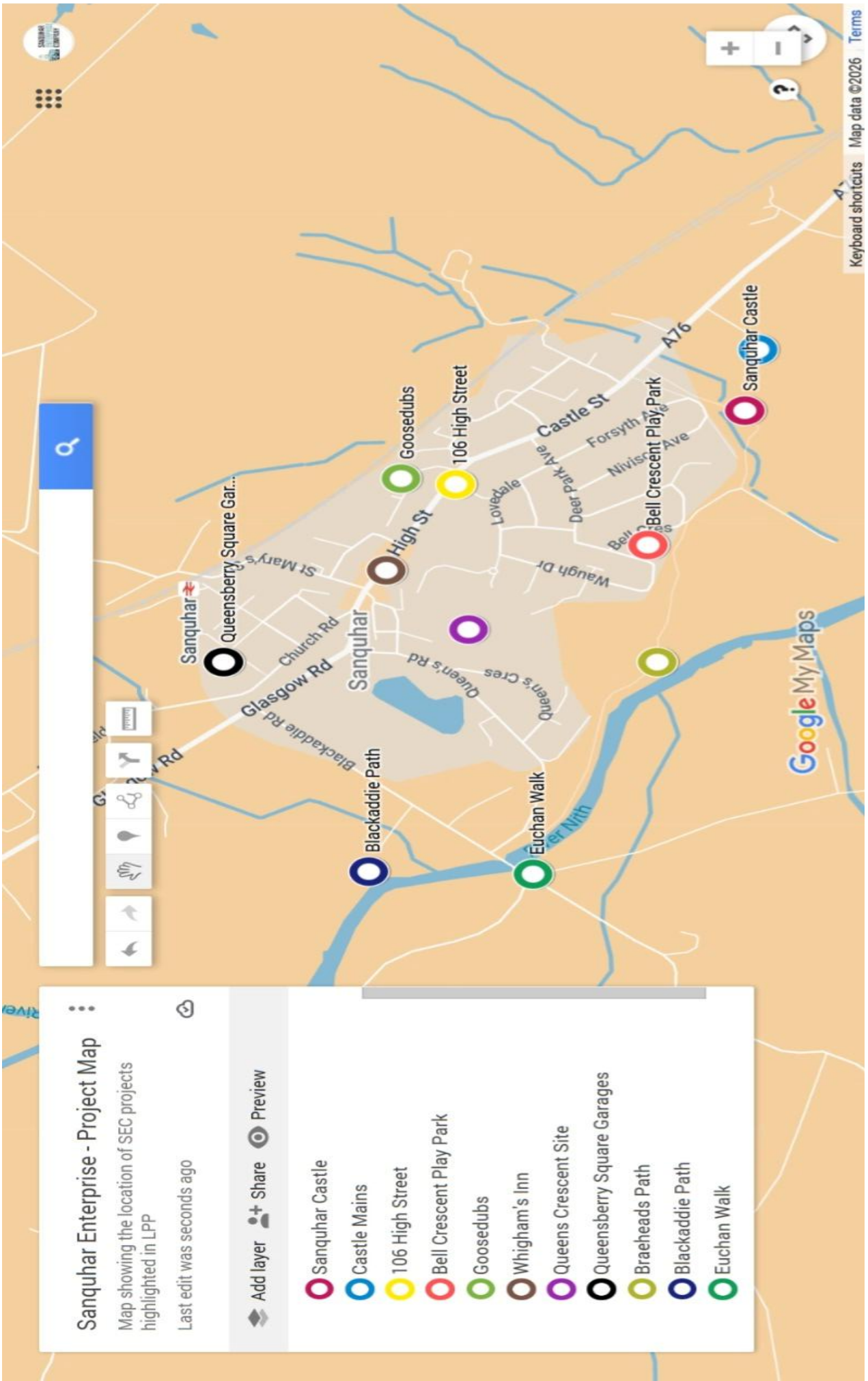
Sanquhar Enterprise - Project Map

Map showing the location of SEC projects highlighted in LPP

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- Sanquhar Castle
- Castle Mains
- 106 High Street
- Bell Crescent Play Park
- Goosedubs
- Whigham's Inn
- Queens Crescent Site
- Queensberry Square Garages
- Braeheds Path
- Blackaddie Path
- Euchan Walk



4.3 Strategic Context

This plan does not exist in isolation. It aligns with and supports a range of local, regional and national strategies that shape how development happens in Dumfries and Galloway.

At a local level, the plan will be submitted to Dumfries and Galloway Council for registration as a Local Place Plan under the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. Once registered, it must be considered in the preparation of Local Development Plan 3. The priorities set out here are consistent with the Council's wider objectives for rural regeneration and community empowerment.

At a regional level, the plan supports the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, which is investing in place-based regeneration across the Scottish/English border area. Upper Nithsdale is identified as a priority area within the Borderlands Place Programme. The plan also aligns with South of Scotland Enterprise's Regional Economic Strategy, which emphasises community-led development, housing and sustainable tourism.

At a national level, the plan contributes to National Planning Framework 4 priorities for rural sustainability, 20-minute neighbourhoods and community wealth building. It supports Housing to 2040 objectives for affordable, energy-efficient homes, and the National Strategy for Economic Transformation's emphasis on spreading opportunity across Scotland.

4.4 Our Needs and Challenges

Sanquhar shares characteristics with other small Scottish towns that have experienced industrial decline. Understanding the socio-economic context helps explain why the priorities in this plan matter.

Population and Households

Sanquhar's population was recorded at 1,913 in the 2022 Census, a decline of 5% since 2011. This rate of decline is higher than in comparable towns. The number of households increased by 4% over the same period to 920, reflecting a trend towards smaller household sizes, that is common across Scotland.

The population is older than average. Just under 60% of residents are of working age (16-64), compared with a Scottish average of 66%. Those aged 65 and over make up approximately 25% of the population, compared with 20% nationally. This age profile has implications for housing needs, service demand and the local workforce.

Employment and Economy

Sanquhar has approximately 600 workplace-based jobs, which is relatively high for a town of its size. The Scottish Towns Partnership classifies Sanquhar as an "interdependent" town, meaning residents both work locally and travel elsewhere for employment.

The local economy is concentrated in a small number of sectors. Manufacturing accounts for around 21% of employment (compared with 8% nationally), reflecting the continued presence of carpet tile production and other light industry. Health and social care (15%) and construction (11%) are also significant employers. Many residents travel significant distances to work, particularly to Dumfries or north to Ayrshire.

Deprivation and Disadvantage

The Scottish Towns Partnership notes that in Sanquhar, as in similar small towns, "people experience more challenging circumstances with higher rates of unemployment, poorer health, lack of a car, lower levels of education and lower social grades than other groups." There is a higher proportion of residents in social rented housing, and a higher proportion of single person households and lone parents.

These indicators are an important context for this plan. They explain why housing, jobs and transport are not just preferences but priorities that affect people's ability to live well in Sanquhar.

Housing

Home ownership accounts for approximately 54% of households, below the Scottish average of 63%. A significant proportion of residents live in social rented housing. While property prices are relatively affordable compared to larger towns, the consultation evidence shows that affordability alone does not solve the housing challenge. Residents described shortages of suitable homes for young families, older people wanting to downsize, and those on social housing waiting lists.

Services and Infrastructure

Sanquhar is relatively well provided with services for a town of its size. It has a primary school, a secondary school, a swimming pool, library, health centre and a range of retail businesses. The railway station provides connections to Glasgow and Carlisle, and bus services link the town to Dumfries and South Ayrshire.

However, recent consultation has revealed significant concerns about the frequency, cost and reliability of public transport, especially local bus services and access to healthcare, particularly GP and dental appointments. These service issues compound other challenges and affect residents' quality of life.



4.5 Headlines from Community Survey

The community survey conducted in 2025 asked residents what they valued about Sanquhar and what they wanted to see improved. The findings were clear and consistent.

What residents value:

Sanquhar is seen as a safe, friendly and close-knit community. Residents appreciate the town's manageable scale, its natural setting, and the ease of accessing countryside and green spaces. Heritage and cultural assets, including the castle, the Riding of the Marches events, the Tolbooth Museum, the Post Office, the knitting tradition and A' the Airts, are sources of pride. Many people highlighted the strength of community spirit and the contribution of volunteers and local organisations.

What residents want to improve:

Housing, transport and jobs were identified as the core strategic priorities. These three issues were repeatedly mentioned together, reflecting an understanding that they are interconnected. Without adequate housing, young people and families leave. Without reliable transport, people cannot access jobs, education and healthcare. Without local employment, the population continues to decline.

The condition of the town centre was a major concern. Residents described litter, dog fouling, uneven pavements, derelict buildings and poor maintenance as affecting their pride in the town and their confidence in its future. Whigham's Inn was repeatedly cited as a symbol of neglect.

The lack of facilities for teenagers emerged as one of the strongest messages. While younger children are now well served by upgraded play parks, older young people described having nowhere to go and nothing to do, particularly in evenings and winter.



Bell Crescent Play Park

4.6 Headlines from Community Consultation

Alongside the survey, consultation included Place Standard assessments, stakeholder interviews and public engagement sessions. These methods provided deeper insight into the issues and opportunities facing Sanquhar.

Place Standard findings:

The Place Standard tool asks residents to score their area against 14 themes on a scale of 1 to 7. Sanquhar's highest scores were for Natural Space (5.8), reflecting widespread appreciation of the surrounding countryside and walking routes. Feeling Safe (5.4), Play and Recreation (5.3), and Identity and Belonging (5.1) also scored well, confirming the strength of community attachment, the town's low crime profile, and recent investment in play facilities.

The lowest scores were recorded for Public Transport (3.6), Work and Local Economy (3.8), and Influence and Sense of Control (3.8). These reflect frustrations about the cost, frequency and reliability of bus and rail services, limited local employment opportunities particularly for young people, and divided views on whether residents feel genuinely listened to in decisions affecting the town. Care and Maintenance (4.5) sits in the mid-range but generated strongly worded concerns about litter, dog fouling, derelict buildings and pavement condition, with poor maintenance seen as a signal that the town is being allowed to decline.

Stakeholder perspectives:

Interviews with local organisations, employers and service providers reinforced the survey findings and added nuance. Stakeholders emphasised that housing is not just a quality-of-life issue but a structural driver of population stability. Without homes for workers, employers struggle to recruit. Without families, the school roll falls. Without young people, the community ages and services become harder to sustain.

