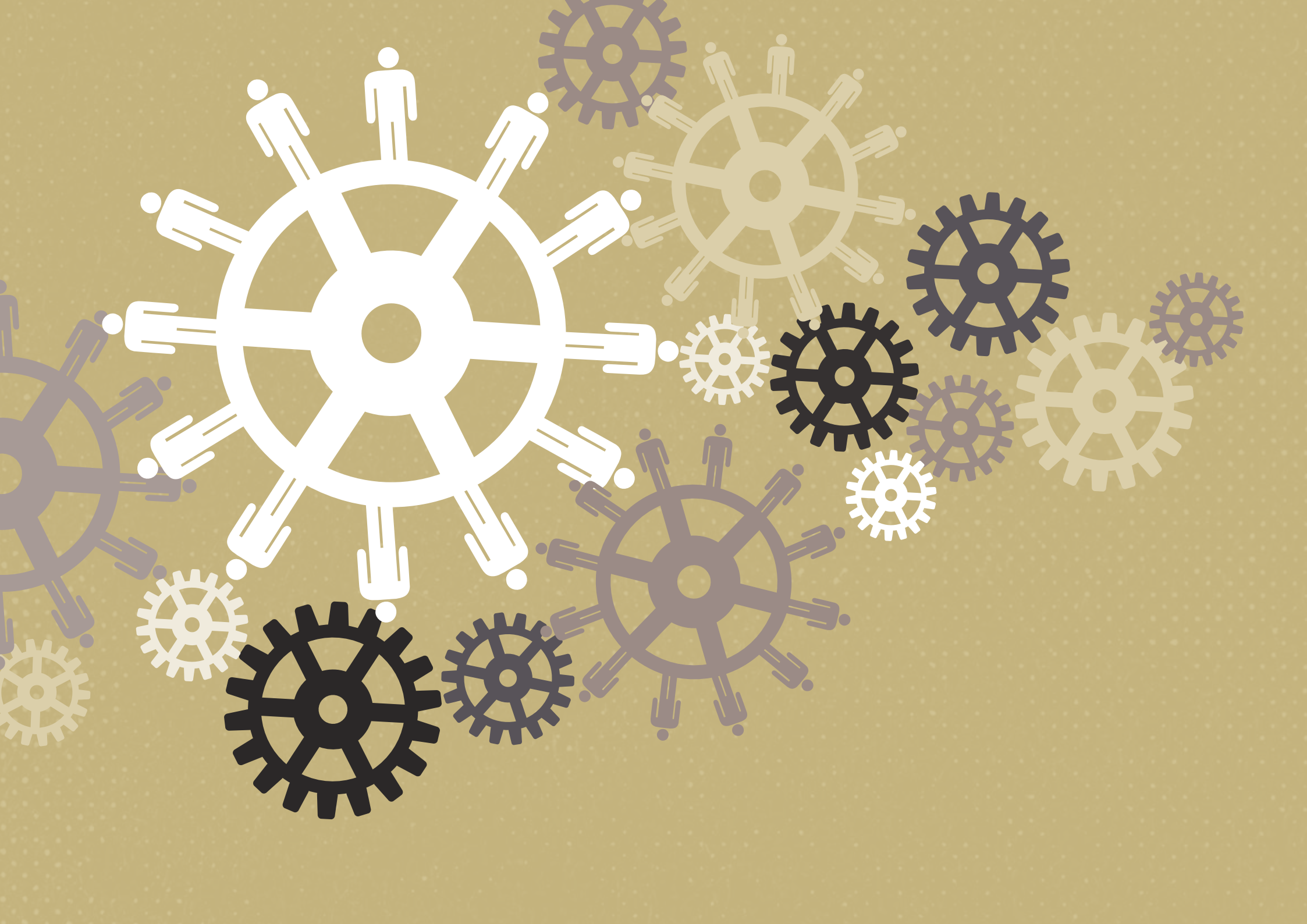
DROMORE PLACE PLAN

MAY 2025



Armagh Banbridge and Craigavon Community Planning Partnership

Armagh City Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council



CONTENTS

Executive Summary **5**

1.0 Dromore Past and Present **7**

2.0 Vision **13**
2.1 Vision for Dromore 14
2.2 Dromore: Destination of Choice 15

3.0 Introduction to the Place Plan Process **17**
3.1 Process 21

4.0 Case for Change **23**
4.1 Population Indicators 26
4.2 Map of Dromore 27
4.3 Strategic Alignment 28

5.0 Engagement **33**
5.1 Overview - How did engagement shape the plan? 34
5.2 Engagement highlights 35
5.3 What we heard, saw and read? 36

6.0 Essential qualities **39**
6.1 The local landscape, culture and heritage 41
6.2 Having adaptable buildings and spaces 42
6.3 Togetherness, collaboration and living well 43
6.4 Being well serviced and connected 44
6.5 Being sustainable 45
6.6 Multi-layered purpose and meaning 46
6.7 Being safe and welcoming 47

7.0 Outcomes **49**
7.1 Historic Dromore 53
7.2 Stocked Dromore 55
7.3 Active Dromore 57
7.4 Discovered Dromore 59
7.5 Connected Dromore 61

8.0 How do we get there? **63**
8.1 The Big Ideas for Dromore 66
8.2 Built Environment and Strategic Growth 68
8.3 History and Interpretation 72
8.4 Sustainability 76
8.5 The Great Outdoors 80
8.6 Community Life 84
8.7 Heart of the Town 88

9.0 Theory of Change **93**

The Way Forward... **96**

Acknowledgement **97**

Support and Funding Opportunities **97**

Appendices **98**

Glossary 98





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon Community Planning Partnership, are pleased to present the third Place Plan for the Borough.

The Dromore Place Plan outlines a strategic vision for the place, the plan sets out five outcomes which are aimed at enhancing the quality of life for the residents, preserving the unique character of the area whilst stimulating economic growth.

The plan details four big ideas, and six thematic clusters comprising of 37 suggested actions, serving as a road map for the community planning partners, stakeholders, businesses and local community groups, designed to help with the shaping, transformation and development of Dromore into the future.

The Place Plan is the outcome of extensive research, engagement, and collaboration with the community members who live, work, and visit Dromore, as well as with those who enjoy the area. A thorough review of strategic documents, policies, heritage, and local statistics has been conducted to support the development of this plan.

To establish a solid foundation for the Dromore Place Plan, it was essential to ensure that the background research and “discovery phase” were comprehensive. This approach guaranteed that the plan aligns with current local, regional, and national strategies while also taking into account previous local plans and studies.

