

ALL RISE ON THE TIDE



A PLACE PLAN FOR STRANRAER

2023-2033



An aerial photograph of a rowing boat on a dark, choppy body of water. A bright red buoy is visible in the lower-left quadrant of the image. The water's surface is textured with small waves and ripples.

*Cover: Stranraer hosts the world
championship Skiffie Worlds with
participants Wendi Cuffe, Alana Hardie, Bill
McCandlish and Tim Millar
photo: Colin Hattersley*

*This page: Skiffie Worlds coastal rowing
boat festival on Loch Ryan, Stranraer
photo Colin Tennant, CT Productions*



This document is designed as a record of the views of local people who co-created the Place Plan between 2022 and 2023. By capturing the town's spirit and ambition we hope to attract support from enablers, funders and partners. We have lodged an Expression of Interest with the Council so that this Place Plan can be registered and taken into consideration as part of the Local Development Plan, influencing Planning decisions for the next decade... all part of our One Vision, One Plan approach to Stranraer's future.

What is a place plan?

This Place Plan belongs to the people of Stranraer

A Place Plan captures the hopes and dreams of local people for their town. It is made by, for and with local people to set priorities for change.

Thanks to the hundreds of individuals and groups who gave their time to come to meetings, take part in focus groups, workshops, meet-ups and conversations and respond to surveys. Engagement took place initially between October 2022 and March 2023 to draft the Plan and then until the end of June 2023, sharing it, ranking priorities and gathering feedback.

The Place Plan is not the end; it's a new beginning. The process has been a catalyst for change: permission to partner and work more collaboratively.

The time is now for Stranraer.

This Plan captures ambition and ideas.

There are opportunities for funding.

We aim to ensure investment reaps rewards for decades to come.

With strong ideas, partnership working and the support of local people, we can transform this town.

Creating Stranraer is the brand that represents the collective effort behind Stranraer's Place Plan. The Place Plan documents captures a snapshot in time. Place Planning as a process is ongoing. The Plan will organically change and evolve. We will print a limited edition of this document for the local Library and publish its full appendices online. We invite comments on emerging plans on Citizen Space - a feedback platform we are trialling for a year. Find out about ongoing consultation and events that will help shape Stranraer's future and have your say on Citizen Space at www.creatingstranraer.co.uk or via the Home page of www.stranraerdevelopmenttrust.co.uk.



**Working together, creating Stranraer...
a place where our people thrive**



East Pier and Marina
Photo: Allan Devlin

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*Castle of St John,
Stranraer town centre
image: Scarlett Visuals*

Foreword

by Nikki-Marie Vjatschlav, Town Team Chair



“

We need to build a strong, reliable base to shape the future. And we need to work from the grassroots up.

”

above: Nikki-Marie Vjatschlav, left, at The Unexpected Garden project, greening unused ground and growing edibles on Stranraer's waterfront.

NURTURING GROWTH

What a year! I started on a placement last summer, working on the Unexpected Garden. Things snowballed and I'm now leading the project. As a consequence, I became involved with and ended up as Chair of the Town Team, working with locals people right across the community to shape a Place Plan for Stranraer.

I come from Paisley - another town that's busy reinventing itself. I moved here 9 years ago. It's home and I'm passionate about the place. The Unexpected Garden was a great opportunity to use my horticulture training and experience. The garden is one of 12 national Dandelion cultural projects, supported locally by The Stove and Stranraer Development Trust.

The garden's five aims, tackling food poverty, mental health, nutrition, sustainability, climate change, map directly to the issues identified by locals during our Place Plan consultation. The Unexpected Garden models how together, we can transform the world around us. We can learn through volunteering. We can grow skills for work. We can build community and fire passions... like a team of little Greta Guerillas. We can be inclusive. All the things we want for our Place Plan too.

Growing takes a longer term view - as does the 10 year vision of this Place Plan. It's exactly what Stranraer needs: planting, tending and nurturing growth is a long game.

At the risk of taking the gardening metaphors too far, our Place Planning approach started with the grassroots - listening to local people. These micro-growers planted the seeds of ideas. Partners and locals helped to dig over the ground. The Place Plan is now a flourishing allotment ... mixed beds of ideas and solutions we can grow together. It feels like the time is NOW for Stranraer. It's ripe for the picking. There's a fresh impetus in the air... a sense of opportunity, an unprecedented level of connection, collaboration, knowledge and skill-sharing going on. I'm confident that together we can deliver a shared vision. I'm excited for the town and look forward to a Harvest Festival 10 years on.



Nikki-Marie Vjatschlav
Town Team Chair



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The citizens, organisations and communities of Stranraer have embraced Place Planning as a chance to change the story of Stranraer, and change it together. We believe the priorities we have identified can transform the town's fortunes and create a tipping point that sees the town go from survive to thrive mode. We want to be a dynamic, open town: a breeding ground for home-grown talent, a place that attracts investment and relocators. We believe our Plan's priorities will reap socio-economic benefits, bring social return on investment and improve local health and wellbeing. We will ensure that any investment made now reaps rewards for decades.

With a fair wind and a rising tide, we can catch the wave together. Let's all rise on the tide.

Stranraer is the hub for the Rhins of Galloway - a town with many charms; something of an undiscovered gem in Scotland's south west with the feel of an island community. Recently adopted to be part of the UNESCO Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere, the characterful town boasts stunning natural assets, unexplored potential and latent talent. There are significant pipeline projects in progress, with funding secured for beacons: the George Hotel transformation, new Watersports Centre and Marina expansion. The new Coast to Coast Cycle route has its starting point in Stranraer. There's potential for a marine interpretation centre on Loch Ryan. The Place Plan has contributed to a growing appetite for change in the town.

COMMUNITY-LED PROCESS

To arrive at a Place Plan that was genuinely community-led, we took a Service Design approach:

- Work with partners to map stakeholders and connect widely.
- Identify issues, ideas and solutions: the Five Strands.
- Share, discuss and shape emerging solutions: the Six Priorities.
- Map priorities in Place: the Four Quarters.
- Consult on the draft Place Plan for a month to rank the Six Priorities.
- Edit and publish the final Place Plan.
- Submit the Place Plan to Dumfries & Galloway Council then Borderlands for endorsement.

CHALLENGES

From the get-go, conversations with local people revealed an emotional undercurrent shaped by stories of abandonment, isolation, broken promises, disregard. The town and the peninsula can feel distant from Dumfries, the municipal heart of the region, two hours west with no rail connection. Essential services like maternity and health clinics have been taken out of the town causing stress and putting our citizens at risk at vulnerable times. Locals must journey to Dumfries and beyond to access some services. The cost of travel for care isn't just financial - there's personal risk to health, time, separation from loved ones, lack of physical and emotional support on a challenging journey. This compounds issues for many in our population experiencing high levels of poverty and unemployment: those most at risk of ill health.

The ferries moved north a decade ago. The town still smarts from the shock of identity loss, job loss and loss of visitors. The East Pier with the railway station at its tip is a bleak arrival point for visitors with a ten minute walk to the station. This large, visible, empty space at the entrance to the town is on the Council's *Vacant & Derelict Land Register*. The Pier's ghostly presence is experienced locally as a symbol of the town's declining fortunes and lack of vision for and investment in the town's future. A 2018 Dumfries & Galloway Council report, *Reshaping Stranraer*, referenced that Scottish Government had set aside £6 million to support economic recovery related to the ferries' departure. It cited a commitment of £2 million each from the Council and emerging enterprise company - South of Scotland Enterprise (SoSE). The report appraised options for the East Pier: 'do nothing' was not an option, 'demolition' was expensive for little benefit, 'accelerated Development' was the best plan. This approach centred on the expansion of the Marina and the potential of the East Pier available as a commercial development site. The Pier failed to attract commercial interest. The Council has invested £2 million in the Marina. SoSE assure their commitment to invest in and support to Stranraer. We aim to use this Place Plan to open conversations with Scottish Government about its promised £6 million (index-linked we hope). The East Pier is an obvious, very visible issue to focus on. Below are other challenges.

THE FIVE STRANDS

Through engagement, we gathered a wide range of issues, ideas and solutions from locals. We organised them into the Five Strands. *See section 6 and Appendices for more detail.*

Strand 1 : QUALITY OF LIFE: Healthcare, Poverty, Drink/drugs

Strand 2: WORK & OPPORTUNITY: Transport, Enterprise, Employment

Strand 3: PLAY AND CREATIVITY: George Hotel, One Waterfront, Playtime

Strand 4: ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE: Climate, Food Futures, Environment

Strand 5: PRIDE & CITIZENSHIP Vacant/derelict spaces, Democracy, Destination Stranraer

Messages about local needs have been consistent:

- We need to fix what we've got first ... like The George Hotel and the East Pier.
- We need more wet weather offers for local families and visitors.
- We need more opportunities to get into work and more support for enterprise.
- We need to make the most of our amazing natural environment.
- We need to address urgently the loss of healthcare in Stranraer and the Rhins.

THE SIX PRIORITIES

Working with the ideas and solutions locals had envisioned in the Five Strands, we held a 'Huddle' workshop with partners and a ballot process. We invited participants to vote for all the ideas they supported then rank their top 3 in a ballot. Through this filtering process and further discussion at a Public Meeting, Six Priorities emerged. *See below and see more on findings at section 9.*

THE FOUR QUARTERS

We mapped the Six Priorities onto Stranraer, looking at them through a physical 'Place' lens and created Four Quarters. *See more about the Quarters in section 8.* Each Quarter has its distinct role:

Q1: ONE WATERFRONT: outdoor leisure activities making the most of the lochside location.

Q2: UPTOWN: indoor culture and leisure anchored by the new George creative hub.

Q3: ENTERPRISE ZONE: retail, business, industry, mixed use development for town centre living.

Q4: STANCTUARY: wild wellness a walk from the town centre for learning, health and wellbeing.

RANKING THE SIX PRIORITIES

At the end of the process, in June 2023, we presented a draft of the Place Plan and the Six Priorities at a public meeting and launched a month-long consultation. We briefed local elected members and offered public drop-ins and paper and online versions of the survey. We invited locals to rank priorities to help focus fundraising and phasing. Some of the priorities are complex and likely to be longer term in delivery. Others offer quick wins. Unsurprisingly, because of its scale and prominent position in town, the East Pier came out top. *See section 9 for findings.*

NEXT STEPS

The Town Team worked with the premise that if five towns bid into the Borderlands £15 million pot, and Stranraer has the biggest population and the biggest issues, we might hope for £5 million from that fund to lever other funding. The Team used the £5 million figure as a guide to scope rough values for the Six Priorities. The number was used to frame conversations about potential and priorities and the relative scale of options. We had no accurate costings to work with.