There was consensus that Sanquhar has under-used assets, particularly its heritage and landscape. Tourism was seen as an opportunity to diversify the economy, but one that requires investment in infrastructure, promotion and accommodation.

The following Stakeholders were approached for comment, during the consultation:

1. Sanquhar Primary School Board

2. Sanquhar Academy Parent Council

3. Fiona Daubney Ward Officer at Dumfries and Galloway Council

4. A' the Airts Community and Crafts Centre

5. Sanquhar Riding of the Marches Association

6. Michael Argue, Owner, Nithsdale Hotel

7. Sanquhar Senior Citizens

8. Ladies Dance and Fitness Club

9. William Dagleish, Local Historian and Business Owner

10. Sanquhar Heritage Society



11. "Riding for the Disabled" project at Happy Hooves in Sanquhar

12. Sanquhar Golf Club

13. Upper Nithsdale Angling Association

14. Alan Daubney, Accountant

15. Charles Brown, Newsagent

16. Norman Clark, Crown Inn

17. Nan McKenzie, Nith Valley Embroidery

18. Sanquhar Post Office

19. Sanquhar Men's Shed

20. Sanquhar and District Community Council

21. Youthwork Services, Dumfries and Galloway

22. Sanquhar Community Centre Management Committee

23. Sanquhar & District Silver Band

24. Sanquhar Bowling Club

25. Shaw Industries Group Inc

26. Clark's Little Ark

Views on governance and participation:

Consultation revealed divided views on local influence. Some residents expressed frustration that the same people dominate local decision-making and that newcomers find it difficult to participate. Others felt that Dumfries and Galloway Council does not prioritise Sanquhar and that more power should be devolved locally. There were calls for greater transparency, clearer communication and visible action on agreed priorities.

4.7 Our Opportunity

Despite the challenges, Sanquhar has genuine opportunities for positive change over the next decade.

A track record of delivery. SEC has demonstrated its ability to take projects from concept to completion. The Bell Crescent Play Park, The Old Library, The Pathway Projects, Queensberry Square Garages and Whigham's Inn acquisition show what can be achieved with community leadership, partnership working and effective use of funding.

Access to funding. Sanquhar benefits from community benefit funding from local windfarm developments, which provides a resource that many communities lack. Used strategically alongside other public and charitable funding, this creates opportunities for investment that would otherwise be difficult to secure.

Strong community foundations. The consultation evidence confirms that Sanquhar has active community organisations, high levels of volunteering and a genuine sense of local identity. These are assets that cannot be bought or created from scratch. They provide a foundation for community-led development.



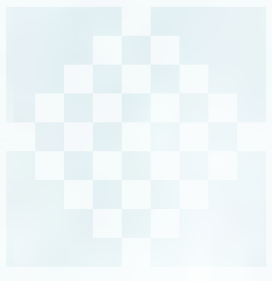
Under-used assets. The town's heritage, landscape and cultural assets have potential to support tourism, attract visitors and generate economic activity. The world's oldest Post Office, the castle, the Tolbooth Museum, the river corridor, the Southern Upland Way and Crawick Multiverse create a distinctive offer that could be better promoted and connected. Research has identified significant vacant accommodation above high street shops which offer an opportunity for housing

Strategic support. Although not directed at Sanquhar, The Borderlands Place Programme, South of Scotland Enterprise and Dumfries and Galloway Council all recognise the need to support the Local Parish of Kirkconnel and Kelloholm. This plan provides a framework for attracting investment and demonstrating that the community has clear priorities and the capacity to deliver.

A clear mandate. This plan is grounded in extensive community consultation. The priorities set out here reflect what residents actually want, not what outsiders assume they need. That mandate matters when seeking funding, negotiating with partners and making decisions about where to focus effort.

The next decade will not be easy. Sanquhar faces real constraints, and not every problem can be solved locally. But the evidence suggests that focused action on housing, the town centre, pathways, heritage and community facilities can make a meaningful difference to how people experience living in Sanquhar. This plan sets out how that action will be taken.





Sanquhar Tolbooth Museum

SANQUHAR TOLBOOTH MUSEUM
Open
Admission Free
Entrance up steps



The plan has been developed through extensive consultation with the local community. This includes input from residents, businesses, community organisations, local councillors and public sector partners.



The approach has been designed to ensure that priorities reflect what local people actually want, and that the community has ownership of the plan.



Part 2: Strategic Development Plan

5.0 Development of the Plan

This plan has been developed through a collaborative process involving local community organisations, public agencies and residents. The following organisations have contributed to its development.

5.1 Those Involved

Lead Organisation:

Sanquhar Enterprise Company (SEC)

Community Partners:

Sanquhar and District Community Council,
Upper Nithsdale Community Trust.

Public Sector Partners:

Dumfries and Galloway Council, South of
Scotland Enterprise (SOSE)

Consultants:

Community Enterprise in Scotland (CEIS), South
of Scotland Community Housing (SOSCH)

Elected Representatives:

Local ward councillors

The plan has also been informed by input from local businesses, service providers, community groups (as previously listed in Section 4.4) and individual residents who participated in consultation activities.



5.2 Overview

The plan has been developed through extensive consultation with the local community. This includes input from residents, businesses, community organisations, local councillors and public sector partners. The approach has been designed to ensure that priorities reflect what local people actually want, and that the community has ownership of the plan.

The consultation process was commissioned by SEC and delivered by Community Enterprise in Scotland (CEIS), building on earlier community action plans prepared in 2015 and 2022. The work combined desk research into existing strategies and data with direct engagement through surveys, workshops and interviews.

The plan is being prepared for submission to Dumfries and Galloway Council as a Local Place Plan under the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. Once registered, it will be considered in the preparation of Local Development Plan 3. This gives the community's priorities statutory weight in planning decisions affecting Sanquhar.

The priorities set out here will be pursued through a range of funding sources, partnerships and community action.

5.3 Process

The development of the plan has followed a structured process designed to move from evidence gathering through to an agreed set of priorities and actions.

Stage 1: Research and Baseline

CEIS conducted desk research to analyse local, regional and national strategies and data sources. This included reviewing previous community action plans, socio-economic data from the Scottish Towns Partnership, housing needs assessments, transport studies and relevant policy documents. Local housing and high street research was carried out. The aim was to establish a clear picture of Sanquhar's current position and the strategic context for the plan.

Stage 2: Community Engagement

Multiple methods were used to gather views from residents and stakeholders. These included an online community survey, the Place Standard tool, stakeholder workshops, community events and individual interviews. The engagement was designed to be accessible, with both digital and in-person options available.

Stage 3: Analysis and Prioritisation

The evidence from research and consultation was analysed to identify consistent themes and priorities. These were tested with stakeholders and refined through discussion with SEC and partners. The 6 themes and their associated priorities emerged from this process.

Stage 4: Plan Development

The final stage involved drafting the plan document, reviewing it with stakeholders and preparing it for submission. The plan will be submitted to Dumfries and Galloway Council in April 2026.



5.4 Methodology

The plan has been developed using several methods, each designed to capture different perspectives and ensure wide participation.

Strategy and Policy Review

CEIS reviewed existing strategies, plans and data sources to establish the baseline for the plan. This included local documents such as the previous community action plans (2015–2020 and 2022–2026), regional strategies from Dumfries and Galloway Council and South of Scotland Enterprise, and national policy frameworks including National Planning Framework 4 and Housing to 2040. The review identified priorities that had already been established through earlier consultation and provided context for new engagement.

Community Survey

A community survey was conducted to gather views from residents on what they valued about Sanquhar and what they wanted to see improved. The survey was available online and promoted through local networks and

social media. It received 86 responses. The survey asked about satisfaction with different aspects of living in Sanquhar, priorities for improvement, and specific issues that mattered to respondents.

Place Standard Tool

The Place Standard is a Scottish Government tool that helps communities assess the quality of their place across 14 themes. Residents were invited to complete the Place Standard assessment online, scoring Sanquhar against themes including transport, housing, natural space, facilities, safety and influence. The assessment received 112 responses, providing a detailed picture of how residents experience different aspects of the town. The results informed the identification of strengths, challenges and priorities.

Stakeholder Workshop

A stakeholder workshop brought together representatives from local organisations, businesses and public agencies to discuss priorities for the plan. Thirty-two stakeholders were invited, with 13 attending. Participants



were asked to identify what was working well, what needed to improve and what the priorities should be for the next 10 years.

Community Workshops

2 community workshops were held to give residents the opportunity to discuss priorities in person. These sessions provided a forum for more detailed discussion than the survey allowed and helped to test emerging themes with local people.

Individual Discussions

For those unable to attend workshops, individual discussions were offered. These one-to-one conversations ensured that people who might not engage through formal consultation channels had the opportunity to contribute their views.

Youth Engagement

Recognising that young people's views are often under-represented in consultation, specific engagement was undertaken with young people. This included a focus group to understand the priorities of younger residents and co working with local youth services to gain additional information.

Ongoing Engagement

The Place Standard survey remained open throughout the consultation period, with the online tool accessible via the Our Place website. This allowed residents to contribute at times that suited them and helped to maximise participation.

Community Council Presentation and Feedback

Presentation and discussion with Sanquhar Community Council and feedback taken on interim fundings.

Local Employer Staff Focus Group

Facilitated workshop with largest local employer with a representative selection of employees living and or commuting to their place of work.

Summary of Consultation Activity

Method	Participation
Community Survey	86 responses
Place Standard Assessment	112 responses
Stakeholder Workshop	13 organisations represented (32 invited)
Community Workshops	2 sessions held
Workplace Workshop	1 session
Individual Discussions	Available throughout
Youth Engagement	Focus group work through youth services

The consultation evidence has been analysed and is summarised in Appendix 1.





Braeheads Circular Core Path





The current Local Development Plan sets the framework for land use planning across the region.



It identifies Sanquhar as a local centre within Upper Nithsdale and supports appropriate development that sustains the town's role as a service centre for the surrounding area.





6.0 Strategic Alignment

This plan does not sit in isolation. It has been developed to align with and support a range of local, regional and national strategies. This alignment is important for three reasons: it ensures that local priorities are consistent with wider policy objectives; it strengthens the case for funding and partnership support; and it demonstrates that the community has engaged seriously with the strategic context for development in Dumfries and Galloway.