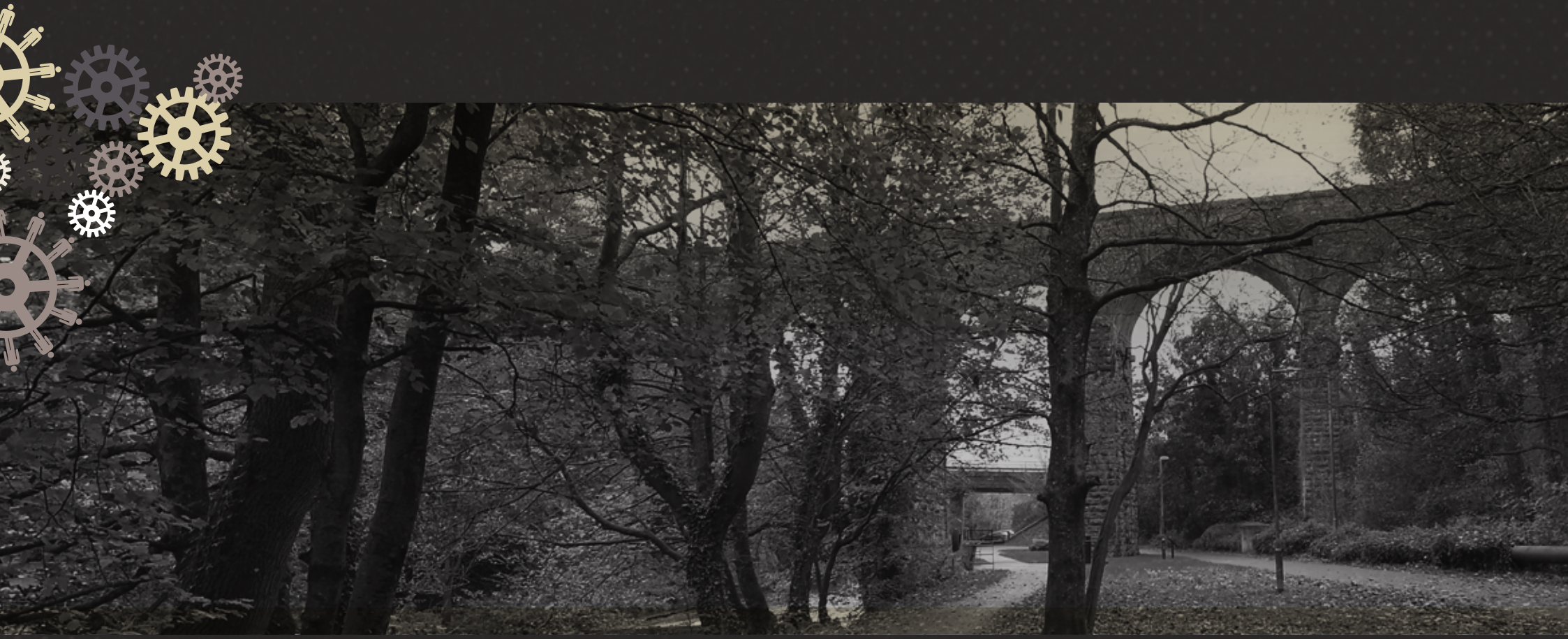
The engagement and consultation element of the Dromore Place Plan were dynamic and exciting stages of the project. Community members and stakeholders were fully involved in the process, ensuring that the resulting “outcomes,” “big ideas,” and “actions” are relevant, responsive, and appropriate to Dromore’s future needs and challenges.

The successful delivery of the big ideas and actions outlined in the Dromore Place Plan will require active participation, energy, funding, and support. The proactive involvement of the community and stakeholders will be crucial to ensure continuous progress, fostering a spirit of regeneration, renewal, and collaboration toward achieving Dromore’s vision.

With thanks,

Armagh Banbridge Craigavon Community Planning Partnership







1 DROMORE PAST AND PRESENT



Image courtesy of the National Library of Ireland



1.0 DROMORE PAST AND PRESENT

'Dromore is a Cathedral town of ancient origins, situated in drumlin country on the River Lagan. It has a distinct architectural character with most of its building facades dating from the 19th or early 20th Century. These buildings are varied in architectural style. They range from austere classical forms of the traditional buildings of Irish country town, through the ornate almost fanciful buildings of Ulster's great period of industrial prosperity in the late 19th and early 20th Century to modernist 1960's. Many of these buildings are rich in interesting vernacular craftsmanship and give evidence of a time in the not-too-distant past when the buildings of Dromore were the subject of considerable civic pride.

The centre of the town still possesses a strong urban form, notably some narrow streets and a square. The streets have a special charm and quality, derived mainly from their narrowness, continuous frontages, and the traditional style and scale of the buildings. Regrettably, the current high levels of dereliction and vacancy, detracts in part from the town's appearance.

The Market Square and Church Street form the commercial centre and the way in which the street pattern focusses on the Square draws attention to the Town Hall, which was one of the last of Ulster's market houses to be built. Church Street links Market Square to the Church of Ireland Cathedral, which has played a major part in the history of Dromore.

The Cathedral is modest in style and scale, but is one of the few buildings to fully exploit Dromore's riverside setting. Dromore's other church buildings make a significant contribution to defining the extent and appearance of Dromore's Conservation Area.'

Taken from the Dromore Conservation Area document, published in September 1992.

Dromore has the diverse fabric of a vibrant historical past intertwined with a creative and artisan present with the potential for an energetic and creative future. The town's location was determined by its strategic vantage point along the River Lagan and its safe and sheltered position nestled in the rolling County Down topography.

In 1992 the heart of Dromore was designated as a Conservation Area. This status reflects the towns rich and varied history which is visibly evident on a walk through the network of town spaces and narrow streets. This Place Plan studies how the town interacts with its settlement development limit and within that there are a wide diversity of listed buildings and scheduled monuments (68 in total). There is a wide range of architectural styles within the town and notable assets include the Victorian Town Hall centrally located in Market Square to the 17th Century Dromore Cathedral perched alongside the River Lagan, on a site where St. Colman of Dromore set up a 'wattle and daub' church in 510 AD.

The town thrived during the early industrial years and its Market Square was a bustling hive of activity for trading, collaboration and camaraderie. The town's railway was active from 1863 to 1956 which ensured great interconnectivity to regional towns and historical events with some of the first Ferguson Tractors being driven from the train station through the town. The old railway station is repurposed today as a nursery.


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The myriad of heritage assets in Dromore also include the Motte and Bailey nestled on a local high point off Mount Street with stunning views across the town, Dromore Castle tucked away off the aptly named Castle Street and the iconic Viaduct, spanning over the River Lagan within Dromore Park, that can be seen from miles around. These assets are currently interlinked through the engaging and informative Heritage Trail, and serve as a unique tourism offering to attract visitors from far and wide.