The next step in the process is to commission studies to flesh out the relative cost-benefit of our priorities. We would look to Dumfries & Galloway Council to help with this to update their 2018 data on East Pier options. This would help Borderlands and other funders determine the level of investment they might offer Stranraer and its phasing. Our Place Plan will be submitted to Dumfries & Galloway Council in September 2023 and once endorsed, will be presented to Borderlands. The Council has helped broker discussions with Stena Line to begin conversations about the Pier's future. We look forward to further discussions with owners, Crown Estates and leaseholders Stena Line and Network as the feasibility study is developed.

We have big ambitions for Stranraer and the Rhins to maximise all it has to offer locally, regionally and nationally. Our unique location in the south west makes us a strong contender as a base for business and tourism, with easy access to Scotland, England, Ireland and beyond. We need expert support and resources to keep up momentum. We look forward to ongoing partnership working and co-designing Stranraer's future with local people to achieve meaningful and lasting change. This Place Plan will help focus the potential of the town for economic growth and wellbeing and we believe our priorities can bring Stranraer not just financial return on investment (ROI) but social return on investment (SROI), transforming lives.

We're excited about the town's potential. We're ready and able for change.



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2023-2033



Have your say

Hello! Welcome to Stranraer's Citizen Space website.
This is a new, single point for surveys that affect people who live in and around Stranraer.
Local people said they wanted this. Trust, part of the project.
Stranraer's Community Council, Stranraer's Millennium Centre, Stranraer's Watersports Association and the Community Project and the Community Project are in a trial to see how learning the ropes will help you.
Please use it to have your say on things that matter to you.
New and live surveys will be available soon. You can search the full list of surveys here.

CITIZEN SPACE

We developed Citizen Space in response to early insights in the engagement process. Locals told us that for some, work and care responsibilities meant attending meetings was a challenge. For others, meetings are unappealing. Many were interested in the potential of harnessing mobile digital to influence plans and decisions. We made a bid to the Community-Led Vision Fund and secured funding to trial Citizen Space. Partner organisations have been trained to use the feedback tool and we will continue to harness this route to local democracy to broaden engagement. This gives us a mandate for decision-making, collective effort and future funding applications to meet the town's needs.

Find Citizen Space on the Place Plan website www.creatingstranraer.co.uk

Up
Down

Still I  love
Diana

2. OUR MISSION

Mission

ONE VISION, ONE PLAN

Get locals on the same page.

Vision

ALL RISE ON THE TIDE

Put locals* first.

Prioritise actions that see Stranraer flourish and locals thrive.

**Locals include all newcomers who choose the Rhins as home - from Ukrainian guests to friends who cross the sea or Border.*

Values

FAIR → Let's be inclusive.

GREEN → Let's protect and enhance our environment.

OPEN → Let's be open to the new: try, learn, share, improve.

STRANRAER ACCENT

Stranraer has its own accent; literally and metaphorically. The Plan's Mission, Vision and Values emerged from conversations with locals about what they want for their town.

Stranraer, at the south western tip of Scotland and historically the short sea crossing to Northern Ireland, is renowned for its broad Galloway Irish accent with long, soft vowels ('laang, saaft'). There's a particular flavour to the folk. Kind, friendly, dry, witty, spiky, resilient, brave, unflappable, unassuming. There's an equanimity of spirit that could be characterised as: "nobody's better than me and I'm no better than anybody else."

We use the Scots word 'Strand' in this Plan to theme issues and ideas, reflecting the word that is the stem of Stranraer's name - the water or lifeblood that courses through the town, charting the flow of thoughts shared by locals.

3. OUR CONTEXT



IN A GOOD PLACE

Stranraer is the Gateway to Galloway, a family friendly town attracting visitors from Scotland, Northern Ireland and the North of England. The town has ambitions to reinvent itself as a destination for eco-tourism - a strategically placed hub, a leisure destination with a focus on watersports, a growing cultural offer and most of all, a glorious green place with wellbeing at its heart.

Stranraer is the second biggest town in the Dumfries & Galloway region, on the southwest border of Scotland. With a population of just under 11,000, it is the main town in the Rhins of Galloway and commercial hub for rural and coastal villages ... Portpatrick, Lochans, Leswalt, Sandhead, Stoneykirk, Kirkcolm, Drummorie, Port Logan, Dunragit, Castle Kennedy, New Luce, Glenluce and Cairnryan... a total population of 15,397.

Our green peninsula is great for outdoor life - walking the Southern Upland Way, golfing, sailing, fishing, swimming, cycling. The South West Coastal 300 Route identifies a route for explorers. The new Kirkpatrick Coast to Coast Cycle Route from Stranraer to Eyemouth launched in summer 2023. The Rhins is home to the Mull of Galloway, Scotland's most southerly point. The town sits on Loch Ryan - an important asset, as Scotland's last remaining sustainable, native oyster fishery with an annual and Autumn Oyster Festival growing over the last five years.



*Stranraer Development Trust's growing success story - the unique Oyster Festival
Courtesy: Stranraer Development Trust
Photo: Colin Hattersley*



STRANRAER'S OFFER

- Scotland's last native oyster bed, annual Oyster Festival and Shucking Championships.
- Scotland's most southerly point, the dramatic Mull of Galloway, a Stevenson Lighthouse.
- 93 miles of coast for swimming, surfing, fishing, sailing, birdlife, sealife, wildlife, flora & fauna.
- Golf courses, country estates, gardens, and a Royal Botanic Garden.
- The Southern Upland way and coastal paths.
- Historic lighthouses, brochs, castles, standing stones.
- The birth of Stranraer's town centre: 14th century Castle of St John with historic interpretation.
- North West Castle, historic 73-bed 4 star hotel, with curling rink and pool.
- Family events: ParkFest, Spring Fling, Hogmanay Hoolie, the Cattle Show.
- Leisure facilities: Millennium Centre, Ryan Centre, Stair Park, Agnew Park.
- One of Scotland's oldest football clubs, regional rugby team, Olympic curling team.
- Innermessan 4 star campsite with 52 touring pitches, over 50 tent pitches and camping barrels.
- Community building through food and friendship: Apex food bank and the Fed Up Cafe.



ON THE GO AND IN THE PIPELINE

Dumfries & Galloway Council and local community organisations have been developing significant projects to transform Stranraer. The Watersports Centre and George Hotel are ‘green-lit’ - good to go. Priorities identified in this Place Plan will amplify and complement key projects:

- **Watersports Centre:** funding secured for centre to learn to kayak, canoe, swim and sail.
- **George Hotel:** funding secured to develop creative hub, bunkhouse, climbing/caving centre.
- **Solway Coast & Marine Project (SCAMP):** proposal for marine interpretation centre.
- **Coast to Coast Cycle Route:** starting point of Kirkpatrick cycle route to Eyemouth.
- **Furniture Project:** expand social enterprise activities to develop start-ups and upskill locals.
- **Millennium Centre:** developing plans for a youth-run cafe and more in our community centre.
- **Unexpected Garden:** successful growing project promoting health and wellbeing.
- **Stair Park:** upgraded skatepark.
- **King George V Park:** proposal for 50 new allotments and BMX Pump Track.

4. PLACE PLAN PROCESS

The catalyst for Stranraer's Place Plan was an invitation to Stranraer from Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal to prepare a community-led Plan and submit it for consideration to the £15 million Borderlands pot that is to be shared among five towns in Dumfries & Galloway.

Support from South of Scotland Enterprise enabled Stranraer Development Trust to host two posts: a six-month Place Plan Manager role to lead community-led Place Planning and a post to trail the way for the recently funded George Hotel transformation. The two roles worked closely together to find synergies and maximise resources in their overlap area... engaging with the local community.

STRANRAER'S APPROACH

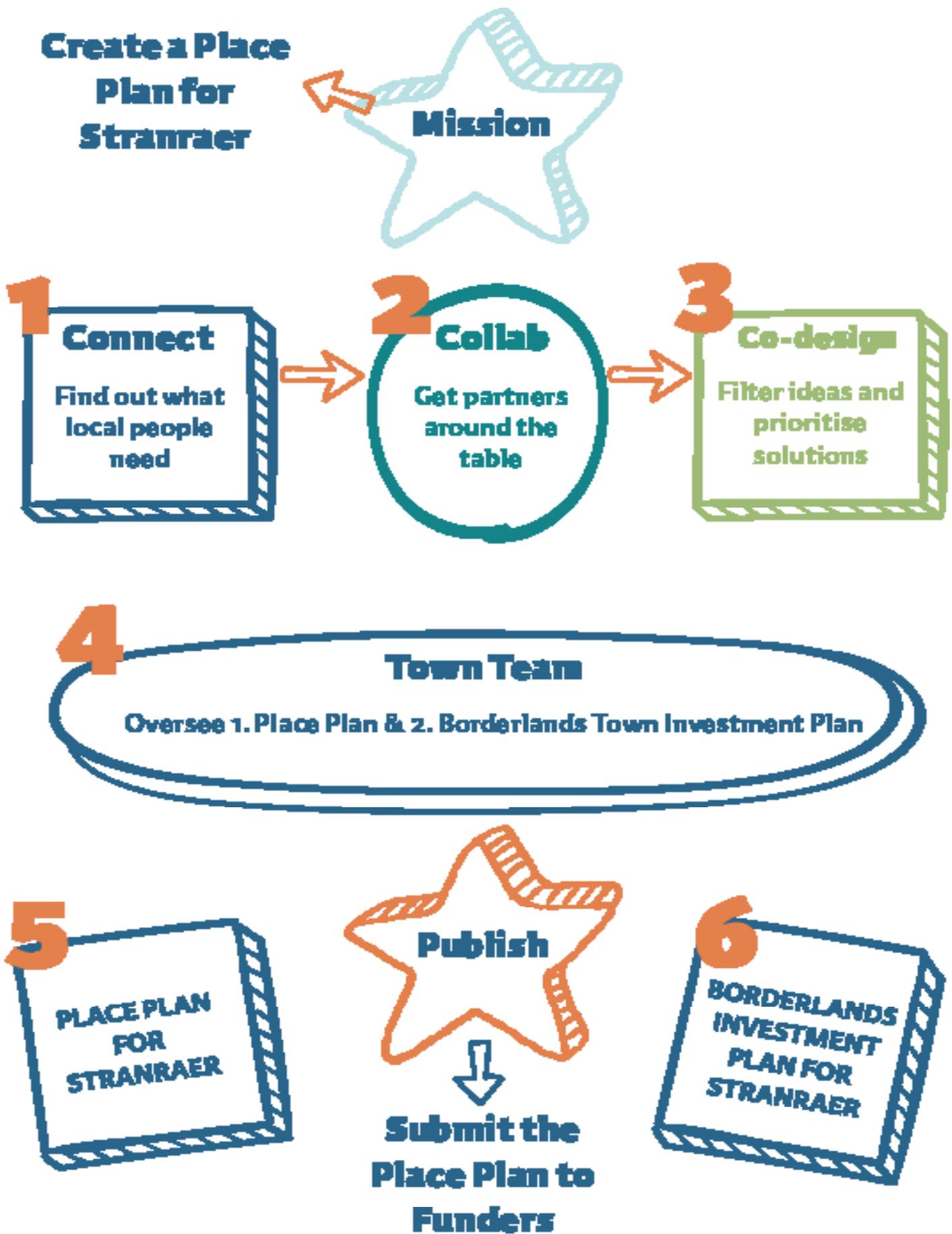
These principles guided Stranraer's approach to engagement on the Place Plan:

- **Community-led** keep ownership with locals, building community.
- **Collaboration** bring community partners together to share a vision.
- **Co-design** keep user-needs and ideas at the heart of solutions.
- **Citizen voice** reflect the authentic voice of locals and broaden their influence.