The following sections summarise how the plan aligns with key strategies at each level.

6.1 Alignment with Local Strategies

Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan 2 (2019)

The current Local Development Plan (LDP2) sets the framework for land use planning across the region. It identifies Sanquhar as a local centre within Upper Nithsdale and supports appropriate development that sustains the town's role as a service centre for the surrounding area. The priorities in this Community Action Plan, particularly around housing, town centre improvement and active travel, are consistent with the spatial strategy and policies of LDP2.

This plan is being prepared for submission as a Local Place Plan under the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. Once registered, it will inform the preparation of Local Development Plan 3, giving the community's priorities statutory weight in future planning decisions.

Dumfries and Galloway Council Plan

The Council Plan sets out the local authority's priorities for improving outcomes for residents. Key themes include tackling poverty and inequality, supporting the local economy, protecting the environment and empowering communities. The priorities in this plan directly support these objectives, particularly through the focus on affordable housing, local employment, community ownership and partnership working.

Dumfries and Galloway Local Housing Strategy

The Local Housing Strategy sets out priorities for housing investment across the region. It identifies the need for affordable housing in rural areas, improved housing quality and energy efficiency, and homes that meet the needs of an ageing population. The housing priorities in this plan, including Goosedubs, Queens Crescent and Whigham's Inn projects, align with and support the strategic housing objectives for Upper Nithsdale.

6.2 Alignment with Regional Strategies

Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal (BIGD)

The Borderlands Growth Deal is a £452 million investment programme across the Scottish English border area, including Dumfries and Galloway. The Place Programme within Borderlands is investing in town regeneration. Although Sanquhar does not directly benefit from funding through the BIGD, neighbouring and connected communities have access to other funding which will benefit Upper Nithsdale, including Sanquhar.

Empowering local communities to build a long-term future for their towns:

- Safeguarding existing businesses and attracting new investment
- Increasing visitor numbers and spend in town centres
- Delivering new jobs and opportunities for economic participation
- Maintaining and increasing the number of people living in towns
- Raising the quality of the physical environment

The strategic objectives in this plan directly support these Borderlands priorities. Housing development supports population retention. Heritage and tourism investment supports the visitor economy. Town centre improvement raises environmental quality. Skills and employment initiatives support economic participation.

South of Scotland Enterprise Regional Economic Strategy

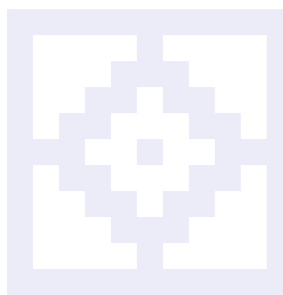
South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE) is the regional economic development agency for Dumfries and Galloway and the Scottish Borders. Its Regional Economic Strategy emphasises community-led development, sustainable tourism, housing as economic infrastructure, and support for rural enterprise. The priorities in this plan are closely aligned with SOSE's approach, particularly the emphasis on community ownership, housing delivery and tourism development based on local assets.

SWestrans Regional Transport Strategy

The Regional Transport Strategy sets priorities for transport investment in the south-west of Scotland. It identifies objectives around affordability, accessibility and connectivity, with particular attention to communities experiencing transport poverty. The transport and active travel priorities in this plan, including pathway development and improved connections, align with the regional strategy's emphasis on sustainable and inclusive movement.



Braeheads Circular Core Path





6.3 Alignment with National Strategies

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) is Scotland's national spatial strategy, adopted in 2023. It sets out a policy framework that prioritises sustainable places, liveable places and productive places. Key themes relevant to this plan include:

- Support for rural sustainability and the vitality of small towns
- The concept of 20-minute neighbourhoods, where people can meet daily needs locally
- Community wealth building through local ownership and procurement
- Reuse of vacant and derelict land and buildings
- Active travel and reduced car dependency
- Heritage-led regeneration

The priorities in this plan directly support NPF4 objectives. The focus on housing, local facilities, walking routes and heritage restoration all contribute to making Sanquhar a more sustainable and liveable place.

Housing to 2040

Housing to 2040 is the Scottish Government's long-term housing strategy. It sets a vision for everyone in Scotland to have a safe, high-quality and affordable home. Key priorities include increasing the supply of affordable housing, improving energy efficiency, supporting community-led housing and ensuring housing meets the needs of an ageing population.

The housing priorities in this plan, including Passivhaus standard development at Goosedubs and community-led projects at Whigham's Inn and Queens Crescent, directly support Housing to 2040 objectives.

National Strategy for Economic Transformation

The National Strategy for Economic Transformation sets out Scotland's approach to building a wellbeing economy. It emphasises spreading opportunity across Scotland, supporting fair work, building on local assets and enabling community wealth building. The economic priorities in this plan, including tourism development, business support and skills, align with the national strategy's emphasis on inclusive and place-based economic development.

Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015

The Community Empowerment Act provides the legislative framework for community-led development in Scotland. It enables Community Asset Transfer, participation requests and the preparation of Local Place Plans. SEC has already used these powers to acquire Queensberry Square Garages. This plan demonstrates the community's capacity to use the powers available under the Act to deliver positive change.





Summary

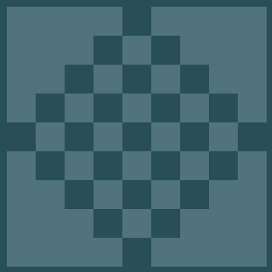
The following table summarises how the plan's themes align with key strategic objectives at local, regional and national levels..

Plan Theme	Local Alignment	Regional Alignment	National Alignment
Sustainable Sanquhar	Local Housing Strategy, Council Plan	Borderlands (population retention), SOSE (community-led housing)	Housing to 2040, Community Empowerment Act
Local Facilities and Activities	Council Plan	Borderlands (community empowerment)	NPF4 (20-minute neighbourhoods)
Town Environment and Transport	LDP2 (town centre policy), Council Plan	SWestrans (accessibility), Levelling Up Fund (multi-modal travel hub)	NPF4 (active travel, liveable places)
Culture and Heritage	LDP2 (heritage policy)	Borderlands (visitor economy), SOSE (sustainable tourism), SNH (Built environment)	NPF4 (heritage-led regeneration)
The Natural Environment	LDP2 (green network)	SWestrans and Community Led Local Development (active travel)	NPF4 (sustainable places)
Tourism, Business and Employment	Council Plan (economy)	Borderlands (jobs, businesses), SOSE (regional economy)	National Strategy for Economic Transformation



Sanquhar High Street





Sanquhar benefits from community benefit funding generated by windfarm developments in the surrounding area. This funding is distributed through several mechanisms, including Upper Nithsdale Community Trust (UNCT), which administers funds from Community Windpower, Twenty Shilling, Whiteside Hill Windfarm and Foundation Scotland on behalf of other operators.





7.0 Complementary Initiatives

This plan does not operate in isolation. A number of initiatives led by other organisations are under way in Upper Nithsdale that complement and support the priorities set out here. Aligning with these initiatives strengthens the impact of local investment and creates opportunities for collaboration.

Windfarm Community Benefit Funding

Sanquhar benefits from community benefit funding generated by windfarm developments in the surrounding area. This funding is distributed through several mechanisms, including Upper Nithsdale Community Trust (UNCT), which administers funds from Community Windpower, Twenty Shilling, Whiteside Hill Windfarm and Foundation Scotland on behalf of other operators.

Community benefit funding has been an important resource for SEC's project delivery, contributing to the Queensberry Square Garages restoration, Bell Crescent Play Park, the Acquisition of Whigham's Inn and other initiatives. It provides a source of match funding that can leverage additional investment from public and charitable sources.

Looking ahead, community benefit funding will increasingly support project delivery under this plan. The strategic use of these funds, combined with other sources, creates opportunities for investment that would otherwise be difficult to secure in a community of Sanquhar's size.





Crawick Multiverse

Crawick Multiverse is an award-winning land art installation located just north of Sanquhar. Created by landscape architect Charles Jencks on the site of a former opencast coal mine, it opened in 2015 and has become a significant visitor attraction for Upper Nithsdale.

The site attracts visitors to the area who might otherwise not come, creating opportunities for Sanquhar businesses to benefit from increased footfall. The Multiverse is also a potential partner for tourism development, events and outdoor activity programming.

SEC's pathway projects, including the Blackaddie to Crawick Bridge route, are designed to improve connections between Sanquhar and the Multiverse, making it easier for visitors to explore the wider area on foot or by bike. This supports both the tourism objectives in this plan and the Multiverse's own development ambitions.



Southern Upland Way

The Southern Upland Way is Scotland's coast-to-coast long-distance walking route, running 214 miles from Portpatrick to Cockburnspath. The route passes through Sanquhar, making the town an official stop/start point for walkers undertaking the full route or shorter sections.

The Southern Upland Way brings visitors to Sanquhar who require accommodation, food and supplies. The plan's priorities around walker-friendly accommodation, improved pathways and better visitor information all support the town's role as a waypoint on this nationally significant route.

There is potential for Sanquhar to strengthen its offer to Southern Upland Way walkers through better promotion, improved facilities and stronger links between the main route and local attractions and facilities.



Multi-Modal Transport Hub

Dumfries and Galloway Council is developing a network of nine multi-modal transport hubs across the region, funded by the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund. One of these hubs is planned for Sanquhar, to be located at Simpson Road car park.

The hub is designed to make sustainable and active travel easier for residents and visitors by joining up different modes of transport and reducing reliance on the private car. Planned facilities at the Sanquhar hub include secure cycle storage lockers, a public cycle pump and repair station, e-bikes for hire, electric cycle storage with internal charging points, electric vehicle (EV) charging points for public use, and a car club hire bay with EV charger.

This investment directly supports the transport and active travel priorities in this plan. Better infrastructure for cycling, e-bikes and electric vehicles makes it easier for people, particularly those without a car, to travel to work, access services and explore the surrounding area. It also strengthens Sanquhar's appeal to visitors arriving by sustainable means, supporting the town's tourism ambitions.

SEC welcomes this investment and will work with Dumfries and Galloway Council to ensure the hub is well integrated with the town's existing and planned active travel network, including the new Blackaddie to Crawick Bridge pathway and other route improvements planned under this Local Place Plan.