Dromore is well known for its character and its characters. In years gone by the town would be a central hive of activity during its annual horse fair. The streets would be filled with bartering, bargaining and market stalls doing a roaring trade. The highlight of the day would be a cavalcade of vintage cars through the town and a parade of horses and traps.

Dromore is a town of champions and extraordinary talent across various sports. Home to Olympic medallist, Commonwealth Game medallist, World Champions in their sport and Rugby legends, this town has earned a reputation for its rich sporting heritage and dedication to excellence. Its residents take pride in fostering a sporting culture of discipline, teamwork, and relentless pursuit of greatness. The sports clubs, teams and individuals take on both national and international stages at every opportunity. This sporting heritage has infiltrated the life blood of the community and this is very evident in the wealth of sporting teams and clubs and the positive collaboration between them for a common goal.

The weaving and spinning linen industries in the town have long since gone, but their stories remain and their locations alongside the River Lagan serve well to remind the town of the importance of this asset, and the rich mix of landscapes that bind together the sites dotted around the River Lagan and their use for amenity and activity purposes.

The streetscape of Dromore today remains the same, centred around Market Square and its narrow radiating streets. Whilst there has been work over the years to restore buildings and improve façades, it is visibly clear that many buildings including listed ones, are in a poor state of repair and dereliction. Among these, are nine heritage at risk buildings and unless they receive prompt restoration works they could potentially be lost forever. The Conservation status of Dromore Town should afford protection to those listed structures and assets and will help determine the approach for restoration which will assist in protecting much of the unique character of Dromore.

With 6,395 residents, Dromore is a semi-rural town with a village sense of community. Its shops, retail offerings, entrepreneurs and artisans provide the town with a buzz and unique way of life alongside aspirations to develop further, making the most of its location, services and appetite for strategic and informed growth of the town.

Dromore is a popular choice for commuters due to its location and good connectivity to Belfast, Banbridge and Newry. This connectivity and the good education offering in the area is a major attraction for young families and this has also developed a demand for housing and services in the area.

Dromore is strategically located on the A1 and along the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor. It therefore has the ability to attract investment, funding and interest ensuring that the town is on the verge of striving forward to develop in a way that will meet the needs of its community and businesses whilst increasing its offering as a destination of choice.





2 VISION

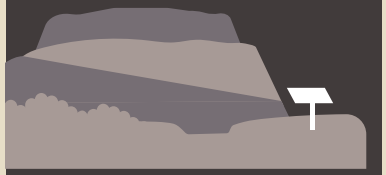
2.1 VISION FOR DROMORE

A place with ambition and passion interwoven with a historic fabric, ready and committed for a new future.

The vision for Dromore is to create a thriving and prosperous place to live, recognising that many refer to Dromore as their 'home', but would love it to be a 'great' place. Dromore has the appetite and energy to develop in a way that meets the needs of the place and it's people. The vision points below set out aspirations from engagement:



A **unique** market town, bustling with activity, community life, vibrancy and a 'can-do' attitude.



A town rich in built and natural **heritage** and full of stories, tradition and industries ready to be uncovered and discovered.



A town interwoven with urban and rural fabric, ideally located off the A1 and Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor and primed for **strategic growth**.



A diversity of **open spaces**, parks and sports assets, boosting peoples physical and mental well-being.



The **River Lagan** is a vital place for meandering walks, with rich and diverse habitats along its banks and landscape.



2.2 DROMORE: DESTINATION OF CHOICE

Lets walk through the heart of the town which is vibrant and bustling. Many artisans, innovators, and entrepreneurs are trading from the heritage buildings, the Market Square and the narrow streets are full of life. People are spending time in the town; locals are shopping, chatting and socialising. Visitors are discovering and uncovering all that the town has to offer and everyone is enjoying the hospitality and the array of food and drink on offer, into the evening time.

Dromore is prominent on the A1, the Quillyburn lands have been developed for industry and it is now a hive of activity, where enterprise, technology and innovation collides.

A variety of businesses and enterprises have invested here, offering employment and student apprenticeships. Entrepreneurs are working and selling across the world from the smart business hubs.

The modern Dromore High School offers new courses and skills for this catchment area, pupils and parents can walk or cycle to school with the new active travel networks.

A town forged from its diverse historical past, people are learning about its history and the stories. There is a heritage buzz, the top of the viaduct is open to the public, you could spend hours looking over the park and the countryside. The heritage walking tours and evening talks are booked up, led by the local Historical Society.

Enter the Riverwalk at Regents Bridge, strolling along the banks into Dromore park, lets throw the blanket on the ground and have a picnic. The play park is busy, there are activities in the park from paddle boarding, outdoor yoga, gardening and fishing.

There are a variety of walks through the town, along the river, around the public rights of way and up to the Motte and Bailey. Dog walkers and walking groups exchange greetings and stop to chat along these routes.

The pitches and sports facilities are alive with the vibrant energy of a wealth of different teams and clubs getting involved in activities for all ages and sections of the community.

You notice a variety of community hubs along the way with lively dance halls, energetic boxing clubs and derelict buildings which have been brought back to life as a community health and well-being hub.

Dromore is ‘home’, a place to live, with new housing developments and plenty of activities on offer for the whole family. There are a range of groups to join, from gardening to arts and crafts which help you to stay connected and feel part of the Dromore community.