The process has been enriching for the town. Engagement has been a catalyst for community building. A Town Team of volunteers was enlisted to support the process. Various interdisciplinary groups have started to meet to develop solutions... on healthcare, wellness, drugs and alcohol, food poverty, active travel, arts development, growing (in every way).

A TEN YEAR PLAN

This Place Plan represents a vision for Stranraer for the next decade. The first test of its strength is its submission to Dumfries & Galloway for endorsement so it can be submitted to Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal Fund for consideration. Any project Borderlands is interested in supporting will require a Borderlands Town Improvement Plan (BTIP) to unpack cost-benefit for Stranraer. We aim to use Borderlands Funding to lever funds from various sources eg for the East Pier project, the £6 million Scottish Government earmarked for the East Pier's recovery. All partners in the Place Plan and local groups, networks and organisations who align with this shared vision can use the Place Plan to evidence need for their own funding applications in the coming years.



5. ENGAGEMENT

Place Planning is designed to promote a community-led approach to shaping an area's future.

We took a human-centred, service design approach... putting 'users' of the town at its heart - local people, businesses, community organisations and communities of interest. The starting point is understanding local experiences and needs. From a standing start, we worked with partners to identify stakeholders, built contacts and set up conversations, focus groups, collaboration workshops and drop-ins to connect. Once we had co-created a draft Place Plan, we invited local people to rank its priorities and feedback on the Plan in general in a month-long consultation. *See Appendices for more.*

ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
25 Oct	Wigtownshire Wellbeing	Ryan Centre
2 Nov	Listening & Visioning meet	Millennium Centre
3 Nov	Listening & Visioning meet	Stranraer Academy
9 Nov	Public consultation	Millennium Centre
16 Nov	Connectors Huddle	Millennium Centre
21 Nov	Pupil Council focus groups	Stranraer Academy
30 Nov	Field trip	Langholm Alliance
Nov-Mar	Information display	Millennium Centre
Nov-Jan	Depth interviews	Zoom/chats/in person
2 Dec	Wigtownshire Stuff	Friday Group drop-in
6 Dec	Christmas gathering	Gateway to Galloway
17 Jan	Co-Lab workshop	Millennium Centre
18-25 Jan	Drop-in week	Ryan Centre
21 Jan	Saturday stall	Castle Square
24 Jan	Listening & Visioning	Rugby Club
25 Jan	Listening & Visioning	Zoom Live
Feb-Mar	Town Team meets	Millennium Centre
1 Mar	Student focus group	Dumfries & Galloway College
15 Mar	Focus group	Rephad Primary Schools
15 Mar	Parents Night	Park Primary School
21/22 Mar	Governance workshops	Millennium Centre
23 Mar	Vision & Action	Rugby Club
27-28 Mar	Governance workshops	Millennium Centre
30 May-2 Jun	All year Assemblies	Stranraer Academy
1 Jun	Councillors briefings	Creative Hub
6 Jun	Place Plan Summit	Rugby Club
8 Jun	Public Drop-Ins	Creative Hub



Above: Co-design Huddle - filtering ideas and identifying priorities. Below: Rugby Club public meeting



ENGAGEMENT DESIGN

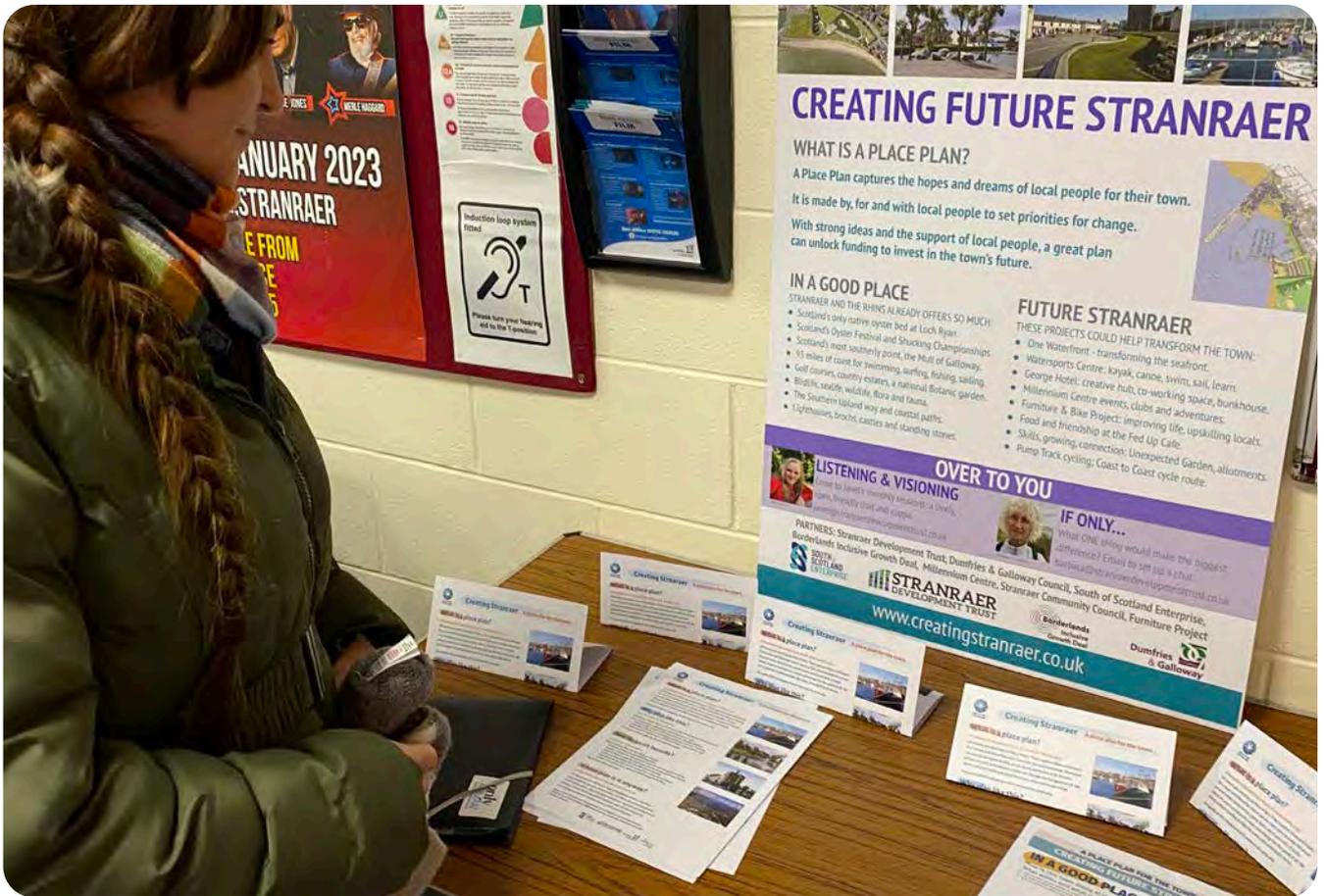
We designed engagement to throw the net widely and listen deeply. We started with a public consultation at the Millennium Centre and had a 6 month information display there. We had a Huddle with partners to identify stakeholders. We aimed to ‘meet people where they’re at’ in clubs, groups, at school, in college. We had a week-long information stall at the busy Ryan Centre. We set up stall in the town centre too. We carried out depth conversations with scores of key stakeholders. Once we’d gathered information on issues and potential solutions: the Five Strands, we ran a Co-Lab to identify on priorities then ballot on them. The Town Team mapped the Six Priorities over Four Quarters of the town... shaping the town’s transformation. We eventually took the draft Place Plan back to a 28 day consultation and used Citizen Space to rank priorities and gather feedback, fed back into this version of the Plan.





Above: Rephad Primary pupils ponder what they want for their future. Below: town centre stall.





Above: Ryan Centre information stall and drop in week. Below: Stranraer Academy all-year engagements.



ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

We used a range of tools for engagement, from information boards, blackboards, print, slide decks, flip charts, post-its, voting wands and ballot papers. The most important tools are ears and eyes - listening during conversations, focus groups, meet-ups and drop-ins; and observation - watching how people move around our town, noticing what works and what doesn't. In service design, we call this ethnography.