For further information about the hub, contact Dumfries and Galloway Council at LUFtransport@dumgal.gov.uk.



Kirkconnel Parish Place Plan

Kirkconnel and Kelloholm, Sanquhar's neighbouring community in Upper Nithsdale, has developed its own Place Plan through the Borderlands Place Programme. The Kirkconnel plan shares many of the same themes, including housing, tourism, heritage and community facilities.

The 2 communities face similar challenges and have overlapping interests in areas such as transport, tourism promotion and access to services. Coordination between the Sanquhar and Kirkconnel plans creates opportunities for joint working, shared learning and a stronger collective voice when engaging with regional and national partners.

An Upper Nithsdale approach to visitor development, transport advocacy and service provision may be more effective than communities working in isolation. This plan supports collaboration with Kirkconnel and other Upper Nithsdale communities where it serves shared interests.



A' the Airts

A' the Airts is Sanquhar's community arts centre, located on the High Street. It provides workshop space, classes, exhibitions, events and a cafe, and has played an important role in reviving the Sanquhar Pattern knitting tradition.

A' the Airts is an established community asset that complements the priorities in this plan. It contributes to the town's cultural offer, supports local makers and artists, provides a venue for community activity, and attracts visitors interested in arts and crafts.

The plan's priorities around heritage, tourism and community facilities align with A' the Airts' activities. There is potential for collaboration on heritage interpretation, visitor information, events programming and skills development.



South of Scotland Enterprise Programmes

South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE) delivers a range of programmes to support community-led development, business growth, skills and place-based investment in Dumfries and Galloway and the Scottish Borders.

SOSE has been a partner in SEC's development and continues to provide support for community enterprise in Upper Nithsdale. Relevant programmes include support for community asset development, business advice, tourism development and skills initiatives.

This plan positions Sanquhar to benefit from SOSE programmes by demonstrating clear priorities, community support and delivery capacity. SEC will continue to engage with SOSE as a strategic partner for project development and funding.



Borderlands Place Programme

The Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal includes a Place Programme that is investing in town regeneration across the Scottish English border area. Although Sanquhar will not benefit directly from Borderlands Growth Deal funding, Kirkconnel and Kelloholm will have access to funding for projects relevant to Sanquhar and collaboration is a necessity.

While this plan is not exclusively a Borderlands document, it aligns with Borderlands investment objectives and may inform future funding applications. The Place Programme's focus on housing, tourism, town centres, connectivity and community empowerment mirrors the priorities set out here.

SEC will work with Dumfries and Galloway Council and Borderlands partners to identify opportunities for investment that support the delivery of this plan.



Renewable Energy Developments

Upper Nithsdale hosts significant renewable energy infrastructure, including operational windfarms and a number of future developments. These projects bring both challenges and opportunities for local communities.

Community benefit funding from windfarm operators provides resources for local investment, as noted above. There may also be opportunities for community ownership stakes in future developments, local supply chain participation and skills development linked to the renewable energy sector.

The plan's priorities around sustainable development, community wealth building and local employment are consistent with capturing greater local benefit from the renewable energy activity in the area. SEC will explore opportunities to strengthen the link between energy development and community benefit as part of its ongoing work.



Summary

These complementary initiatives provide context and opportunity for the delivery of this plan. By aligning with the work of other organisations and taking an Upper Nithsdale perspective where appropriate, Sanquhar can achieve more than it could by working alone.





The following table summarises how each initiative connects to the plan's themes.

Initiative	Relevant Plan Themes
Windfarm Community Benefit	All themes (funding source)
Crawick Multiverse	Tourism, Natural Environment, Transport
Southern Upland Way	Tourism, Heritage, Town Environment
Kirkconnel Parish Place Plan	All themes (shared challenges and opportunities)
A' the Airts	Heritage, Tourism, Facilities
South of Scotland Enterprise Programmes	Sustainable Sanquhar, Tourism, Business
Borderlands Place Programme	Potential beneficiary through neighbouring projects
Renewable Energy Developments	Sustainable Sanquhar, Business
Multi-Modal Transport Hub (D&G Council / Levelling Up Fund)	Town Environment and Transport Links, Tourism, Business and Employment, The Natural Environment

How Community Projects Are Funded

How Does SEC Pay for All This?

You might be wondering: where does the money come from for all the projects in this plan? The honest answer is from many different places and pulling it all together takes time.

Community benefit funding from wind farms is one important source. The wind farms in the hills around Sanquhar are required to contribute money to the local community. This is distributed through Upper Nithsdale Community Trust (UNCT) and has already helped pay for things like the Bell Crescent Play Park, the renovation of the Queensberry Square Garages and the purchase of Whigham's Inn.

Scottish Government grants fund a range of things, from building affordable homes (through the Rural Housing Fund and Scottish Land Fund) to regenerating town centres (through the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund and Place Based Investment Programme). These are competitive grants, which means SEC has to apply and make a strong case for Sanquhar's projects.

The National Lottery distributes money raised through lottery ticket sales to support heritage, arts, community and environmental projects across the UK.

Other public funding comes from bodies like South of Scotland Enterprise, Dumfries and Galloway Council, Paths for All, NatureScot, Sport Scotland and others, each focused on specific types of project.

Income from community assets like the rents from the Queensberry Square Garages commercial units goes back into SEC's work, helping to fund future projects.

Most projects rely on several of these sources combined. This is called "match funding" whereby one funder will often only contribute if others are involved too. Putting a funding package together can take months or even years, which is why some projects in this plan have timescales that stretch across the full ten-year period.

What about costs listed as "TBC" (To Be Confirmed)? In some cases, the exact cost of a project is not yet known because a feasibility study (a detailed investigation into whether and how a project can be done) has not been completed. SEC needs to know what is realistic before committing to a specific cost.

SEC is accountable for how all this money is spent. As a registered Scottish charity, it must report to its members, to funders, and to OSCR (the charity regulator). Annual reports are presented at the AGM and are available to all.



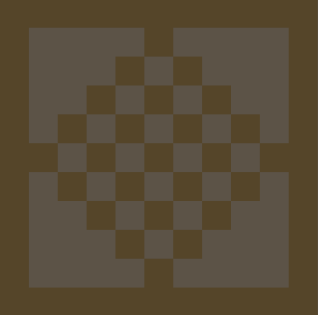
Riding of the Marches Sculpture commemorating 100 years 1910 to 2010





This plan takes a whole-town approach to identifying priorities for Sanquhar over the next ten years.

Success will be measured not only by the completion of individual projects, but by the wider changes they bring about for residents, businesses and the community as a whole.



8.0 Measuring Success

This plan takes a whole-town approach to identifying priorities for Sanquhar over the next ten years. Success will be measured not only by the completion of individual projects, but by the wider changes they bring about for residents, businesses and the community as a whole.

This section sets out a monitoring framework for the plan, identifying under each theme the key activities that will be delivered (outputs), the positive changes we want to bring about (outcomes), and the measures that will be used to evidence progress.

The framework is designed to be practical and proportionate. It focuses on measures that can realistically be collected and tracked by SEC and its partners. Individual projects will have their own specific targets and indicators, which will contribute to these higher-level objectives.

Progress against this framework will be reviewed annually and reported to the community. A more substantial evaluation will be undertaken at the 5-year and 10-year points to assess the overall impact of the plan.



8.1 Theme 1: Sustainable Sanquhar

Strategic Objective: To build a resilient community through increased affordable housing, community ownership of key assets, and sustainable income for local reinvestment.

Outputs	Outcomes	Measurements
Number of affordable housing units completed	Increased supply of affordable homes	Housing completions data
Number of Community Asset Transfers completed	Increased community ownership of local assets	SEC asset register
Square metres of property brought into community ownership	Sustainable income generated for community reinvestment	SEC financial reports
Number of feasibility studies completed	Reduced number of vacant/derelict buildings	Vacant property monitoring
Value of funding secured for housing and asset projects	Increased resident satisfaction that housing meets their needs	Community survey (Year 5, Year 10)
Number of housing units meeting energy efficiency standards (e.g. Passivhaus)	Reduced fuel poverty for residents in new community housing	Scottish House Condition Survey data



8.2 Theme 2: Local Facilities and Activities

Strategic Objective: To maintain and improve services, spaces and activities that support residents of all ages, with particular attention to provision for young people.

Outputs	Outcomes	Measurements
Number of community facilities improved or developed	Increased use of community facilities	Facility usage records
Square metres of community space created or upgraded	Increased resident satisfaction with local facilities	Community survey (Year 5, Year 10)
Number of activities or programmes for young people supported	Improved provision for teenagers and young adults	Youth engagement feedback
Number of young people participating in activities	Increased sense of belonging among young people	Place Standard reassessment
Value of investment in community facilities	Facilities maintained and fit for purpose	Condition assessments
Number of partnerships with service providers	Services sustained that might otherwise be at risk	Service availability monitoring

8.3 Theme 3: Town Environment and Transport Links

Strategic Objective: To improve the Townscape, the public realm and active travel options, making Sanquhar easier and safer to navigate for everyone.

Outputs	Outcomes	Measurements
Number of derelict or vacant buildings brought back into use	Improved appearance of town centre	Photographic record, vacant property count
Number of public realm improvements completed	Increased resident satisfaction with care and maintenance	Community survey (Year 5, Year 10)
Kilometres of pathways created or improved	Increased use of walking and cycling routes	Path counter data, user surveys
Number of accessibility improvements delivered	Improved accessibility for people with mobility needs	Accessibility audit
Number of active travel connections completed	Reduced barriers to movement within and around town	Place Standard reassessment
Value of investment in town centre and pathways	Increased footfall in town centre	Footfall monitoring if available

8.4 Theme 4: Culture and Heritage

Strategic Objective: To protect, restore and actively use Sanquhar's heritage and cultural assets, strengthening local identity and supporting sustainable tourism.

Outputs	Outcomes	Measurements
Number of heritage buildings stabilised or restored	Heritage assets secured for the future	Condition surveys
Number of heritage interpretation projects delivered	Increased visitor awareness of Sanquhar's heritage	Visitor feedback
Number of heritage events or programmes supported	Increased resident pride in local heritage	Community survey (Year 5, Year 10)
Value of investment in heritage projects	Heritage assets generating economic and social value	Visitor numbers, income generated
Number of heritage assets brought into active use	Strengthened local identity and sense of place	Place Standard reassessment
Condition surveys completed for at-risk buildings	Reduced number of heritage buildings at risk	Buildings at Risk Register

8.5 Theme 5: The Natural Environment

Strategic Objective: To enhance access to and stewardship of Sanquhar's natural environment, supporting health, wellbeing and sustainable enjoyment of the landscape.