UNIQUE IN CHARACTER BUSTLING WITH CHARM







3 INTRODUCTION TO THE PLACE AND PLAN PROCESS

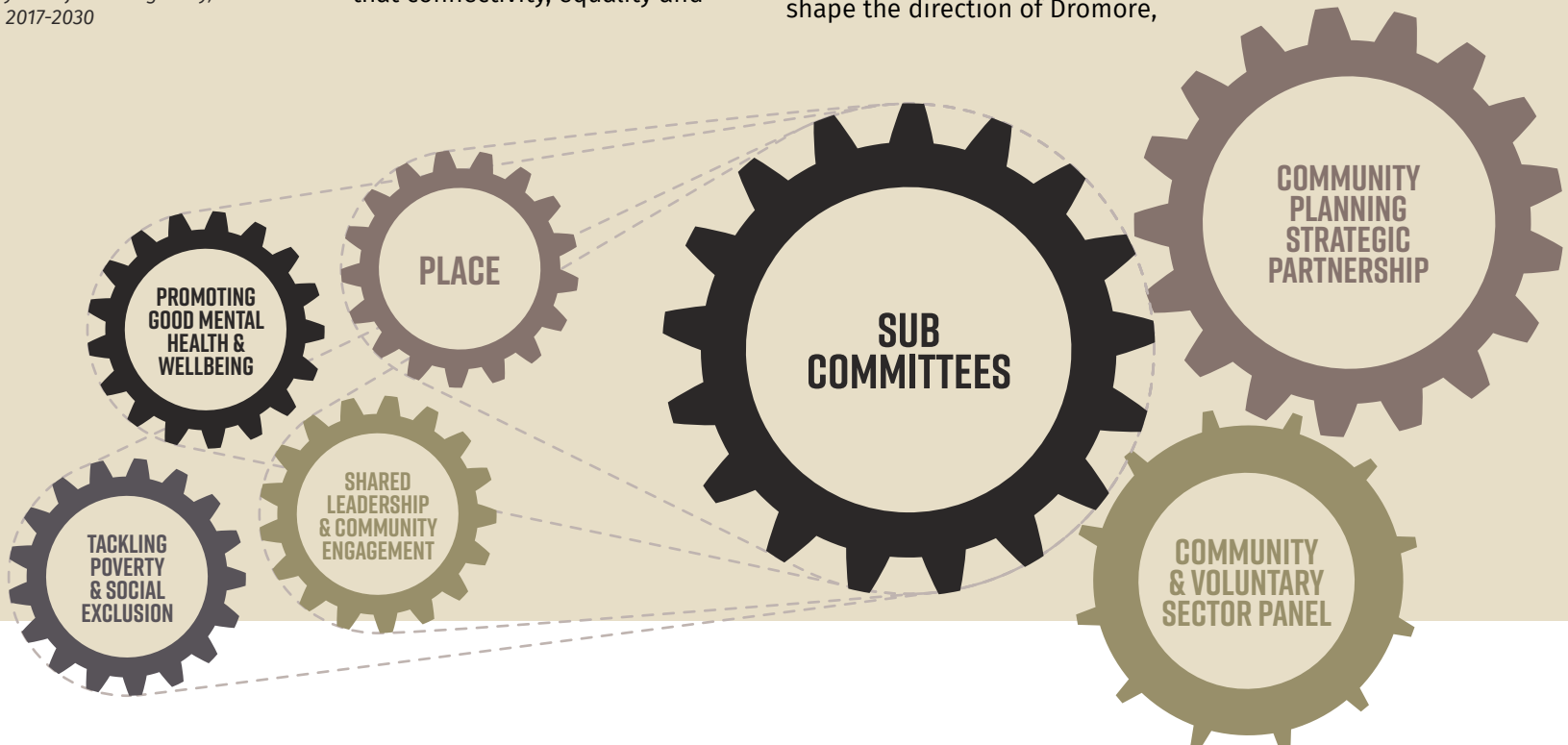
3.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE PLACE PLAN PROCESS

‘WE HAVE A HAPPY, HEALTHY AND CONNECTED COMMUNITY, A VIBRANT AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY AND APPEALING PLACES FOR LIVING, WORKING AND LEARNING’

Vision of Connected: A Community Plan for Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough 2017-2030

The creation of new community planning functions as part of Local Government Reform 2015 brought together key partners to work collectively for the communities that they serve. In 2017, Connected, the Community Plan for the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough was developed, and it identified opportunities for the ABC Community Planning Partnership to work together and with the community to ensure that connectivity, equality and sustainability lie at the heart of all they do collectively, for the good of the Borough.

In 2022 and 2024, after the development of Place Plans for Armagh and Banbridge, the Community Planning Partnership agreed to continue the development of Place Plans for urban centres in the borough. The place plan process brings together a wide range of partners, businesses and the community to shape the direction of Dromore, recognising, the need to take a ‘whole town’ approach and work together. The quality of a place, where we live and spend time has an influence on the health and wellbeing of the people and communities who live there. A range of factors and interactions between the natural, built and social environments will affect the overall ‘health’ of our place.





Connected: A Community Plan for Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough 2017 - 2030

Place shaping provides an opportunity for the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Community Planning Partnership to work together with local people and stakeholders, unlocking innovation and change, to improve the quality of life in our places across the Borough for the benefit of all. Participation of local people and local communities is essential in this place planning process.

This Place Plan is a departure from traditional forms of master planning, towards a more hybrid, co-produced approach, at a local scale, which has a focus on well-being and puts the people of Dromore and their views at the centre of future planning. This aligns with recent theoretical evolutions towards more inclusive community engagement practices. This is based on a belief that co-designed outcomes will better take account of both the interrelationship between people and place, and, specifically, the complexities and singularities of Dromore. The approach has been employed already in the Borough through the recent Armagh Place Plan (2022) and Banbridge Place Plan (2024).

The Place Plan is not a statutory document, but it has the potential to set a framework of tangible projects and proposals for future development. This will enable different stakeholders to work together to their mutual benefit and for the betterment of Dromore, leading to more credible plans for a place that is more reflective of the people of that place.

The implementation of all the actions/ outcomes in the Plan will be subject to obtaining all the necessary consents including planning permission.



COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

Armagh City Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council

Department for Communities
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Depairtment fur Commonities

ea Education Authority

COMMUNITY & VOLUNTARY SECTOR PANEL
ARMAGH, BANBRIDGE, CRAIGAVON

Housing Executive

HSC Public Health Agency

BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP ALLIANCE
ARMAGH CITY, BANBRIDGE AND CRAIGAVON

Keeping People Safe

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TOURISM NORTHERN IRELAND

CCMS
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools

sport Northern Ireland

src Southern Regional College

Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service

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3.1 PROCESS

MAR 2024

Initiation

Discovery Phase

APR-JUN 2024

Desktop research

Discovery and Engagement

Public Survey

JUL-SEP 2024

Development of Draft Place Plan

Draft Vision, Outcomes and Key Actions

OCT-NOV 2024

Community Planning Partnership and Council Committee approvals

DEC 2024-FEB 2025

Public Consultation on Draft Place Plan

Live engagement and workshops

FEB-APR 2025

Review of feedback and Place Plan approval

MAY 2025

LAUNCH OF PLACE PLAN





4 CASE FOR CHANGE


DROMORE
HIGH
SCHOOL
DROMORE
HIGH SCHOOL
Visitor's Entrance
Please report to Reception

4.0 CASE FOR CHANGE

During the Place Plan process, the discovery phase was completed, which included desktop research, statistical analysis of town data, essential qualities health check and strategic policy scanning. The discovery phase was informed by 'on the ground' analysis to understand the current conditions, opportunities, challenges and the overall spirit of the place. This led to the development phase and draft outcomes and actions which were publicly consulted on during December 2024 - January 2025.