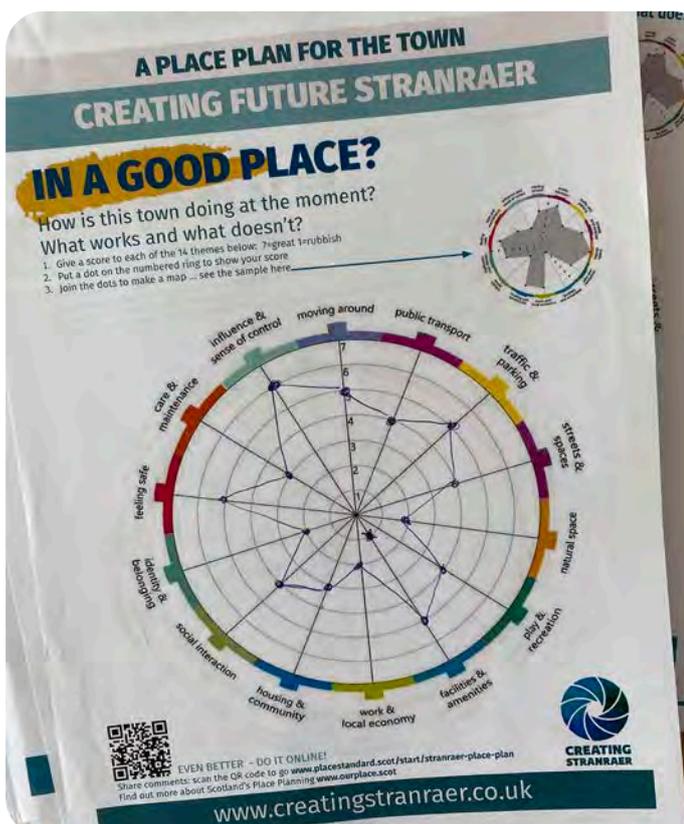
As well as face to face engagement with locals, we used the national Place Plan Tool in paper and online, distributing it via our five key community partners and big local employers, the Council and NHS. The Place Tool prompts users to assess their experience of aspects of life in Stranraer through 14 lenses and rank them.

Here are the best and worst aspects of life in Stranraer (where 1=best):

TOP FIVE

WHAT LOCALS LOVE ABOUT STRANRAER

- 1 Natural space
- 2 Feeling safe
- 3 Identity & belonging
- 4 Play & recreation
- 5 Social interaction



BOTTOM FIVE

We were least happy with these (14= worst)

- 14 Work & economy
- 13 Care & maintenance
- 12 Public transport
- 11 Influence & control
- 10 Play & recreation



This grouping of topics rated fairly neutral

- 6 Traffic & parking
- 7 Moving around
- 8 Housing & community
- 9 Facilities & amenity



Above: Park Primary Parents Night. Below: Dumfries & Galloway College Students Association.



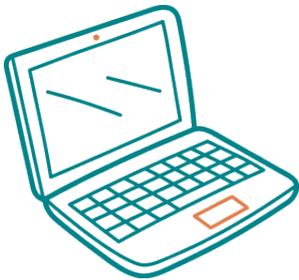
6. THE FIVE STRANDS

From our engagement, key issues clearly emerged. We organised these into Five Strands and in a workshop of stakeholders, balloted for priority issues. Find more granular detail on The Five Strands in the Appendices.



Strand 1: QUALITY OF LIFE

- **Healthcare** maternity services; clinics; sexual health; mental health
- **Poverty** social housing; employability; funeral, fuel and food poverty; resettlement
- **Drink/drugs** risky behaviour; emergency to recovery



Strand 2: WORK & OPPORTUNITY

- **Transport** timetables; routes; connections
- **Enterprise** culture of enterprise; de-risking/supporting enterprise
- **Employment** opportunities; courses; apprenticeships; volunteering



Strand 3: PLAY AND CREATIVITY

- **George Hotel** creative hub; workshops; studios; bunkhouse; climbing/caving
- **One Waterfront** Watersports Centre, Marina expansion, Unexpected Garden
- **Playtime** community/leisure centres; parks/outdoor; programming; youth



Strand 4: ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE

- **Climate** renewable energy; free/low-cost energy; active travel; routes and paths
- **Food futures** food poverty, local produce; growing; cooking; social connection
- **Environment** green-blue environments; marine protection; Biosphere



Strand 5: PRIDE & CITIZENSHIP

- **Vacant/derelict spaces** East Pier; shopfronts; community assets; public realm
- **Democracy** refreshing democracy; growing community; Citizen passport; inclusion
- **Destination Stranraer:** *One Waterfront; Rhins; Biosphere;* events; connectivity



Strand 1: Quality of Life

BIG FAT GOAL

Improve the quality of life for everyone in the town, focussing support where need is greatest.

PRIORITIES

1. **Healthcare:** maternity services; clinics; sexual health; mental health
2. **Poverty:** social housing; employability; funeral, fuel & food poverty; resettlement
3. **Drink/drugs:** risky behaviour; emergency to recovery pathways

✔ **Enabling infrastructure**

✔ **Improving places**

✔ **Improving health & wellbeing**

✔ **Creating safe communities**

There are long-standing issues of poverty and deprivation in Stranraer. The town is one of five poorest areas in the region, according to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. Over half our citizens are officially categorised as 'Financially Stretched'. More than double the number of people in town are 'Poorer Pensioners', compared with the wider region.

It's well evidenced that poverty is the key marker for poor health and wellbeing. For some, juggling two or three low-paid jobs with childcare or elder care to service, they are time poor. For others, with no work and poor prospects, they are time rich, cash poor and without support, skills and a leg-up, opportunities are closed to them. Both scenarios limit locals' ability to fulfil their potential as active citizens, contributing to their town. We're all the poorer for this in an unequal world.

Strand 1 aims to right this balance by addressing the breakdown in some key services. Place Planning has been the catalyst for partners who provide services in these areas to come together and begin conversations. The next stage is to scope and cost options, working with local people to co-design solutions. A Wellbeing Hub could create change across these connected issues. A Transport Hub and review of public transport could help people get to work. The Council's new Active Travel Strategy (ATS2) - promoting walk, wheel, cycle - will support healthier choices. We will work in partnership with Wigtownshire Active Travel Forum. All solutions very much rely on co-creating our future with service users. If we can get these right, we will all be better able to live our best lives.

**“ SOME FAMILIES ARE
DESTITUTE... THAT'S
THIRD WORLD TALK ”**

**“ GETTING TO THE
LABOUR WARD IN
DUMFRIES IS A RISK
TO LIVES ”**

**“ MY 14 YEAR OLD
FRIEND IS DOING
COKE. IF SHE CAN
FIND DEALERS,
HOW COME THE
POLICE CAN'T? ”**

**“ I HAVE A FIVE HOUR
ROUND TRIP TO
DUMFRIES FOR
APPOINTMENTS.
LAST TIME, THE
CONSULTANT
COULDN'T SEE ME ”**

**“ YOU HAVE TO TRAVEL TO AYR
FOR CREMATION. IT'S NOT
RIGHT AND IT'S MORE COST ”**



Strand 2: Work & Opportunity

BIG FAT GOAL

Offer skills-for-life and opportunities for everyone in the town who wants to grow.

PRIORITIES

1. **Transport:** timetables; routes; connections
2. **Enterprise:** culture of enterprise; de-risking/ supporting enterprise
3. **Employment:** opportunities; courses; apprenticeships; volunteering

✓ Enabling infrastructure

✓ Improving places

✓ Supporting business, innovation and skills

✓ Encouraging green growth

The population of Stranraer has fallen. We have fewer people of working age and more retired people. This has a knock-on effect in the local economy with lower spending in local shops and commercial retailers less inclined to want to locate here. This in turn reduces work opportunities.

Transport links are patchy. Rural timetables and low service users mean few rely on public transport to get to work or study. With the HQs of the Council and NHS in Dumfries, senior roles tend to be based there. This takes higher paid jobs out of Stranraer which has a ripple effect in the economy.

The College has a limited curriculum shaped by the scale of local demand. For a student finishing their HNC in Stranraer, their next step is to jump on the 6am bus to Dumfries to join the HND course, returning around 9pm each day if they want to continue to live in Stranraer while studying. Many school leavers expect to leave the area and return only to retire, depleting our talent pool.

Strand 2 looks to grow the economy and support people into work. We want local talent to stay. We want to attract fire-starters and catalysers. We need to rebrand Trades as a valuable destination for school-leavers to meet a gap in the supply market and grow enterprise. We want more high value manufacturing jobs. To attract inward investment and relocation, we need to improve infrastructure, develop a road network that's fit for purpose and develop our town's attractions. The Watersports Centre and George arts centre will make us more attractive to relocators.

Scottish Government's Strategic Transport Projects Review promises to upgrade the A77 and A75. This will help the many locals who have to drive regularly for work, meetings and medical appointments. (A rail option would be even better.) Better distributed public sector roles could grow local career prospects.

“

**THE ENTERPRISE PEOPLE
WITHDREW BUSINESS
SUPPORT SERVICES IN
STRANRAER**”

”

“

**WHEN I LEAVE
SCHOOL I'LL LEAVE
THE TOWN... MAYBE
RETIRE HERE**”

”

“

**YOU NEED EXPERIENCE
TO GET A JOB ...
YOU NEED TO BE IN
WORK TO GET AN
APPRENTICESHIP**”

”

“

**THE BUS SCHEDULE
CAN'T GET ME TO
WORK ON TIME - YOU
NEED TO BE ABLE
TO DRIVE TO GET TO
WORK**”

”

“

**THEY SHOULD
INCENTIVISE
COMPANIES TO
LOCATE HERE... THEY
DO IT IN CITIES**”

”



Strand 3: Play & Creativity

BIG FAT GOAL

Offer many reasons to visit Stranraer as the district's hub for locals, families, visitors.

PRIORITIES

1. **George Hotel:** creative hub; workshops; studios; bunkhouse; climbing/caving
2. **One Waterfront:** Watersports Centre, Marina expansion, Unexpected Garden
3. **Playtime:** community/leisure centres; parks/ outdoor; programming; youth

✓ Enabling infrastructure

✓ Improving places

✓ Supporting business, innovation and skills

✓ Encouraging blue/green growth

From the get-go, The George Hotel was on the lips of locals in Place Planning engagement. With a sense of resignation after years of complaining, they had begun demanding that The George should be pulled down. The Council stepped up and invested in the building. By the end of 2022, they secured £8.7 million to start the transformation. In the same Levelling Up Fund round, Stranraer Watersports Association secured £4.6 million for a watersports centre that will deliver our *One Waterfront* approach, reimagining Loch Ryan as an amphitheatre for watersports.

Strand 3 initiatives provide a solid infrastructure for leisure in town. The George for culture, creativity, climbing and caving. The Watersports Centre for kayaking, canoeing, paddle-boarding and Get-Wet fun. The Millennium Centre for socials, meetings, clubs and performances. The Ryan Centre for swimming, sports, film and classes. These key venues must be safeguarded. In a town with high levels of poverty, they are not money-making operations and the new venues are likely to take time to establish.