Outputs	Outcomes	Measurements
Kilometres of paths created or upgraded	Increased use of outdoor spaces for recreation	Path counter data, user surveys
Number of benches, signage or wayfinding installed	Improved accessibility of natural spaces	Accessibility audit
Number of environmental improvement projects completed	Maintained or improved quality of natural spaces	Environmental condition monitoring
Number of trees planted	Increased biodiversity and habitat connectivity	Tree planting records
Number of community clean-up or stewardship events	Increased community involvement in environmental care	Volunteer participation records
Area of land improved for biodiversity	Sustained high satisfaction with natural environment	Place Standard reassessment

8.6 Theme 6: Tourism, Business and Employment

Strategic Objective: To diversify the local economy, support existing businesses, and create new opportunities for sustainable employment that allows people to work and build careers locally.

Outputs	Outcomes	Measurements
Square metres of business or workspace created	Increased commercial property occupancy	Property occupancy records
Number of businesses supported or advised	New business start-ups in Sanquhar	Business registration data
Number of visitor accommodation units created	Increased visitor numbers to Sanquhar	Visitor surveys, accommodation bookings
Number of tourism promotion initiatives delivered	Increased visitor spend in town	Business feedback
Number of people accessing training or skills support	Improved employment opportunities for residents	Training participation records
Value of investment secured for economic development	Diversified local economy	Employment data, business surveys

Summary

The monitoring framework set out above will be used to track progress against the plan's objectives. It is designed to capture both the direct outputs of project delivery and the wider outcomes for the community.

Not all measures will be relevant to every project, and some outcomes will take longer to materialise than others. The framework provides a consistent basis for reporting progress while allowing flexibility in how individual projects are assessed.

SEC will report annually on progress against these measures. The 5-year and 10-year evaluations will provide opportunities for more detailed assessment of impact and for adjusting priorities if needed.



Euchan Core Path





Effective governance is essential to delivering the priorities set out in this plan.

This section describes how the plan will be managed, who is responsible for delivery, and how the community will maintain oversight and accountability.





9.0 Management and Governance

Effective governance is essential to delivering the priorities set out in this plan. This section describes how the plan will be managed, who is responsible for delivery, and how the community will maintain oversight and accountability.

Lead Organisation: Sanquhar Enterprise Company

Sanquhar Enterprise Company (SEC) is the lead organisation responsible for coordinating the delivery of this plan. SEC is a community-owned development trust established to take forward regeneration and development projects in Sanquhar.

SEC operates from The Library at 106 High Street, which serves as its headquarters and a point of contact for community members. The organisation is governed by a voluntary board of directors drawn from the local community, supported by a Development Officer and an Administrative Assistant, who coordinate day-to-day project work.

Since its establishment, SEC has built a track record of project delivery, including the Bell Crescent Play Park, the restoration of Queensberry Square Garages and of 2 popular pathways, the construction of a new pathway and the acquisition of Whigham's Inn. This experience demonstrates the organisation's capacity to manage complex projects, work with partners and secure funding from multiple sources.

SEC's role in relation to this plan includes:

- Coordinating the delivery of priority projects
- Seeking funding and managing grant applications
- Working with partners to progress shared objectives
- Reporting progress to the community
- Reviewing and updating the plan as circumstances change

Governance Structure

SEC is a Company Limited by Guarantee and a registered Scottish charity. It is governed by a board of directors who are elected by members and serve on a voluntary basis. The board meets monthly to oversee the organisation's work, approve major decisions and ensure accountability.

The board is supported by:

- A Development Officer and Administrative Assistant responsible for project development, funding applications and day-

to-day coordination

- External consultants and specialists engaged as needed for specific projects

SEC is a member of the Development Trusts Association Scotland (DTAS), which provides access to support, training and peer learning opportunities.

Key Delivery Partners

While SEC leads the coordination of this plan, delivery will depend on effective partnership with a range of organisations. Key partners include:

Sanquhar and District Community Council

The Community Council is the statutory body representing the community in dealings with local and central government. SEC works alongside the Community Council and other local organisations, ensuring that community development activity is coordinated and that the plan reflects broad community support.

Dumfries and Galloway Council

The local authority is a key partner for planning, housing, economic development and community services. Dumfries and Galloway Council is the planning authority to which this Local Place Plan will be submitted, and a partner in projects including the Bell Crescent Play Park, The Library and potential future housing developments. Council officers provide advice and support on planning, funding and service delivery matters.

South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE)

SOSE is the regional economic development agency for Dumfries and Galloway and the Scottish Borders. It provides support for community-led development, business growth, tourism and skills. SOSE has been a partner in SEC's development and continues to provide advice and potential funding support for projects aligned with regional priorities.

South of Scotland Community Housing (SOSCH)

SOSCH is a community-led housing organisation that supports the development of affordable homes across the south of Scotland. SEC is working with SOSCH on housing projects including Whigham's Inn and Queens Crescent, where SOSCH provides specialist expertise in community-led housing development.

Upper Nithsdale Community Trust (UNCT)

UNCT administers community benefit funding from local windfarm developments. This funding has supported SEC projects including the Queensberry Square Garages, Bell Crescent Play Park and Whigham's Inn. UNCT is an important partner in ensuring that community benefit resources are used strategically to support local priorities.

Registered Social Landlords

Housing associations including Cunninghame Housing Association, Wheatley Homes South and Home Group are potential partners for affordable housing delivery in Sanquhar.

Other Community Organisations

A range of local organisations contribute to community life in Sanquhar, including A' the Airts, Brighten Up Sanquhar, the Riding of the Marches Association, Sanquhar Heritage Society and various clubs and societies. SEC works alongside these organisations and supports coordination where it benefits shared objectives.

Community Accountability

SEC is accountable to the community it serves. This accountability is maintained through:

- An open membership structure that allows Sanquhar residents to join SEC and participate in its governance
- An Annual General Meeting (AGM) at which the board reports on progress and members can ask questions and raise concerns
- Regular communication through local channels about project progress and plans
- Opportunities for community input into major decisions affecting local priorities

This plan itself is a product of extensive community consultation. The priorities it contains reflect what residents told us they wanted to see. SEC's role is to work towards delivering those priorities, not to substitute its own judgement for that of the community.

Decision-Making and Prioritisation

The plan sets out a range of priorities across 6 themes. Not all priorities can be pursued simultaneously, and circumstances will change over the 10-year period.

SEC will need to make decisions about which projects to prioritise, based on factors including:

- Availability of funding
- Readiness of projects (feasibility work completed, permissions in place)
- Community support and demand
- Partner capacity and willingness
- Strategic fit with wider opportunities

Major decisions about prioritisation will be taken by the SEC board, informed by consultation with partners and the community. The plan will be reviewed annually to assess progress and adjust priorities if needed.

Relationship with Dumfries and Galloway Council

This plan is being submitted to Dumfries and Galloway Council for registration as a Local Place Plan under the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. Once registered, the Council is required to have regard to the plan in preparing Local Development Plan 3.

Registration does not mean the Council is obliged to deliver the priorities in this plan, nor does it transfer resources or powers to SEC. It does mean that the community's priorities have statutory weight in planning decisions and that there is a formal basis for ongoing dialogue between SEC and the Council about development in Sanquhar.

SEC will maintain regular contact with relevant Council officers and elected members to ensure alignment between local priorities and Council activity.

Summary of Roles

Organisation	Role
Sanquhar Enterprise Company	Lead organisation: project coordination, sourcing of funding, delivery, reporting
SEC Board	Governance, strategic oversight, major decisions
Development Officer and Administrative Assistant	Day-to-day operations and coordination, project development, funding applications
Sanquhar Community Council	Statutory community representation, partnership working
Dumfries and Galloway Council	Planning authority, service delivery, partnership on specific projects
South of Scotland Enterprise	Regional development support, funding, advice
South of Scotland Community Housing	Community-led housing expertise and partnership
Upper Nithsdale Community Trust	Community benefit funding administration
Other partners	Project-specific roles as appropriate

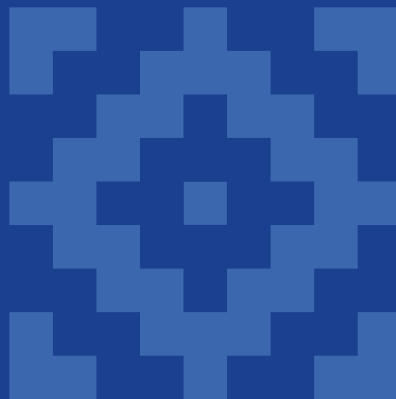
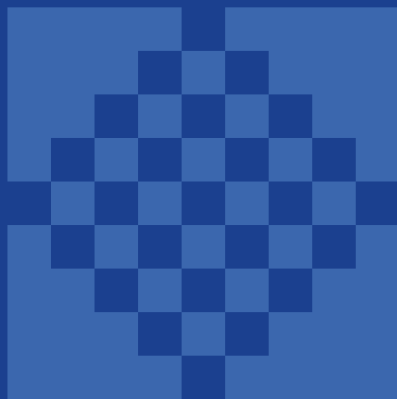


Riding of the Marches Parade



Delivering this plan over ten years will require systematic monitoring to track progress, identify problems early and ensure accountability to the community.

This section sets out how progress will be monitored at both project and plan level.





10.0 Monitoring and Performance Management

Delivering this plan over ten years will require systematic monitoring to track progress, identify problems early and ensure accountability to the community. This section sets out how progress will be monitored at both project and plan level.

Baseline

The 2025 consultation provides the baseline against which progress will be measured. This includes:

- Place Standard assessment scores across 14 themes
- Community survey responses on priorities and satisfaction
- Socio-economic data from the Scottish Towns Partnership/Census data
- SEC project portfolio status as of October 2025
- Photographic record of key sites and the town centre

This baseline establishes the starting position from which change can be evidenced and assessed. Where new data becomes available (for example, from the 2022 Census or updated Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation data), this will be incorporated into the baseline record.