Engagement played an important role, and is highlighted in chapter 5.

The evidence base used in this process included;

DROMORE STATISTICAL PROFILE

DISCOVERY REPORT

ENGAGEMENT REPORT



4.1 POPULATION INDICATORS

A dashboard has been developed to show the current status through several indicators. The population indicators or statistics used are publicly available from NISRA, Department for Communities and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. The Community Planning Partnership will review these indicators to track progress towards realising the outcomes of this Place Plan.

6,395 [1]
POPULATION

96 [2]
CRIMES RECORDED
[DROMORE TOWN CENTRE]

343
CRIMES RECORDED
[DROMORE SETTLEMENT AREA]

28 [2]
ASB RECORDED
[DROMORE TOWN CENTRE]

138
ASB RECORDED
[DROMORE SETTLEMENT AREA]

2 [3]
ROAD TRAFFIC COLLISIONS

25.2% [4]
TOWN CENTRE VACANCY RATE

40 [5]
BUSINESSES

182 [6]
EMPLOYEE JOBS

1,110 [7]
LAGAN RIVER DEA VAT AND/OR PAYE REGISTERED BUSINESSES

85 [8]
CLAIMANTS

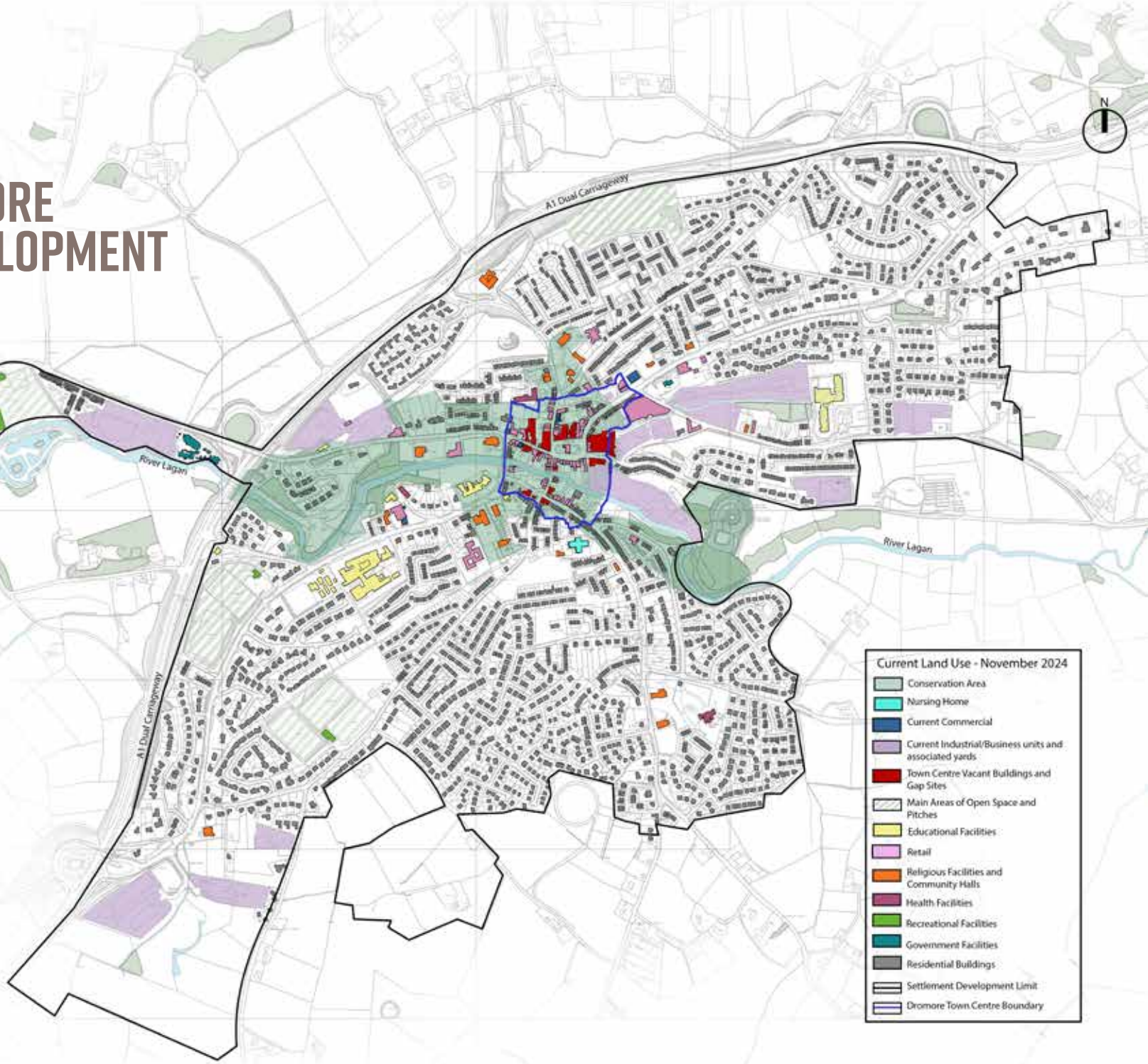
68 [9]
LISTED BUILDINGS IN THE TOWN

11,568 [10]
VISITORS TO DROMORE TOWN CENTRE

57 [11]
PROJECTED (5 YEAR) SOCIAL HOUSING NEED FOR DROMORE TOWN 2023-28

1 Census 2021, NISRA
2 Police Service of Northern Ireland Statistics, via Town Centre Database, Department for Communities 2022.
3 The Northern Ireland Town Centre Database, Crime and Road Traffic Collision Data 2020.
4 Land and Property Services via Town Centre Database, Department for Communities 31 October 2024.
5 Inter-Departmental Business Register, NISRA Economic and Labour Market Statistics Branch via Town Centre Database, Department for Communities 2023.
6 Business Register and Employment Survey, NISRA Economic and Labour Market Statistics Branch via Town Centre Database, Department for Communities 2022.
7 Inter-Departmental Business Register, NISRA March 2024.
8 Claimant Count, NISRA. Claimant Count Monthly December 2024 (provisional). Includes Jobseeker's Allowance Claimants and those Universal Credit claimants who were claiming principally for the reason of being unemployed.
9 Historic Environment Division, Department for Communities January 2025.
10 Footfall in Dromore Town Centre, Week 9, 2025, week commencing 24 Feb 2025 Market Sq counter.. Source: Springboard Analytics
11 Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Housing Investment Plan 2024 Update, Appendix 2 Social housing need by settlement 2023 – 2028