We have buoyant and popular local events... the Cattle Show, Oyster Festival, Parkfest and new-for-'22, Harvest Festival. Locals would welcome a Stranraer *Pride*. Locals are very keen to have more indoor/wet weather options like bowling, roller discos, activities for toddlers. Some of this is about programming. Some needs investment in infrastructure. Groups need to develop joint programming and joint working to share limited resources and promote all that's available as a Stranraer package.

**THERE'S NOT MUCH FOR
TEENAGERS**

**WE NEED WET-
WEATHER
ACTIVITIES...
10-PIN BOWLING,
AN ARCADE,
LASER TAG**

**FAMILY
ACTIVITIES
NEED TO BE
AFFORDABLE -
UNDER A TENNER**

**WE GO TO AYR AND
SPEND £100. WE COULD
BE SPENDING THAT IN
STRANRAER**

**WE NEED MORE
EVENTS AND
FESTIVALS**



Strand 4: Climate & Environment

BIG FAT GOAL

Celebrate, promote and protect our unique natural environment.

PRIORITIES

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Climate: renewable energy; free/low-cost energy; active travel; routes and paths 2. Food futures: food poverty, local produce; growing; cooking; social connection 3. Environment: green-blue environments; marine protection; Biosphere | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Enabling infrastructure ✔ Improving places ✔ Supporting business, innovation and skills ✔ Encouraging blue/green growth |
|--|--|

The Rhins of Galloway is a beautiful and relatively untouched part of Scotland. With Class A farming land, lush and tropical gardens and 93 miles of coast, growing, environment and climate concerns are close to locals' hearts. It's a sobering thought that by 2050, Tescos - sited well off the lochside - will be at risk of flooding.

Strand 4 recognises the need to reduce cars, develop renewables like wind and solar farms and take advantage of government schemes (tax relief, tax benefits, support and incentives) to drive sensible, responsible, future-focussed stewardship of our environment.

Our peninsula is part of Galloway's Dark Skies initiative and we are now part of Galloway and Southern Ayrshire's Biosphere... recognised and protected by UNESCO as a world class environment for people and nature. There are opportunities to develop as a centre of expertise for marine life. The Unexpected Garden is a successful model project we want to nurture, with a focus on growing, learning, protecting the environment and building community around plant and food knowledge.

We welcome tourists. We ask them to be caretakers of our riches, as we do our citizens. It's essential that in the process of change, we protect the natural environment and historic assets and manage clean energy capture and production with low emissions and careful waste management.

We will work with the Council and partners, Wigtownshire Active Travel Forum, to promote cleaner transport as part of the Active Travel Strategy encouraging locals and visitors to walk, wheel, cycle.

“ RENEWABLE ENERGY
COULD POWER PUBLIC
SERVICES FOR FREE...
OUR HOSPITAL,
COMMUNITY CENTRE, ”
SCHOOLS

“ WE SHOULD ‘GREEN’
WASTELANDS AT THE
HEART OF THE TOWN ”

“ AS WE CHANGE
AND GROW, LET’S
KEEP IT GREEN ”

“ WE NEED TO JOIN UP
THE MOVING PARTS OF
THE FOOD CHAIN ”

“ LET’S CELEBRATE
OUR AGRICULTURAL
HERITAGE ”



Strand 5: Pride & Citizenship

BIG FAT GOAL

Use the Place Plan process as a trigger for total transformation (nothing less will do).

PRIORITIES

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vacant/derelict spaces: East Pier; shopfronts; community assets; public realm 2. Democracy: refreshing democracy; growing community; Citizen passport; inclusion 3. Destination Stranraer: One Waterfront; Rhins; Biosphere; events; connectivity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Enabling infrastructure ✓ Improving places ✓ Supporting business, innovation and skills ✓ Encouraging green growth |
|---|---|

The south west of Scotland is one of only two UK destinations Lonely Planet lists in its *Must See 2023* guide. Visitors arriving in Stranraer by train might be disappointed. Elaine C Smith asked her audience at Stranraer's Millennium Centre, "*why do you put up with this*", talking about the state of the East Pier and station. Limmy, comedian and Twitch streamer, giving a running commentary on his on-screen, virtual arrival at Stranraer railway station was left almost speechless: "*Is that the station?!*" (... stream of expletives...) "*That's shocking.*"

Strand 5 discussions proved that local people are not short of ideas for the East Pier. Indeed they have shared them over and over in the last decade. They express frustration at having experienced over-consultation and under-delivery over the years on this topic.

During Place Plan engagement, we heard that old ways of consulting - like public meetings - don't suit everyone. Many expressed a desire to harness the technology in their hands (mobile phones) and vote online. We picked up on this idea during Place Planning and secured Community Led Vision funding for *Citizen Space*, a digital engagement platform, to open up democracy. We will harness this to continue engagement with locals, inviting feedback to shape the Place Plan and projects that emerge once we secure investment.

Stranraer aims to refresh community pride and citizenship through Place Planning. The change has already begun. The future's bright.

“

**THE EAST PIER IS A
DISGRACE. THIS IS
OUR TOP PRIORITY.**

”

“

**IF YOU NEED HELP
BUYING TRAIN
TICKETS, GO TO
GIRVAN**

”

“

**IT'S TIME TO SHIFT
GEAR: DO IT UP OR
TAKE IT DOWN**

”

“

**SOME VOICES ARE
OVER-REPRESENTED.
WE NEED BETTER
BALANCE.**

”

“

**WE NEED TO USE
DIGITAL MORE
TO ENGAGE...
EVERYONE'S GOT A
MOBILE**

”

7. THE SIX PRIORITIES

We took the plethora of issues and ideas from Five Strands to a 'Huddle' - a workshop representing all sectors of the community. We shared the many solutions locals had proposed. See section 6 and Appendices for more detail. We invited the large group to discuss these and prioritise them, strand by strand. We used ballot papers for privacy and anonymity. After processing the ballot, we identified priorities to focus on. In the next and final stage, we would invite locals to rank them. These are their top priorities before ranking. See section 9 for ranking.

East Pier Eventspace

Smarten up the East Pier. Create a prom to walk, cycle and host events.
Connect rail and bus at a transport hub

Dick's Hill Wellbeing Hub

A shared resource for wellbeing, growing skills, social connection and activities.

Sanctuary Outdoor Nursery

Child care provision in outdoor setting. Enable parents to get into work.
Provide skills and placements for college students.

The Big Makeover

Transform the town centre. Do up shopfronts and streetscapes.
Connect the town to the waterfront.

Revive: Town Centre Living

Explore options to transform empty shops for housing and enterprise.

Wet Weather Escapes

Indoor family fun - like bowling or laser tag - in the town centre.

As the ranking form opposite shows, we attached very broad-brush figures to the Six Priorities to help local people think about scale and relatively, pointing out that for capital projects, even £5 million is not enough to deliver all the projects in our sights.

*We had no accurate costings to work with.
Investment plans would be the next stage to flesh out cost-benefits.*

Below: partners shared paper versions of the ranking exercise in their venues to ensure it was accessible to all. Library staff were briefed on the Place Plan, Citizen Space and the process so they could offer support.

HOW COULD STRANRAER SPEND £5 MILLION?

RANK YOUR PRIORITIES



HOW COULD STRANRAER SPEND £5 MILLION?

RANK YOUR PRIORITIES

Stranraer town council is preparing a 10-year Place Plan. A £4.4m Priority Plan is being developed for £5 million for 6 towns. After 6 months of consultation, these are now being prioritised. We're looking for £5 million. We might not get it all, but we speak in millions. See the Plan at www.stranraer.gov.uk or click on Citizen Space to visit (use the QR code).



Ideas	Proposal	Detail	Impact	SRAGTT (5-yr budget priority)
East Pier EventSpace £1.5 million	Smarten up the East Pier. Create a prom to walk, cycle and host events. Connect rail and bus at a transport hub.	Transform the East Pier area into an open space for outdoor events and a prom to walk and sit. Create a train to cycle park. Create a transport hub for bus, rail, taxi, car; the starting point for the new Coast-to-Coast Cycle route to Eyremohy.	Grew events economy. Grew work opportunities. Attract visitors. Improve visitor experience. Develop opportunities for growing the economy.	
Dick's Hill Wellbeing Hub £300,000	A shared resource for wellbeing, growing skills, social connection and activities.	Take over a vacant building in Dick's Hill as a community wellbeing hub shared by Homecare, Unexpected Garden (growing), Fruit & Veg 4 All (H), Community Allotments, Health and Wellbeing partners, Community Radio, Royal British Legion, aged establishments etc more.	Upskill local people. Share resources. Build community. Free food (growing). Food knowledge for health. Cookery skills.	
Sanctuary Outdoor Nursery £500,000	Child care provision in outdoor setting. Enable parents to get into work. Provide skills and placements for college students.	Develop an outdoor pre-school nursery on a well serviced area planned for the 20 acre wasteland behind the football ground. Support parents to get back to work and provide learning in nature for children. (D&G College provides training qualifications in childcare.)	Provide childcare to support parents to work. Offer childcare placements and jobs to students at D&G College. Grow children's skills and confidence.	
The Dig Waterfront £500,000	Transform the town centre. Dup shopsfronts and streetscapes. Connect the town to the Waterfront.	Transform town centre. Remove weeds (mainly) and graffiti. Improve streets with awnings, lighting, lights, decorative vinyls on windows of vacant buildings. Commit to a grant for gap sites. Improve signs on premises, information and to the waterfront. Make derelict properties safe.	Improve environment. Enhance visitor experience. Make vacant shops attractive. Grow businesses.	
River's Town Centre Living £1 million	Explore options to transform empty shops for housing and enterprise.	Work with landlords, agents and developers to take empty shops and community ownership and convert them to flats and business units that offer 'instant' opportunities for new start businesses, social enterprise, community activities, creatives, nursery care.	Develop housing. Bring football into town centre. Attract new business. Create culture of enterprise. Grow economy.	
West Waterfront Escapes £1.2 million	Indoor family fun - like bowling or laser tag - in the town centre.	Develop community managed leisure for leisure and, right to play, aley/laser tag. Safeguard and upgrade existing community infrastructure (the Kaurum and Ryan Centres). Offer work for local people.	Keep leisure spend local. Develop leisure for day visitors. Provide work for locals. Grow economy. Develop skills.	