Upper Nithsdale Parish Church

Project-Level Monitoring

Individual projects will have their own monitoring arrangements, typically determined by funding requirements. Projects funded through grant programmes will be subject to the monitoring and reporting conditions set by funders, which may include:

- Establishment of project-specific baselines
- Identification of outputs to be delivered and outcomes expected
- Regular progress reports (often quarterly) covering spend and activity
- Evidence of outputs delivered (for example, photographs, completion certificates, user numbers)
- Evaluation of outcomes at project completion

SEC will maintain records for each project that capture progress against targets, expenditure against budget, and any issues or risks that arise during delivery. This information will be consolidated to provide an overview of progress across the project portfolio.

For projects funded through multiple sources, SEC will ensure that monitoring requirements are coordinated to avoid duplication while meeting each funder's needs.

Plan-Level Monitoring

At the level of the plan as a whole, SEC will undertake the following monitoring activities:

Annual Review

Each year, SEC will review progress against the plan and report to the community. The annual review will cover:

- Projects completed during the year
- Projects in progress and their current status
- New projects initiated
- Funding secured and spent
- Progress against the monitoring framework set out in Section 8
- Any changes to priorities or circumstances
- Plans for the year ahead

The annual review will be presented at SEC's Annual General Meeting (AGM) and made available to the wider community through appropriate channels.



Sanquhar Golf Course



Mid-Term Evaluation (Year 5)

At the 5-year point (2031), SEC will commission or undertake a more substantial evaluation of progress. This will assess:

- Overall progress against the plan's strategic objectives
- The impact of completed projects on the community
- Whether priorities remain appropriate or need to be adjusted
- Lessons learned from delivery to date
- Recommendations for the second half of the plan period

The mid-term evaluation will include a repeat of the Place Standard assessment to provide comparable data on how residents' views have changed since 2025.

Full-Term Evaluation (Year 10)

At the end of the plan period (2036), a full evaluation will be undertaken to assess:

- The overall impact of the plan on Sanquhar
- Progress against each of the 6 themes and their strategic objectives
- The economic, social and environmental changes that have resulted from investment
- The effectiveness of governance and delivery arrangements
- Lessons for future planning

The full-term evaluation will inform the development of any successor plan and provide an account to the community of what has been achieved.

Place Standard Reassessment

The Place Standard tool provides a consistent method for assessing how residents experience their place. The 2025 assessment established baseline scores across 14 themes.

SEC will repeat the Place Standard assessment at Year 5 and Year 10 to track changes in resident perception over time. This will show whether the priorities addressed through the plan have resulted in improved scores and will highlight any emerging issues that may need attention.

The reassessment will use the same methodology as the 2025 baseline to ensure comparability, while also being open to input from residents who did not participate in the original consultation.

Reporting and Communication

Monitoring is only useful if the information gathered is shared with those who need it. SEC will communicate progress through:

- Annual reports presented at the AGM and published online
- Regular updates through local communication channels
- Project-specific communications as milestones are reached
- Responses to questions and requests for information from community members

SEC will also provide monitoring information to partners including Dumfries and Galloway Council, South of Scotland Enterprise and funders as required.

Adapting the Plan

This plan covers a 10-year period. Over that time, circumstances will change. New opportunities may emerge, some projects may prove undeliverable, funding landscapes will shift, and community priorities may evolve.

The monitoring arrangements set out above are designed to identify when adaptation is needed.

The annual review provides an opportunity to make minor adjustments. The mid-term evaluation at Year 5 provides a more substantial checkpoint at which significant changes can be considered.

Any major changes to the plan's priorities will be subject to community consultation to ensure that the plan continues to reflect what residents want.

Summary

Activity	Timing	Purpose
Project monitoring	Ongoing	Track delivery, meet funder requirements
Annual review	Each year	Report progress, update priorities
Place Standard reassessment	Year 5, Year 10	Track changes in resident perception
Mid-term evaluation	Year 5 (2031)	Assess impact, adjust priorities if needed
Full-term evaluation	Year 10 (2036)	Account for achievements, inform future planning



Appendix 1:

Summary of Consultation

Consultation Approach

Community Enterprise in Scotland (CEIS) led the consultation process during 2025, working in partnership with SEC and Dumfries and Galloway Council. The consultation was designed to gather views from residents, stakeholders and young people through multiple methods:

- Community survey delivered online and in paper format
- Place Standard assessments (112 responses)
- Stakeholder workshops with strategic, operational and delivery partners
- Community workshops with residents
- One-to-one interviews with residents and stakeholders who were unable to attend group sessions.

This multi-method approach was designed to ensure representation across different age groups, interests and levels of engagement with the formal consultation processes.

Overview of Findings

How Residents Describe Sanquhar

When asked to describe Sanquhar, residents emphasised both significant strengths and persistent challenges.

Positive attributes: Safe and friendly community, beautiful natural setting, strong sense of identity and belonging, rich heritage, close-knit social fabric.

Challenges: Run-down appearance in places, limited opportunities especially for young people, poor public transport, lack of facilities for teenagers.

Key Local Assets

Residents identified assets that contribute to Sanquhar identity and quality of life:

- Sanquhar Castle and historic townscape
- The world's oldest working Post Office (established 1712)
- A' the Airts arts and cultural centre
- Sanquhar knitting heritage and traditions
- Swimming pool and recreation facilities

- Natural environment, River Nith and walking routes
- Proximity to Crawick Multiverse and Southern Upland Way
- Active community organisations with track record of delivery

Stakeholder Consultation

Key insights

Stakeholders from public agencies, housing organisations, community planning partnerships and community groups participated in workshops and interviews. Their insights reinforced and contextualised the community survey findings:

- Housing is understood as a structural driver of population stability and economic resilience. Stakeholders directly linked housing availability to school roll sustainability, workforce attraction and service viability.
- Heritage and tourism assets are recognised as under-used. Stakeholders see potential for tourism development based on Sanquhar Castle, the Post Office, the Tolbooth Museum, Southern Upland Way plus local walking routes and proximity to Crawick Multiverse.
- There is strong support for community ownership and community-led development. Stakeholders recognise SEC track record and see community asset transfer as a viable model.
- Transport connectivity is understood as critical to accessing employment, education and healthcare, particularly for young people and those on low incomes.

Stakeholders emphasised the need for visible progress on agreed priorities rather than further rounds of consultation.

Opportunities for Development

The consultation identified opportunities that can be pursued to address priorities and build on strengths:

- Tourism and heritage development building on Sanquhar Castle, the Post Office, knitting heritage, walking routes and links to Crawick Multiverse.
- Community ownership of key buildings and sites through community asset transfer, enabling community-led regeneration.
- Windfarm community benefit funding as a significant resource for local investment in infrastructure, facilities and community projects.
- Remote and flexible working opportunities given the natural environment, quality of life and improving digital connectivity.
- Strong track record of community organisations, particularly SEC, providing capacity and credibility for project delivery.

Place Standard Assessment

About the Place Standard

The Place Standard is a tool developed by the Scottish Government, NHS Health Scotland and Architecture and Design Scotland. It provides a structured way to assess places across 14 themes, covering both physical elements such as buildings and streets, and social aspects such as feeling safe and opportunities to participate.

Residents scored each theme from 1 (much room for improvement) to 7 (little improvement needed). The results identify existing strengths to build on and clear priorities for improvement.

Total responses: 112



Summary of Scores

The table below shows average scores across all 14 Place Standard themes. Scores of 5.0 and above indicate relative strengths, while scores below 4.0 highlight priorities for improvement.

Theme	Average Score	Interpretation
Natural Space	5.8 / 7	Significant strength
Feeling Safe	5.4 / 7	Strength
Play and Recreation	5.3 / 7	Strength
Identity and Belonging	5.1 / 7	Strength
Moving Around	4.8 / 7	Generally positive
Social Interaction	4.8 / 7	Generally positive
Care and Maintenance	4.5 / 7	Mixed views
Housing and Community	4.2 / 7	Mixed views
Facilities and Services	4.2 / 7	Mixed views
Streets and Spaces	4.1 / 7	Priority for improvement
Traffic and Parking	4.0 / 7	Priority for improvement
Work and Local Economy	3.8 / 7	Priority for improvement
Influence and Sense of Control	3.8 / 7	Priority for improvement
Public Transport	3.6 / 7	Significant concern

Detailed Theme Analysis

The following sections summarise key findings for selected themes, focusing on the highest and lowest scoring areas.

Highest Scoring Themes

Natural Space (5.8 / 7)

Natural space emerged as Sanquhar's strongest and most consistently valued asset. Residents repeatedly emphasised immediate access to countryside, the River Nith, walking routes and open landscapes, with many describing reaching open countryside within 5 to 10 minutes from home. The natural environment is valued for wellbeing, recreation and as central to the town identity. However, residents expressed concern that poor maintenance, litter, dog fouling and uneven accessibility risk eroding this strength.

What works well: Immediate access to countryside and nature. Variety of walks and routes including riverside paths. Scenic landscape quality. Recent improvements to paths and play spaces.

Improvements needed: Action on litter and dog fouling. Better path maintenance and accessibility for people with limited mobility. Improved signage and promotion of routes. More seating and facilities.

Feeling Safe (5.4 / 7)

Feeling safe is one of Sanquhar's strongest qualities. Residents described the town as low-crime, friendly and reassuring, with strong community spirit and neighbourliness

contributing to everyday safety. However, concerns about antisocial behaviour, drug use, traffic speed and limited visible policing temper this positive picture, with residents noting that safety feels fragile and could be strengthened.

What works well: Low levels of serious crime. Strong sense of community and neighbourliness. Safe for families and children. Trust between residents.

Improvements needed: Greater visible police presence. Action on drug use and dealing. Traffic speed enforcement and safer crossings. Better lighting and maintenance to improve perception of safety.

Identity and Belonging (5.1 / 7)

Residents expressed strong pride in Sanquhar history, character and traditions. Events such as the Riding of the Marches, A' the Airts, and heritage assets contribute to a powerful sense of place. However, some residents, particularly newcomers and younger people, experience the town as insular and resistant to change, suggesting strong identity but uneven belonging.

What works well: Strong community spirit. Rich historic traditions and annual events. Cultural and heritage assets. High levels of volunteering. Deep attachment to place.