4.2 MAP OF DROMORE SETTLEMENT DEVELOPMENT



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Map produced November 2024

4.3 STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

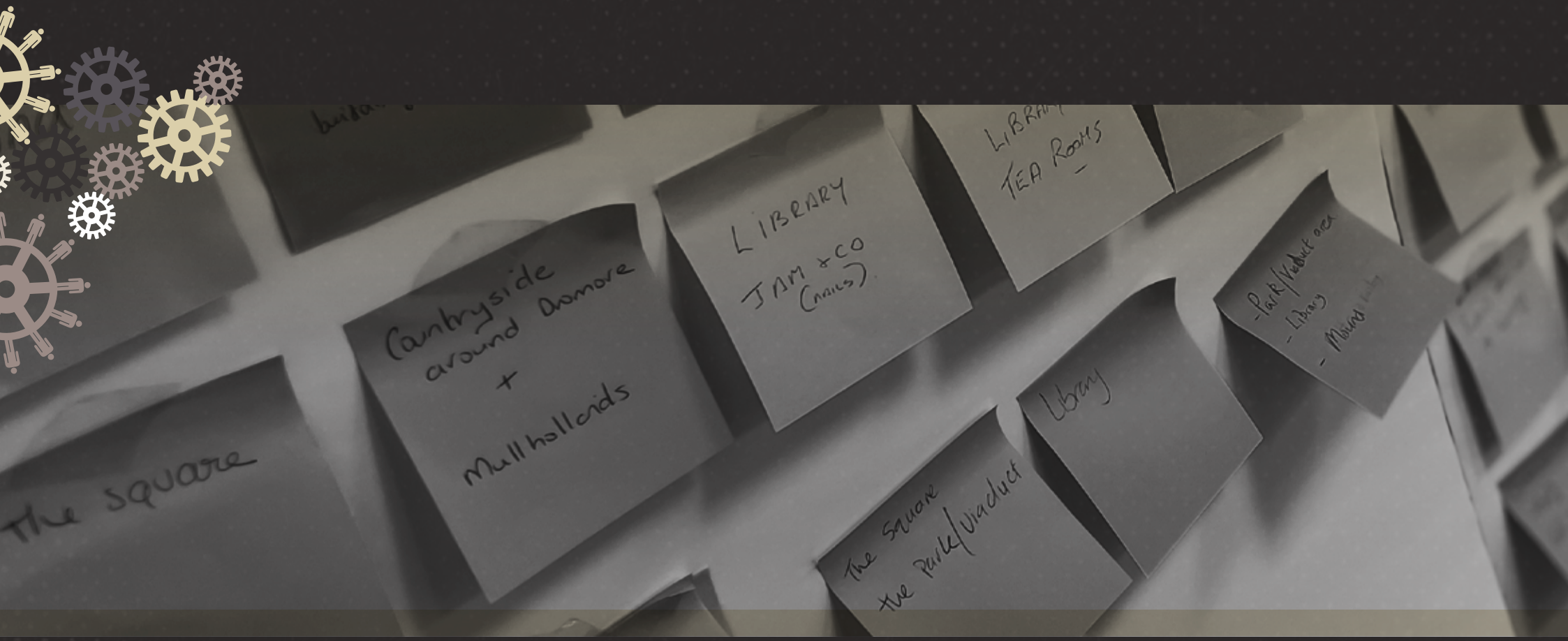
During the Discovery phase, a strategic analysis of policies and strategy was carried out to identify common themes and to ascertain what alignment opportunities exist across government and with wider stakeholders. The desktop analysis determined five key areas of alignment for the Dromore Place Plan which are reflected through the five outcomes. Five spatial levels present the global to the local, from the UN Sustainable Goals to previous plans for the town of Dromore.

POLICY OR STRATEGY DOCUMENT		DROMORE PLACE PLAN OUTCOMES				
		HISTORIC	STOCKED	ACTIVE	DISCOVERED	CONNECTED
GLOBAL	The 2030 Agenda - UN Sustainable Goals, 2015		✓	✓	✓	
UK WIDE	UK Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener, 2021	✓	✓		✓	✓
	Cycle infrastructure design (LTN 1/20) Department for Transport, 2020		✓	✓	✓	✓
ISLAND-WIDE	All-Island Strategic Rail Review, DoT and DFI0, July 2024				✓	✓
	Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor Partnership Strategy 2022		✓		✓	✓
NI AND REGIONAL	Programme for Government 2024 - 2027 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most' (Northern Ireland Executive)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Regional Development Strategy 2035	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Draft Tourism Strategy for NI: 10 Year Plan, (DfE) 2023	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	MAG Living High Streets Craft Kit (2022) and Starter Pack (2024)	✓	✓		✓	✓
	Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI) Strategic Plan 2024-2034	✓	✓		✓	
	Heritage 2033- Our 10 year strategy. The National Lottery Heritage Fund, 2023	✓	✓		✓	
	Planning for the future of transport- Time for change (DfI) 2021		✓	✓	✓	✓

POLICY OR STRATEGY DOCUMENT		DROMORE PLACE PLAN OUTCOMES				
		HISTORIC	STOCKED	ACTIVE	DISCOVERED	CONNECTED
NI AND REGIONAL	High Street Task Force Delivering a 21st Century High Street, 2022	✓	✓		✓	✓
	Housing Supply Strategy 2022 - 2037	✓	✓		✓	✓
	Draft Green Growth Strategy for Northern Ireland (DAERA)		✓		✓	✓
	Sustainability for the Future - DAERA's Plan to 2050	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Delivering the Economic Vision- a three year forward look and 2024/25 Action Plan (DfE)		✓			✓
	Living Places: An urban stewardship and design guide for NI (2019)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Creating Places: Achieving quality in residential environments (2000)		✓			✓
	Active Living: The Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for NI 2022 (DfC)		✓	✓	✓	✓
COUNCIL WIDE	Connected Community Plan, 2017-2030 (under review)		✓	✓	✓	✓
	ABC Corporate Plan, Our People Our Place Our Future, 2023-2027	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	ABC Recovery and Growth Framework 2021		✓			✓
	Arts, Culture and Heritage: A Framework for the Future 2021-2031		✓	✓	✓	
	Evening economy development strategy and action plans (ABC Council) 2018		✓		✓	✓
	Armagh Place Plan (ABC Council) 2022	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Banbridge Place Plan (ABC Council) 2024	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