Name	_____
Email (send to:)	_____

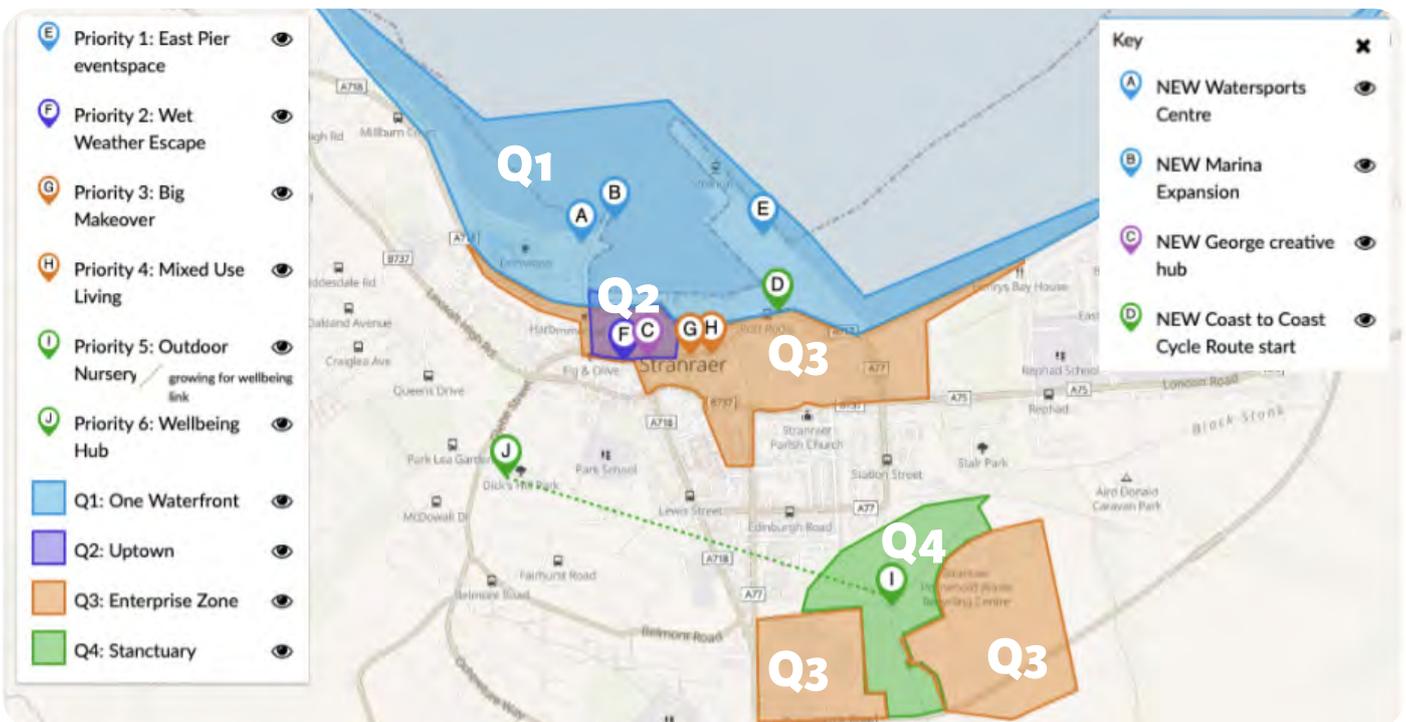
Please return this to staff or email a copy to projects@stranraer.gov.uk or info@stranraer.gov.uk

Quarter 1: One Waterfront

Quarter 2: Uptown

Quarter 3: Enterprise Zone

Quarter 4: Stanctuary



The Four Quarters identify zones for a range of activities in the town:

Q1: One Waterfront - outdoor leisure activities

Q2: Uptown - indoor culture and leisure

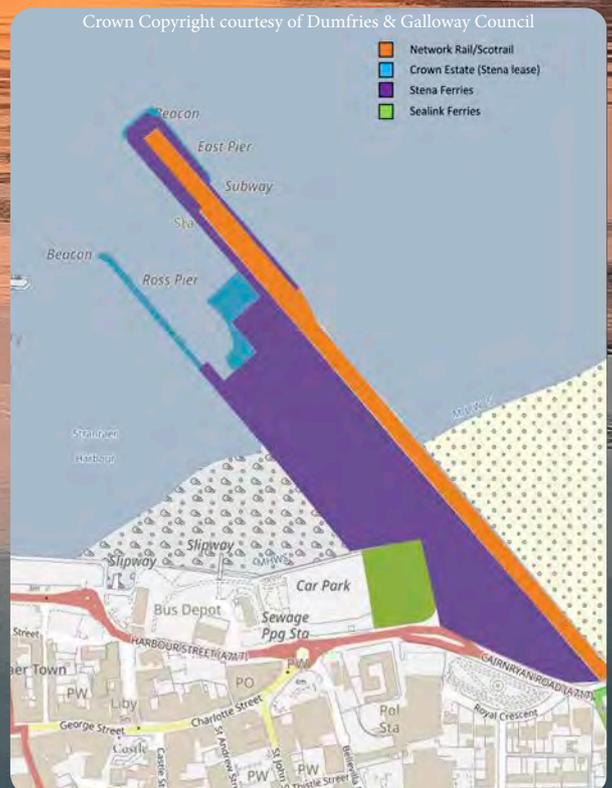
Q3: Enterprise Zone - retail, business, enterprise, skills

Q4: Stanctuary - nature, learning, health and wellbeing

QUARTER 1: ONE WATERFRONT

With a dramatic arrival by train, spectacular sunsets and views to Arran over Loch Ryan, the East Pier could be Stranraer's greatest asset. It is currently, and for the last decade, has been its biggest liability.

Let's flip that.



EAST PIER OWNERSHIP

Crown Estates own the seabed and foreshore
The Pier is leased by Stenaline (purple/blue)
and Network Rail (orange)

Q1: One Waterfront

Aim: Reimagine the whole waterfront as One Waterfront - an amphitheatre for watersports and hub for eco-tourism for the Rhins, with new Watersports Centre and much expanded Marina. Bring the East Pier into community use, transforming the land registered as *Vacant & Derelict* with an intervention to create a promenade, piazza and events space, connected by paths along the lochside into town. Develop an integrated Transport Hub as a safe and well-designed starting point for the thousands expected to flock to the new Coast to Coast Cycle Route. Phase one explore landscaping this significant piece of public realm to be fit to flex for future uses. Long term, explore the best position for the station and Transport Hub.

- Partners are owners Crown Estates and leaseholders, Stena Line and Network Rail.
- Scottish Government pledged £6 million to aid the town's recovery after the ferries left 10 years ago.
- Stranraer Watersports Centre has secured £4.6 million Levelling Up Funding with 10% match funding by Dumfries & Galloway Council.
- Borderlands has invested £16 million and Dumfries & Galloway Council £2 million in the Marina expansion project.
- We look to Dumfries & Galloway Council and South of Scotland Enterprise to support exploring and developing the waterfront.



Loch Ryan looking to Ailsa Craig and Arran: photo Colfin Captures

Loch Ryan as an amphitheatre for watersports

Develop the seafront from the Cockleshore to Broadstone, embracing a transformed East Pier promenade and piazza, a much expanded Marina, The Unexpected Garden, Agnew Park and the new Stranraer Watersports Centre and potential Solway Coast and Marine Project (SCAMP) marine interpretation centre.

The inclusive Watersports Centre adjacent to the 230 berth Marina will create an anchor attraction in the town centre and develop Loch Ryan as an amphitheatre for watersports, attracting watersports events like the Skiff World Championships and Scottish Fin & Foil Championships.

Locals and visitors will be attracted to play, learn and thrive on the water, offering locals skills training and job opportunities, attracting sailing boats to the substantial marina and visitors to the Rhins of Galloway.

We will embrace our Green value and the opportunity to be the starting point for the new Kirkpatrick Coast to Coast Cycle Route by making the town centre and waterfront cycle friendly.

The illustration below shows one early vision of the East Pier's potential. This gives a sense of the scale of the space and its relative impact as the arrival point in town. The purple buildings shown on the pier were designed to demonstrate commercial potential for leisure, housing and retail development. Investment has not materialised yet. Image courtesy of Dumfries & Galloway Council.



Integrated waterfront

The town needs a single vision approach to the town's lochside location. These are key elements in the scheme:

- **East Pier EventSpace:** The community would like to explore potential to revitalise the space to create a promenade, piazza and open space for walking, cycling, learn-to-cycle park, circular routes and paths, events space for the Oyster Festival, the Shows (visiting fair), house an iconic beacon sculpture and develop green pockets. We aim to explore the East Pier's future together with owners, Crown Estates and leaseholders Stena Line and Network Rail, supported by partners, Dumfries & Galloway Council. We will look to the Council for support to commission a feasibility study to update our data on options and cost-benefits.
- **Welcome:** design arrival, wayfinding routes and digital visitor information from the East Pier's Transport Hub to all Four Quarters: One Waterfront, Uptown, the Enterprise Zone and Stanctuary. Consider in wayfinding design the needs of growing visitor numbers attracted by the town's improved offer and the thousands of cyclists attracted by the Coast to Coast Cycle Route. Ensure the infrastructure supports and directs their stay, keeping spend in the town before travellers set off and providing accommodation for visitors to stay in hotels, B&Bs, caravan sites and The George bunkhouse.
- **Railway Station:** make the East Pier and its station a visitor attraction. Showcase Scotland's oldest signal box currently protected but hidden from view at the end of the pier, creating a railway enthusiasts visitor attraction, with occasional steam trains tooting all the way down the track. Explore the cost-benefit of moving the station/platform towards the town end of the East Pier at Port Rodie or revive the old station at Station Street, aligning any plans with the new Transport Hub.
- **Transport Hub:** create a safe hub for rail, bus, car, cycle, pedestrians with timetables, public information, water bottle point, charging points for phones, bikes and cars. Embrace the opportunity to be the starting point of the new Coast to Coast Cycle Route - a much-coveted position. Factor into the transport review the projection of 70,000 cyclists - 400 a day in the high season - setting off on the 250 mile route to Eyemouth, launching June 2023. Align to Council's Active Travel Strategy (ATS2) and Transport Review, keeping our Green value in check. Connect with Wigtownshire Active Travel Forum as a potential partner. Work with Dumfries & Galloway Council to explore options with East Pier leaseholders, Stena Line, to move lorry parks from the Pier to the industrial estate, the town's periphery or nearer the ferries at Cairnryan.



*Stranraer Watersports Centre from slipway looking towards marina.
Image: John Renshaw Architects*





*Potential Marine Interpretation Centre - part
of Solway Coast And Marine Project (SCAMP).
Photo courtesy Dumfries & Galloway Council*

Q2: Uptown

Aim: Develop the town centre's Uptown as its culture, leisure and community quarter, centred on the phoenix-like return of the George Hotel creative hub with neighbours - the refurbished Museum, nearby Library and Millennium Centre.