Improvements needed: Greater openness to newcomers and new ideas. More visible promotion and celebration of heritage. Stronger engagement of young people. Better communication about local activities.



Lowest Scoring Themes

Public Transport

(3.6 / 7)

Public transport scored lowest of all themes. While residents value having a railway station on a main line, bus services are seen as infrequent, expensive, poorly timed and unreliable. Residents without cars face significant barriers to accessing employment, education, healthcare and social opportunities. Concerns about service cuts and future vulnerability create anxiety about isolation.

What works well: Railway station with direct services to Glasgow and Carlisle. Some bus provision exists.

Improvements needed: More frequent and reliable bus services. Better affordability. Improved timetabling aligned with work, education and healthcare. Better accessibility. Improved integration between bus and rail.

Influence and Sense of Control

(3.8 / 7)

Views on local influence were deeply divided. Some residents feel well served by community organisations and councillors with regular consultation opportunities. Others feel strongly that decision-making is closed, repetitive and dominated by a small group. The key concern is not lack of consultation opportunities but lack of confidence that engagement leads to meaningful change.

What works well: Active community organisations. Accessible local councillors. Regular consultation exercises.

Improvements needed: More transparent decision-making. Visible action on agreed

priorities showing consultation leads to change. Broader participation across different groups. Better communication about how decisions are made.

Work and Local Economy

(3.8 / 7)

Views on the local economy were polarised. The economy is seen as narrow, fragile and overly dependent on a small number of large employers. Younger people, graduates and those seeking skilled or progression-oriented work have few viable local options. While volunteering and community activity are recognised as strengths, these are not seen as substitutes for secure, well-paid employment.

What works well: Large employers providing jobs. Volunteering opportunities. Cultural and arts activity through A' the Airts.

Improvements needed: Greater variety of employment. More skilled and better-paid jobs. Reduced reliance on few large employers. More training and apprenticeships. Better support for new businesses and social enterprises.

Key Messages from Place Standard

The Place Standard assessment confirms that Sanquhar has significant existing strengths. The natural environment, safety, play and recreation provision, and sense of identity provide a strong foundation for regeneration and investment.

The assessment also identifies clear priorities for improvement. Public transport, work and local economy, influence and decision-making, traffic and parking, and care and maintenance emerge as interconnected priorities requiring action.

Housing, transport and employment are viewed as the core strategic priorities, forming the foundation for the town's long-term sustainability. These are seen as interlinked rather than standalone issues.

Summary

The consultation evidence confirms that housing, transport and employment are interconnected priorities that fundamentally shape residents' confidence in Sanquhar's future. These are not isolated issues but structural challenges that affect population sustainability, economic opportunity and quality of life.

At the same time, Sanquhar has significant strengths. The natural environment, heritage assets, strong community identity and active community organisations provide a solid foundation for regeneration. The challenge is to address longstanding weaknesses while building systematically on existing strengths.

Residents want to see practical action on agreed priorities. The 6 themes and priorities in this Local Place Plan respond directly to what the community has told us through consultation. They reflect both community aspiration and evidence-based assessment of what is needed and achievable over the next decade.

Appendix 2:

Thematic Action Plan

Theme 1: Sustainable Sanquhar		
Category	Priority 1: Affordable & Community-Led Housing	Priority 2: Community Asset Ownership
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver new affordable homes via Goosedubs (Passivhaus), Queens Crescent (15 units) and Whigham's Inn (4 units + mixed use) • Survey vacant High Street upper floors for additional residential opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand SEC portfolio of income-generating community assets • Key assets: 106 High Street, Queensberry Square Garages, Sanquhar Castle, Castle Mains
Stage of Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whigham's Inn: acquired June 2025, feasibility under review • Queens Crescent: research and planning stage • Goosedubs: business plan in development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Queensberry Square Garages: completed August 2025 • 106 High Street: operational; Community Asset Transfer planned • Castle and Castle Mains: in active negotiation
Evidence of Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top concern in 2025 consultation • Home ownership (54%) below Scottish average (63%) • Population down 5% since 2011, linked to housing shortage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation strongly backed community ownership for long-term value • Derelict buildings consistently raised as a concern by residents
Difference it will make	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain younger families and working-age residents • Reduce outmigration and sustain local services and schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates sustainable income for reinvestment • Removes dereliction and returns buildings to community use

Theme 1: Sustainable Sanquhar		
Category	Priority 1: Affordable & Community-Led Housing	Priority 2: Community Asset Ownership
Lead and Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: SEC • SOSCH, Dumfries and Galloway Council, SOSE • Historic Environment Scotland, Upper Nithsdale Community Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: SEC • Dumfries and Galloway Council, SOSE • Historic Environment Scotland, Upper Nithsdale Community Trust, private landowners
Costs (if known)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBC per project • Feasibility and business plans in development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition and Community Asset Transfer costs TBC • Ongoing management covered by rental income
Likely Funding Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Government Rural Housing Fund • Scottish Land Fund • RCGF; PBIP; Windfarm Community Benefit Funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Land Fund; Community Asset Transfer mechanisms • Historic Environment Scotland grants; Windfarm Community Benefit Funds • Rental income from commercial units
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2026–2030 • Whigham's Inn: target 2028 • Queens Crescent: Under discussion • Goosedubs: subject to funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing 2026–2036 • 106 High Street CAT: 2027–2029 • Castle: negotiations ongoing
Outputs and Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New affordable units delivered • Reduced High Street vacancy • Outcomes: population stabilisation; shorter waiting times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assets transferred to community ownership • Income generated; derelict buildings returned to use • Outcomes: SEC financial resilience; improved townscape
Risks and Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and land assembly delays • Construction cost inflation • Grant funding availability; heritage constraints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protracted owner negotiations • High remediation and heritage consent costs • SEC capacity constraints

Theme 2: Local Facilities and Activities		
Category	Priority 1: Facilities and Activities for Young People	Priority 2: Maintaining & Improving Community Facilities
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop dedicated spaces for teenagers and young adults • Options include MUGA, indoor social space or covered outdoor facility • Young people to co-design any provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support existing facilities: swimming pool, library, community halls, sports provision • Identify accessibility improvements and work with Dumfries and Galloway Council on investment
Stage of Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority identified through consultation • Feasibility and options appraisal to be undertaken • Bell Crescent Play Park (April 2025) provides delivery model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing advocacy and partnership working • SEC focused on own asset base; wider improvement requires Dumfries and Galloway Council partnership
Evidence of Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of teenage provision was among the strongest consultation messages • Young people described nowhere to go in evenings or poor weather • Linked to antisocial behaviour and desire to leave 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents value existing facilities highly and fear cuts or closures • Recent play park investment was widely welcomed
Difference it will make	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve belonging and wellbeing for young people • Reduce antisocial behaviour • Help retain the 16–25 age group in Sanquhar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-maintained facilities support health, social inclusion and confidence in Sanquhar's future
Lead and Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: SEC • Dumfries and Galloway Council, Sanquhar Academy • Youth organisations, Upper Nithsdale Community Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: SEC (advocacy) • Dumfries and Galloway Council, NHS Dumfries and Galloway • Leisure operators, community hall committees
Costs (if known)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBC following feasibility • Bell Crescent comparator: £250,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variable; to be identified through condition surveys • Subject to partnership discussions with Dumfries and Galloway Council



Theme 2: Local Facilities and Activities

Category	Priority 1: Facilities and Activities for Young People	Priority 2: Maintaining & Improving Community Facilities
Likely Funding Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dumfries and Galloway Council capital; Windfarm Community Benefit Funds National Lottery; Youth Scotland; Sport Scotland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dumfries and Galloway Council budgets; PBIP Sport Scotland; National Lottery; Windfarm Funds
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility: 2026 Design and funding: 2027 Delivery: 2028–2029 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing 2026–2036 Specific projects as opportunities arise
Outputs and Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth facility delivered; activities programme in place Outcomes: improved wellbeing; reduced antisocial behaviour; better youth retention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilities maintained or improved; accessibility upgrades delivered Outcomes: increased participation; improved wellbeing; reduced closure risk
Risks and Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site identification and capital funding Revenue sustainability long-term Meaningful engagement of young people in design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dumfries and Galloway Council budget pressures Ageing building stock requiring significant investment NHS provision outside community control

Theme 3: Town Environment and Transport Links

Category	Priority 1: Town Centre Improvement	Priority 2: Active Travel and Pathway Connections
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tackle dereliction, improve shopfronts and upgrade pavements on the High Street Address litter and dog fouling; bring vacant upper floors into residential use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve walking and cycling routes within and around Sanquhar Blackaddie to Crawick Bridge Pathway (adds to a 6.5km circular walk): completion due end March 2026
Stage of Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High Street vacancy survey in progress Whigham's Inn acquisition (June 2025) demonstrates SEC's capacity to act directly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blackaddie pathway: construction started January 2026 Euchan and Braeheads Core Paths: already upgraded Further routes to be scoped from 2026



Theme 3: Town Environment and Transport Links		
Category	Priority 1: Town Centre Improvement	Priority 2: Active Travel and Pathway Connections
Evidence of Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town condition was the most emotionally charged consultation issue Place Standard: Care and Maintenance 4.1/7; Traffic and Parking 4.0/7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural Space scored highest in Place Standard (5.8/7) Residents raised concerns over path maintenance, poor signage and limited accessibility
Difference it will make	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases resident pride and investor confidence Improves visitor experience and attracts new residents and businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports everyday health and wellbeing for all residents Enhances tourism offer and reduces short car journeys New pathways provide accessibility for mobility scooters and wheelchair users
Lead and Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: SEC Dumfries and Galloway Council, private property owners Local businesses, Sanquhar & District Community Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: SEC SWestrans, CLLD and SPEN provide funding Dumfries and Galloway Council, Upper Nithsdale Community Trust, landowners
Costs (if known)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shopfront grants: £5,000–£30,000 per property Derelict building intervention: £50,000–£500,000+ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blackaddie pathway: £59,000 (funded) Future routes: TBC through feasibility
Likely Funding Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PBIP; Town Centre Fund; RCGF Historic Environment Scotland (listed buildings); Windfarm Funds; private investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paths for All; Sustrans Active Travel Fund NatureScot; Dumfries and Galloway Council; Windfarm Funds
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quick wins (litter, minor repairs): 2026 Shopfront programme: 2027–2030 Major derelict building interventions: 2028–2036 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blackaddie: complete March 2026 Further route scoping: 2026 Additional delivery: 2027–2030