POLICY OR STRATEGY DOCUMENT		DROMORE PLACE PLAN OUTCOMES				
		HISTORIC	STOCKED	ACTIVE	DISCOVERED	CONNECTED
COUNCIL WIDE	ABC Car Parking Strategy, 2023 (Draft)		✓	✓	✓	✓
	ABC Play Strategy 2018-2026		✓	✓	✓	✓
	ABC Local Development Plan Preferred Options Paper, 2018	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	ABC Vacancy Study 2019	✓	✓		✓	✓
	Mid South West Regional Economic Strategy, 2020	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	ABC Environmental Policy Statement, 2018		✓	✓	✓	✓
	ABC Open Spaces Strategy		✓	✓	✓	✓
	ABC Air Quality Action Plan, 2022-2024		✓	✓	✓	
	ABC Allotment Survey		✓	✓	✓	✓
	Get Moving ABC Framework 2020 - 2030		✓	✓	✓	✓
DROMORE	Dromore Conservation Area Guide, 1992		✓	✓	✓	
	Banbridge / Newry and Mourne Area Plan, 2015	✓	✓		✓	✓
	Dromore Town Centre Masterplan 2015	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Dromore Transport Study (DRD) 2016		✓	✓		✓


The square
Countryside around Dunmore + Mullhollands
LIBRARY
JAM & CO (nails)
LIBRARY
TEA ROOMS
The square
the Park/Viaduct
Ubary



5 ENGAGEMENT

5.1 OVERVIEW – HOW DID ENGAGEMENT SHAPE THE PLAN?

The strength of a Place Plan is largely determined and informed by the depth and extent of engagement with those who live, work and visit the place. At the earliest stages of this process, the Place Plan team prepared comprehensive engagement proposals to ensure that all stakeholders and sections of the community would be afforded an opportunity to have their say about how the town should be shaped, developed and changed into the future.

The purpose of the engagement was to gather as many diverse constructive opinions, ideas and aspirations for Dromore as possible and to ensure that the sessions, survey and activities would not only be enjoyable and innovative but that they would allow all voices to be heard so that the future Place Plan is truly reflective of the town and its community.

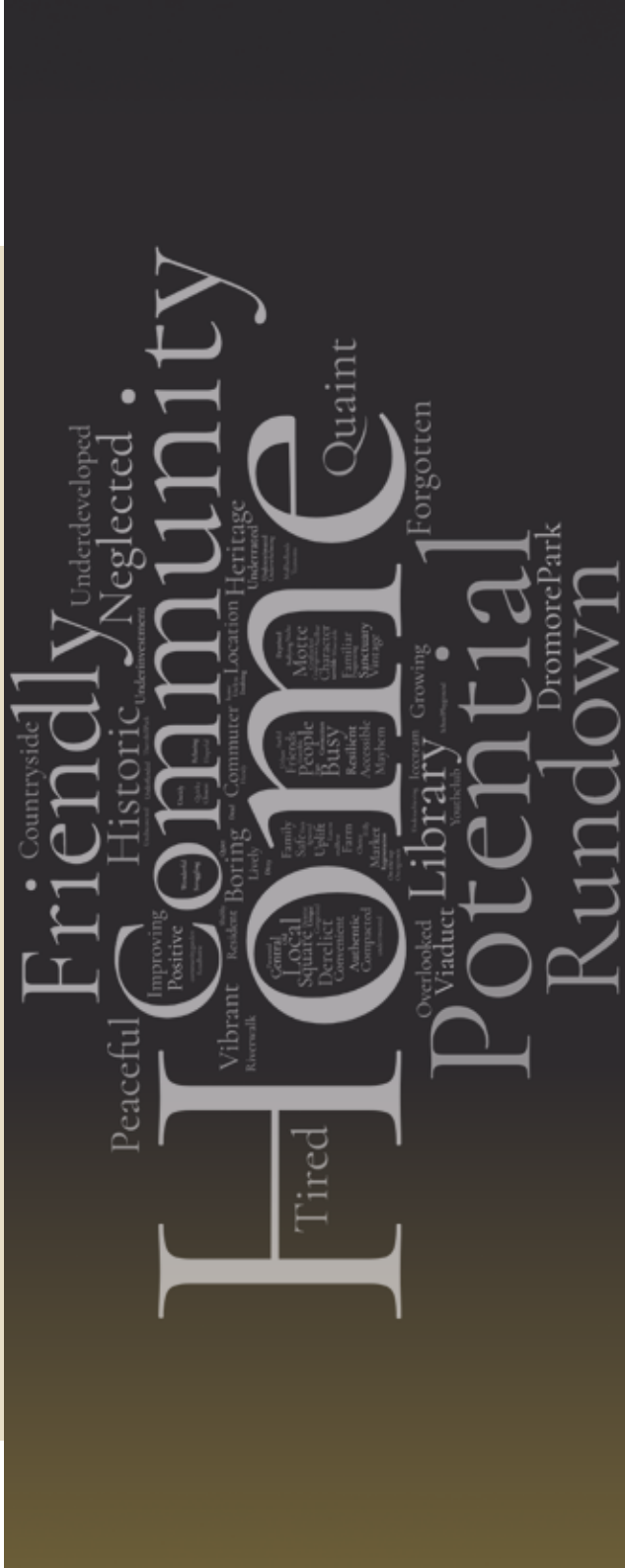
The engagement was delivered through meaningful and genuine collaborative methods and activities to ensure various opportunities for input were available.

These included:

- 1 to 1 conversations
- Cinema night
- Dromore Artisan Market
- Focus groups
- Historical walk and talks
- Ideas storming session and photography project with Dromore Youth Club
- Knit and Natter Group
- One-word ice-breakers
- Online surveys (discovery and public consultation)
- Park design session with Dromore Central Primary School
- Post-it note idea sessions
- Stakeholder meetings
- Sustainability Workshop with Dromore High School
- SWOT analysis
- Virtual engagement meetings

The Place Plan project team also held a series of 'Dromore Forum' sessions. The meaning of 'Forum' is 'The place of public discussion.' These informal forums were an opportunity for face to face interaction and for people to drop in, meet the Place Plan team, have their say and learn more about the process. The forums were held at 2 locations; the Town Hall and Dromore Community Centre.

The public consultation was held between December 2024 and January 2025 on the draft outcomes and actions.