Develop a community-managed wet weather family leisure offer. Safeguard and upgrade existing leisure venues, infrastructure and facilities. Meantime, support the new temporary King Street Creative Hub, trailing the way for the George Hotel. Offer local tradespeople construction work. Ensure contractors provide placements and skill exchange opportunities to local people as part of their Community Benefits to enable long term unemployed to get into work.

- The George Hotel transformation has already secured £8.7 million from Levelling Up and Dumfries & Galloway Council.
- The Museum upgrade is underway.
- **George Hotel:** transform the crumbling George as an anchor attraction for the town's recovery with exhibition and retail space, workshops, artists studios, climbing/caving playground and 30 bed bunkhouse for artists residencies and active travellers including cyclists on the Coast to Coast Cycle Route and walkers on the Southern Upland Way. Due for launch in 2025.
- **Creative Hub:** sustain the temporary creative hub trailing the George's launch. Sited beside the new Tragic O'Hara mural, opposite the *Blin' Johnny* sculpture, down from the harbour's photo wall, this is an essential resource building a network of creative practitioners, growing audiences for exhibitions and attracting participants for events.
- **Wet Weather escapes:** explore potential to develop new wet weather leisure like the oft-requested 10-pin bowling or laser tag. Safeguard and upgrade the town's key community and leisure centres (Millennium and Ryan Centre) and develop coordinated programming, sharing resources, joint promotion and developing zones for young people in these community centres.
- **Museum & Library:** sustain these essential elements of our cultural heritage, as centres for play, learning and research.

The roofless George Hotel, now rescued for development as a creative hub, bunkhouse and playground for all ages.

The George transformation: interior (facing page); exterior (page 51).





*George Hotel creative hub:
ground floor exhibition and retail space.*

Image: Collective Architecture





Above: the phoenix-like George Hotel anchors the new Uptown Quarter for culture and leisure with neighbouring Stranraer Museum, well-used Millennium Centre, nearby Library and temporary King Street creative hub.

Left: the George's courtyard climbing and caving playground.

Images: Collective Architecture

Q3: Enterprise Zone

Aim: Transform the town centre facade and infrastructure to support and encourage enterprise. Revive town centre living to drive residents and footfall into the town. Nurture and grow Stranraer's economy and create new employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. Animate the high street through 'meantime opportunities'.

- **Town Makeover:** Transform the high street, supplementing the town's Shopfront Improvement Scheme to support the town's independent shops with colourful paint schemes and awnings over shops; apply decorative vinyls to windows of vacant buildings; commission murals for gap sites and buildings; remove weeds from roofs and facades. Improve wayfinding and path-making from town centre to sea. Make derelict properties safe. Improve arterial routes to town.
- **Revive: Town Centre Living:** Animate the town centre, working with landlords, agents and developers to explore 'meantime opportunities' - short term, low cost leases for start-ups, entrepreneurs and artists - to inject life into the town centre. Develop mixed use sites and schemes for housing, retail and enterprise.
- **Vacant/derelict sites:** Review *Vacant & Derelict Properties Register* to bring save significant historical buildings from ruin or deal with their demise. 'Green' derelict and waste ground.
- **Industrial Park:** keep industrial enterprise in this secondary, out of town zone. Explore moving Stena's lorry parks here or north towards ferry terminals. Improve safe Active Travel routes. Provides routes and paths for residents to access the Furniture Project and Zero Waste site, supporting its expansion. Invest in green energy to power community assets. Attract high value manufacturing to the industrial park.





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mocha
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Hot chocolate ~ med
Chai latte £3.50 large

COAST

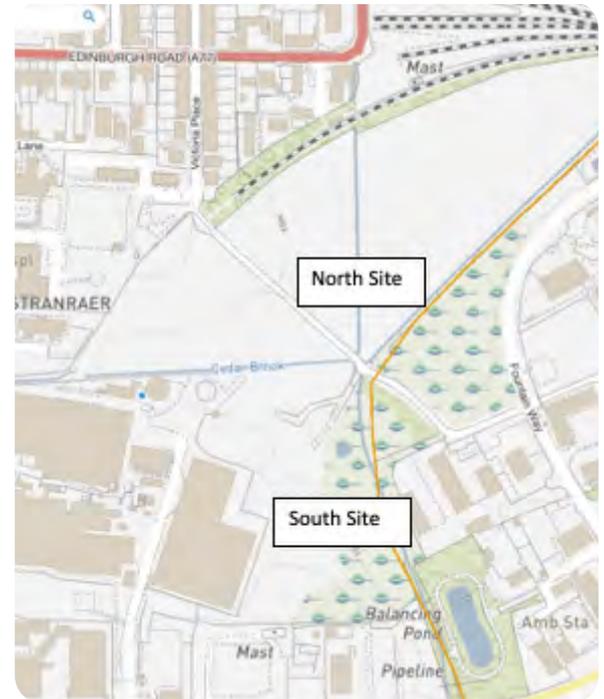
Q4: Stanctuary

Aim: Develop the unused land along the evocatively named Black Stank burn as a 20-acre wild wellbeing Sanctuary - or our preferred, ironic, playful name: *Stanctuary* - protecting and promoting blue-green life with potential for an outdoor nursery, wild play and for an outdoor learning centre for children and adults.

Develop an Outdoor Nursery to offer children the chance to grow in nature. This will provide placements and jobs for childcare students at the local college and support parents to return to work.

Develop a linked Wellbeing Hub in nearby Dick's Hill, a growing base and connection into the local community. This could trail the way for the Stanctuary.

Below: Black Stank site beyond the railway line and behind Stranraer's Football Stadium



- **Outdoor nursery:** Support locals back into work by providing childcare that offers rich learning and growing experiences. Offer students at Dumfries & Galloway College placements, work experience and jobs in childcare.
- **Dick's Hill Wellbeing Hub:** link Stanctuary to a nearby Wellbeing Hub and early base for growing, trailing the way for the Stanctuary. There is currently a potential Community Asset Transfer of a vacant building in Dick's Hill, one of the most economically challenged areas of the Rhins. The Hub will support families to grow skills and confidence to get into work and build ownership in the Stanctuary for the townspeople. A shared community tenancy of the Hub will develop support growing community and building capacity and skills... growing, food knowledge, diet and recipes and cooking skills. The Hub will host Moveable Feast, the next iteration of the successful Unexpected Garden project on the seafront... a growing and food project that can reach out across the town and the Rhins as part of a regional and national Food Futures movement, a potential partner in the South West for Glasgow School of Art's Forres-based Rural Food Futures Lab. This will improve health and wellbeing through food knowledge, diet, cooking, connection with food sources and local produce, allotments and growing.
- **Wild Wellness:** develop a wild play adventure playground, wild wellness hub and outdoor learning centre, developing circular routes, paths and raised walkways through the Stanctuary for walking and cycling as part of the town's broader Active Travel scheme... all designed to accommodate natural seasonal flooding.

Galloway Glens project modelling the way for our new Stanctuary quarter: images Duncan Ireland





The Unexpected Garden, one of the national Dandelion projects on Stranraer's seafront, proving that if you can grow it here - on the wild and salty water's edge - you can grow it anywhere.

The Unexpected Garden's Moveable Feast project will trail the way for the development of the 20-acre Stanctuary: Quarter Four on our future Stranraer map through a growing base in Dick's Hill Wellbeing Hub - one of the community's Six Priorities. This growing project ticks many boxes. It improves plant knowledge, gardening skills, relationships with food and with access to free, freshly grown produce that can improve diet and health.





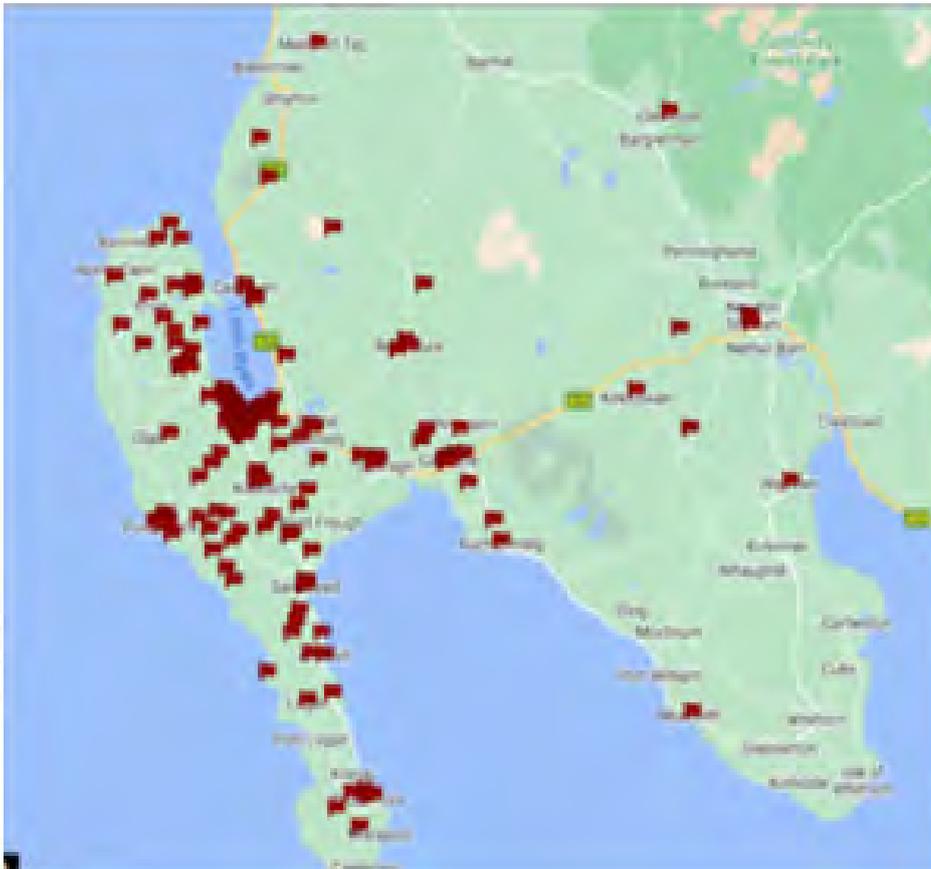
9. FINAL FEEDBACK

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

At the end of the engagement and co-design process, in June 2023, we published a draft of the Place Plan and launched a month-long consultation on Citizen Space, our digital democracy platform. See more on Citizen Space on p11. We engaged as widely as possible:

- We reached out to local people through a launch to the media and on social media.
- We shared the Plan, its Six Priorities and the Citizen Space survey online, through partners, direct mail, at a public meeting and at a series of Assemblies at Stranraer Academy for all pupils.
- We briefed local Elected Members and offered public drop-ins.
- We briefed Library staff to support the public to respond.