Theme 3: Town Environment and Transport Links		
Category	Priority 1: Town Centre Improvement	Priority 2: Active Travel and Pathway Connections
Outputs and Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vacant/derelict properties brought back into use; public realm improved Outcomes: improved resident satisfaction; increased footfall; investor confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Km of paths improved/created; seating and signage installed Outcomes: increased physical activity; enhanced tourism; greater accessibility
Risks and Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private ownership limiting action Listed building constraints Dumfries and Galloway Council budget pressures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landowner consent for future routes Post-completion maintenance funding Ground conditions and weather

Theme 4: Culture and Heritage		
Category	Priority 1: Heritage Building Restoration	Priority 2: Heritage Interpretation and Promotion
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure, develop and stabilise key buildings: Sanquhar Castle, Castle Mains and Steadings, Whigham's Inn Negotiate ownership changes, commission surveys and seek Historic Environment Scotland grant funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve signage, interpretation and promotion of Sanquhar's heritage assets Assets include the world's oldest Post Office, the castle, A' the Airts and the Sanquhar Pattern knitting tradition
Stage of Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Castle: Historic Environment Scotland condition survey complete 2024; owner negotiations ongoing Castle Mains: in negotiation; survey and architect consultation done Whigham's Inn: acquired 2025; feasibility under review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early stage; no integrated strategy yet in place To be developed with A' the Airts, Dumfries and Galloway Council and VisitScotland
Evidence of Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation revealed frustration that heritage assets are not fully realised Derelict buildings cited as symbols of both Sanquhar's identity and its challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identity and Belonging scored 5.1/7 in Place Standard Residents proud of heritage but feel it is under-promoted to both residents and visitors



Theme 4: Culture and Heritage		
Category	Priority 1: Heritage Building Restoration	Priority 2: Heritage Interpretation and Promotion
Difference it will make	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restored buildings strengthen identity, improve townscape and support heritage tourism May provide new housing, workspace or community facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves resident pride and visitor experience Strengthens the case for investment in at-risk buildings
Lead & Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: SEC Historic Environment Scotland, Dumfries and Galloway Council, South of Scotland Enterprise Private landowners, Upper Nithsdale Community Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: SEC and A' the Airts Dumfries and Galloway Council, VisitScotland Local schools, Upper Nithsdale Community Trust, local historians
Costs (if known)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Castle: substantial (full assessment required) Castle Mains and Whigham's Inn: TBC following feasibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signage and interpretation panels: £20,000–£60,000 Digital resources (trail app, website): £10,000–£30,000
Likely Funding Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historic Environment Scotland grants; National Lottery Heritage Fund RCGF; PBIP; Scottish Land Fund; Windfarm Funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historic Environment Scotland; National Lottery Heritage Fund VisitScotland; Dumfries and Galloway Council; Windfarm Funds
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Castle ownership resolution: 2026–2028 Castle Mains development: 2028–2032 Whigham's Inn: 2027–2029 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heritage strategy: 2026 Signage and trails: 2027–2028 Digital resources: 2027–2029
Outputs and Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heritage buildings secured and restored; assets in community/public benefit ownership Outcomes: townscape improved; tourism increased; heritage protected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpretation panels installed; trails developed; digital resources live Outcomes: increased visitor numbers; stronger resident pride and identity
Risks and Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protracted private owner negotiations High remediation costs; listed building consents Specialist contractor availability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revenue sustainability of ongoing promotion Coordination across multiple sites and organisations Accessibility for diverse audiences



Theme 5: The Natural Environment		
Category	Priority 1: Path Network Enhancement	Priority 2: Environmental Stewardship
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrade path surfaces, signage and accessibility; create new circular routes Builds on completed Euchan and Braeheads Core Path upgrades 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain natural spaces through action on litter, dog fouling and vegetation management Support Brighten Up Sanquhar; integrate native planting into capital projects
Stage of Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Euchan and Braeheads paths: upgraded (2021 and 2024) Blackaddie pathway: under construction (complete March 2026) Further enhancements to be scoped from 2026 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community groups active; clean-up events ongoing Native tree planting included in Blackaddie pathway project No formal stewardship programme yet established
Evidence of Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural Space scored highest in Place Standard (5.8/7) Residents raised concerns over maintenance, accessibility and insufficient seating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation raised persistent concerns over litter, dog fouling and sporadic maintenance Risks eroding Sanquhar's highest-rated asset
Difference it will make	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports everyday health and wellbeing for all residents Improves accessibility for people with limited mobility Extends Sanquhar's appeal to walkers and outdoor visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protects and enhances Sanquhar's most valued asset Supports biodiversity and contributes to climate adaptation
Lead and Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: SEC Paths for All, NatureScot, Sustrans Dumfries and Galloway Council, Forestry and Land Scotland, Upper Nithsdale Community Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: SEC and Brighten Up Sanquhar Dumfries and Galloway Council, NatureScot Forestry and Land Scotland, schools, Keep Scotland Beautiful
Costs (if known)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blackaddie: £59,000 (funded) Further paths: estimated £20,000–£80,000 per km 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean-up events: largely volunteer time Planting: £5,000–£20,000 per project Dog fouling infrastructure: £5,000–£15,000



Theme 5: The Natural Environment		
Category	Priority 1: Path Network Enhancement	Priority 2: Environmental Stewardship
Likely Funding Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paths for All; NatureScot; Sustrans • Dumfries and Galloway Council; Windfarm Funds; National Lottery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NatureScot; Keep Scotland Beautiful • National Lottery; Windfarm Funds • Dumfries and Galloway Council; volunteer in-kind contribution
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blackaddie: complete March 2026 • Scoping of further routes: 2026 • Additional delivery: 2027–2030 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community events: regular programme from 2026 • Biodiversity planting: integrated into capital projects throughout 2026–2036
Outputs and Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Km of paths upgraded/created; seating and signage delivered; accessibility improved • Outcomes: greater usage; improved health outcomes; enhanced tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean-up events held; trees and shrubs planted; dog fouling infrastructure installed • Outcomes: improved environmental quality; increased biodiversity; greater community pride
Risks and Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landowner agreement for new routes • Post-completion maintenance funding • Erosion and ground conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustaining volunteer motivation over time • Dumfries and Galloway Council grounds maintenance capacity • Dog fouling enforcement limitations

Theme 6: Tourism, Business and Employment		
Category	Priority 1: Tourism Development	Priority 2: Business Support and Workspace
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Sanquhar's tourism offer through improved visitor infrastructure, signage and accommodation • Key assets: oldest Post Office, Castle, A' the Airts, Southern Upland Way, Crawick Multiverse, Sanquhar Tolbooth Museum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide affordable workspace, business advice and access to funding for existing and new enterprises • SEC portfolio: Queensberry Square Garages (live), 106 High Street and Old Glove Factory (in negotiation)



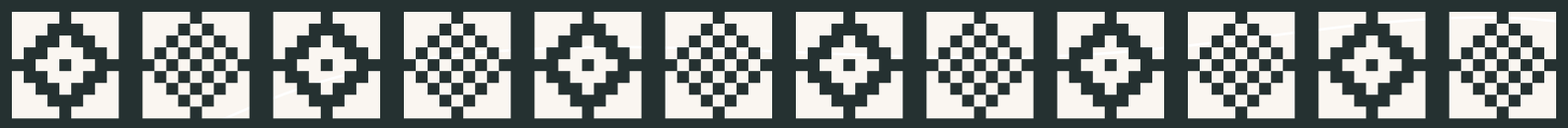
Theme 6: Tourism, Business and Employment		
Category	Priority 1: Tourism Development	Priority 2: Business Support and Workspace
Stage of Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Path and heritage improvements under way (see Themes 3–5) • No integrated tourism strategy yet in place • Engagement with VisitScotland and South of Scotland Enterprise to be progressed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Queensberry Square Garages: 5 commercial units operational from August 2025 • 106 High Street and Old Glove Factory (in negotiation)
Evidence of Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work and Local Economy scored 3.8/7 in Place Standard • Consultation identified strong untapped tourism potential given heritage and landscape assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work and Local Economy scored 3.8/7; economy seen as narrow and fragile • Young people described limited skilled employment options locally
Difference it will make	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brings new income to local businesses and supports hospitality employment • Reduces reliance on a small number of large employers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps existing businesses grow and new enterprises start • Creates local employment and reduces economic fragility
Lead & Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: SEC and A' the Airts • VisitScotland, South of Scotland Enterprise, Dumfries and Galloway Council • Local businesses, Crawick Multiverse, Upper Nithsdale Community Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: SEC • South of Scotland Enterprise, Business Gateway • Dumfries and Galloway Council Economic Development, local businesses
Costs (if known)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism strategy: £15,000–£30,000 • Visitor infrastructure: £30,000–£100,000 • Accommodation: subject to separate business case 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workspace development (106 High Street/Old Glove Factory): TBC • Queensberry Square Garages: managed through rental income
Likely Funding Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VisitScotland; South of Scotland Enterprise Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund • Dumfries and Galloway Council; Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal; Windfarm Funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South of Scotland Enterprise; Scottish Government; Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal • RCGF; Windfarm Funds; Business Gateway



Theme 6: Tourism, Business and Employment		
Category	Priority 1: Tourism Development	Priority 2: Business Support and Workspace
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism strategy: 2026–2027 • Visitor infrastructure: 2027–2030 • Accommodation development: 2028–2032 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Queensberry Square Garages commercial lets: ongoing • Business support engagement: from 2026 • Workspace feasibility: 2027–2029; development: 2029–2033
Outputs and Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy delivered; visitor infrastructure installed; accommodation improved • Outcomes: increased visitor numbers and spend; new hospitality jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses supported; enterprises established; workspace developed; jobs created • Outcomes: more diverse economy; increased local employment; reduced vulnerability
Risks & Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seasonality of tourism income • Limited existing accommodation base • Dependence on heritage building access not yet secured 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertain workspace demand • Revenue sustainability of business support • Broadband connectivity gaps in parts of the area



This Local Place Plan represents the voice of Sanquhar – a community with a **proud past** and an **ambitious vision for the future**.



SANQUHAR & DISTRICT



LOCAL PLACE PLAN 2026-2036

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