Over 600 people took part in the Place Plan survey



At the end of the consultation, with a robust sample of the population responding to our survey, we lodged an Expression of Interest with the Council so that this Place Plan can be registered and taken into consideration as part of the Local Development Plan process, influencing Planning decisions for the next decade.



Stranraer's Place Plan hits the news on BBC Radio and DnG24

There was a good spread of participation across the Rhins and beyond from the many who use Stranraer as their 'hub' for work, play and life

RANKING THE SIX PRIORITIES

We invited people to offer feedback on the Place Plan and crucially, rank the Six Priorities... reminding respondents that **ALL six projects remain priorities.**

We're not knocking any priorities out at this stage... all Six Priorities have been through a filtering process. The ranking task in the survey was designed to help the team determine where to focus resources. We may yet have to make choices eg

- focus all resources on one project to make the most of the money we have
- put more money into a top priority
- start with a quick win while long term projects simmer away
- abandon a priority if the numbers don't stack up when we dig in a little more.

Here are the Six Priorities, ranked by locals:

See comments about each of the Six Priorities in the Appendices.

1. East Pier Eventspace
2. Wet Weather Escapes
3. Big Makeover
4. Revive: Town Centre Living
5. Stanctuary Outdoor Nursery
6. Dick's Hill Wellbeing Hub

The robust engagement behind our community-led Place Plan gives the town a mandate for change

“ THIS AREA IS
UNDISCOVERED - LET'S
MAKE IT DISCOVERABLE

IT'S TIME TO PUT
STRANRAER BACK ON
THE MAP ”

*These are some of the
comments from
survey feedback*

“ FORWARD- THINKING AND
AMBITIOUS...INSPIRING...
POSITIVE... AMAZING...
BRAVE...CLEAR VISION...
EXCELLENT... LOVE THE ”
ENERGY BEHIND
THE PLAN

“ LET'S SWITCH
PERCEPTIONS FROM
EX-FERRY TOWN TO
THRIVING
COMMUNITY ”

FOCUS ON JOBS,
ENERGY, MONEY

“ YOU'LL NEVER PLEASE
ALL THE PEOPLE ALL
THE TIME ”

THANKS FOR THE
CHANCE TO HAVE
MY SAY ”

“ ALL PROJECTS WILL CONSUME
CASH, NEVER PROVIDE IT ”

£5 MILLION - AIRY FAIRY
PIPE DREAM ”

HOPE IT'S NOT
PIE IN THE SKY ”

*See more comments in the
Appendices and on
Citizen Space at
www.creatingstranraer.co.uk*

10. CONCLUSION

Place Planning has been an energetic, collaborative process. The community has united around this One Vision, One Plan approach... a shared ambition and collective understanding of opportunity that has emerged through community-led Place Planning.

Acknowledging a decade of neglect, a sense of broken promises and under-investment in Stranraer, we look to Government and partners in local government and funding bodies to get behind our Place Plan. We are in desperate need of capital funding promised when the ferries left to transform the town and its hollowed-out infrastructure.

Communities need revenue funding to achieve and sustain growth. We ask funders to recognise this as a significant issue. The current short-term, piecemeal project funding environment pits neighbouring community groups against each other. It's not conducive to partnership working. It's exhausting and drains limited resources. It's not sustainable for a town like Stranraer. We need a longer term, more robust base for growth.

Councils have been shedding community assets and reducing services as public funding has shrunk. Stranraer's community organisations need revenue support if they are to take on the challenge of stepping up. This is certainly the case if we are being asked to commission detailed Business Investment Plans and procure capital projects funders support. For a town facing multiple deprivation - like Stranraer - it's unrealistic to build an arts centre or community centre and expect the community to operate it as a cost-neutral operation straight off. We need time and support to grow capacity. These and other points are covered in the Appendix: *Insights*.

On the upside, we're ambitious, keen and optimistic. We're excited by the Place Planning process and all the conversations we've shared - getting on the same page, realising we're singing from the same song sheet, starting to get a sense of the (sometimes latent) talent in the town. We've enjoyed the process and appreciate the support and partnership with Dumfries & Galloway Council and South of Scotland Enterprise. We're confident that together, we can effect change.

The real deal

“This Place Plan is the real deal. This is our chance to change the story of Stranraer, and change it together. We have understood the importance of speaking to everyone, listening to everyone. It's not about what others think Stranraer could have or should have, it's what locals want and need. We are grateful and delighted to have this invitation to unite as a community behind One Vision, One Plan. It is our absolute intention to deliver for local people.”

Romano Petrucci
Chair, Stranraer Development Trust & Steering Group member

STEERING GROUP STATEMENT

A Steering Group of volunteers - Romano Petrucci, Douglas McMillan, Alex Haswell, Harry Harbottle - brought long experience of government agencies, community activism and enterprise to support the Place Project Manager, along with funding partners from South of Scotland Enterprise and Dumfries & Galloway Council.

These are the words of the Steering Group:

“We have been told for years by public bodies that Stranraer ‘needs to get its act together’ to unlock funds to transform the town and its people’s wellbeing. Well, we got our act together. We’ve undertaken extensive engagement with our citizens – not just the usual suspects - culminating in an aspirational Place Plan. Let’s catch this wave and ALL RISE ON THE TIDE!”

“This Place Plan gathers all the strands of locals’ threads of thought and weaves a picture of a bright future. We are very grateful that over the last nine months the whole town has come together to support this process.

“We, the Steering Group volunteers, need the support of a charismatic, agile catalyst to keep the pot boiling, keep the lines of communication open, and help us to vault barriers - like Stena’s proposed lorry parks - while this Plan progresses through formal funding channels. There is no question that we should look to South of Scotland Enterprise, Dumfries & Galloway Council and Scottish Government for the resources needed NOW to keep up the momentum built over these months of Place Planning.

“Borderlands invited the town to bid for a share of its £15 million pot. We’ve secured Levelling Up Funds for two flagship change projects. A dedicated resource is essential not to lose pace on our road to social, economic and physical regeneration of Stranraer. This is not a new ask. It has been on the table for some considerable time.

“Finally, many have been championing change for decades - too many to mention - but let’s acknowledge Councillors Willie Scobie and the late Grahame Forster, authors of Stranraer Tourism, Leisure & Culture paper and Steve Sloane’s Phoenix paper on behalf of the Smart Group, paving the way for this Place Plan. We were delighted that Stranraer born-and-bred Barbara Chalmers led the mission to engage and craft the Plan. A truly community-led Plan.”

WITH THANKS

TOWN TEAM

Thanks to the commitment of local people with broad ranging interests and experience who joined our Town Team to help shape the Plan. They joined as individuals, not representatives of organisations, though between them, they had links to the 5 community partner groups (below):

- Nikki-Marie Vjatschslav, Chair - growing and community
- Cloe Allison - youth and democracy
- Harry Harbottle - community led development, watersports
- Fiona Herron - further education
- Finlay Lamont - inclusion and active travel
- Mike Lane - education, enterprise
- Catriona McGhie - music, arts, culture, community
- Sandra McHarrie - community council, arts
- Murdo Macleod - health and wellbeing
- Douglas McMillan - business development
- Eva Milroy - further education, community ownership
- Paul Smith - environment and enterprise

Thanks to Dumfries & Galloway Council's Chris Churms, Borderlands Programme and Kerry Monteith, Council Ward Officer; to Lena Hutton, South of Scotland Enterprise and to Jane Stanistreet, Third Sector Dumfries & Galloway for support.

5 COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Thanks to the teams at five key community partner organisations who collaborated on the Plan:

- **Stranraer Development Trust** - this charity runs the Gateway to Galloway tourist office, the annual Oyster Festival, organises flower beds across the waterfront and coordinates projects. The Trust has hosted the Place Plan process on behalf of the whole town through a short-term role funded by South of Scotland Enterprise.
- **Millennium Centre** - this charity runs Stranraer's main community centre in the heart of the town, with meeting rooms, hall/theatre, dance studio and recording studio. The Centre is home to weekly groups, classes, clubs, monthly markets and runs youth and arts activities.
- **Furniture Project** - with a 20-year Council contract to deliver local reuse services, this social enterprise runs a dynamic community reuse centre and town centre thrift shop recycling clothes, homeware, office furniture, bikes and more, tackling poverty, reducing waste, offering volunteer opportunities and employability skills.
- **Stranraer Watersports Association** - developing Stranraer Watersport Centre as a community hub encouraging inclusive access to the water and developing skills; stimulating commerce on Loch Ryan with a watersports events programme of national and international importance.
- **Stranraer Community Council** - the first tier of democracy, linking local people to Council and Scottish Government issues.

Afterword



I have been delighted to work with locals to pull this Plan together. It's a personal mission and passion to help this town flourish.

There's history

Of my 4 sets of my great grandparents, one ran the Poor House in Stranraer, another the drapers in George Street, one ran the Downshire in Portpatrick and the others had followed that

era's trend and migrated south to Wigtownshire to farm near the Lochans where I grew up and went to school. On their dad's side, my children's grandfather was one of the surviving crew of the Princess Victoria and his scrapbook has been on display at the Millennium Centre for the 75th anniversary of the tragedy. Other folks in the town have similar patchwork quilts of family stories.

Names and faces echo down the years in these streets and key features like the Princess Victoria memorial, the Gardens of Friendship, Agnew Park, Stair Park remain. I love that many aspects of this town have changed little. The high street still features independent shops and cafes from my childhood: Barbours, Simpsons, Gillespies, Aitkens, Baxters, Lochs, the Alexandra, the Petrucci family now at the Central Cafe, the McMillan family recently moved on from North West Castle - and their family members all play key roles in sustaining the town, active in community leadership.

Adding to the sense of community built by those who've stayed with the town through its ups and downs, there are always new faces arriving, bringing fresh energy, diversity and new ideas that just make us stronger. Together, we look forward to seeing our beloved town thrive.

Barbara Chalmers, Place Plan Project Manager

*New One Waterfront quarter flying the flag for Stranraer's transformation
photo Pete Robinson*