5.2 ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS



1078 PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE PLACE PLAN

401 RESPONDENTS TO ONLINE SURVEYS

74 YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGED

46 OLDER PEOPLE ENGAGED

57 MEETINGS AND INTERVIEWS

44 PEOPLE ATTENDED THE DROMORE FORUMS AND DROP IN SESSIONS

10 WORKSHOPS (ONLINE AND IN-PERSON)

8 PARTICIPATED AND ORGANISED COMMUNITY EVENTS

8 DISCOVERY WALKS

* Combined statistics from engagement and public consultation

5.3 WHAT WE HEARD, SAW AND READ

1. Dromore is a historical and inclusive town with great assets, a unique character and an active community who have a strong sense of connection to the town and see it as their 'home.'
2. There is a strong desire from the community to see vacant shops brought back to use, gap sites redeveloped, shop fronts repaired and historical building features restored.
3. There is a general feeling that heritage aspects in the town are not being utilised to benefit the community and visitors. People are keen to learn more about the heritage.
4. There are opportunities to make better use of Dromore's strategic location off the A1 on the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor.
5. Dromore is a town with character that is busy during the day and people feel safe within the town. But the town is lacking evening activities.
6. More effort could be made to improve physical connectivity and linkages between the town centre and its rural hinterlands.
7. There is a great interest in the provision of a River Walk, improvements to Dromore Park and for the Community Centre to be better connected to the town.
8. Car use is the favoured method of transport and people have a keen interest in walking for amenity and fitness purposes.
9. People generally commute to work locally within the Borough or further afield (16-20miles) with around 10% of people 'working from home' in Dromore.
10. People tend to spend less than 1 hour within the town, with a focus on visiting larger retail shops or takeaways. There are opportunities to encourage more 'dwell time' within the town.
11. The current 'tourism offering' of Dromore is deemed to be poor.
12. There is a strong interest in general pitch, sporting and play improvements across the town.
13. Residents of Dromore would like to have a Community Hub that is a neutral space within the town.
14. There is an interest to pilot temporary pedestrianisation for occasional events with Bridge Street and the north side of Market Square being suggested.
15. People feel that there is a lack of job opportunities within the town. There is an interest in the provision of co-working spaces and enterprise hubs.
16. There is a lack of new reasonably priced residential properties within the town and people would consider a house, apartment or to live over a shop, if it was available.
17. People feel that the town is satisfactorily accessible but would like to see safer walking routes, crossing points, lighting improvements and better linkages to Market Square.
18. The local community are keen to get involved in local initiatives and activities related to health and well-being, walking, sustainability and growing plants and vegetables.

Feedback received from development engagement and public consultation.

START

DISCOVERY

ENGAGEMENT

IDEAS

5 OUTCOMES



FINISH

37 ACTIONS					
8.2	8.3	8.4	8.5	8.6	8.7
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
✓		✓			✓
✓		✓			✓
✓					✓
✓					✓
✓					✓


THANK YOU
FOR VISITING
HISTORIC
DROMORE
60



6 ESSENTIAL QUALITIES

6.0 ESSENTIAL QUALITIES

The following essential qualities bring together the engagement results and the discovery phase research. These have been compiled in relation to the local guidance in the 'essential qualities health check' format from the Living High Streets Craft Kit 2022, compiled by the Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) for Architecture and the Built Environment for Northern Ireland.

The essential qualities are further elaborated on within the pages that follow.

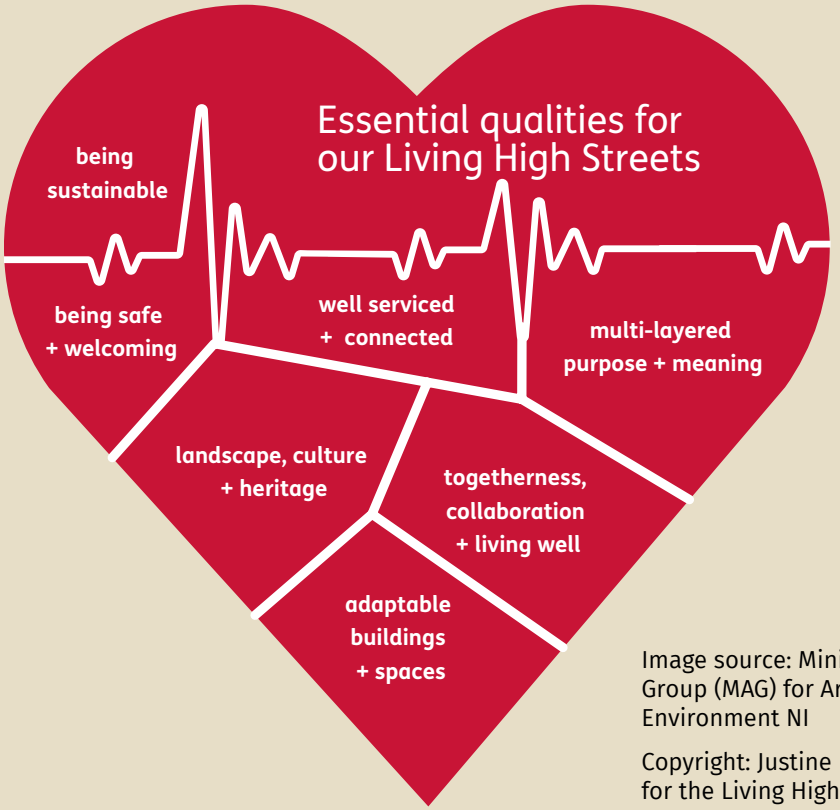


Image source: Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) for Architecture and Built Environment NI

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6.1 THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE, CULTURE AND HERITAGE

The local landscape of Dromore is defined by the rolling topography of the small rounded drumlins, meandering River Lagan and the interface between the town and its rural hinterlands.

Dromore has two Areas of Townscape Character **(Meeting St and Mount St)** and its Conservation Area protects the heart of the town stretching from the Motte and Bailey in the east to the Viaduct in the west. There are 68 listed buildings and monuments within the Dromore Settlement Development Limit, some of which have been retained in a good state of repair whilst others are in a very poor state of repair, and nine are on the Heritage at Risk Register NI (HARNI). There are seven Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLP's), which lie within or adjacent to the settlement development limit of Dromore. There is also one Site of Local Nature Conservation Importance (SLNCI) and an Area of Archaeological Potential (AAP).

The **River Lagan** winds its way through Dromore, from its source in Slieve Croob on route to Belfast. The town's historic growth and past linen industries owe their debt to the river, however the majority of the town turns it's back on the river and visitors to the town could be forgiven for not acknowledging its presence.

There are opportunities to strengthen the connection between Dromore's infrastructure and the River Lagan. This presents a chance to enhance recreation, connectivity, and foster riverside business innovation. One key element of this is the potential development of a riverside walk, with 95% of survey respondents expressing interest in its creation. This walk could potentially connect three key sites; the Motte and Bailey, the Viaduct and the Community Centre along a route that would traverse through the centre of the town and open up adjacent sites for a wide variety of activities and developments. Third party land agreements and navigation around historic features such as Regents Bridge and the Downshire Bridge, will be a challenge that would need to be reviewed through a feasibility study. By linking these key sites, a reinforcement of the towns leisure and open spaces could be achieved.

Dromore Park is an important 'green lung', ideally located adjacent to the town centre with good connectivity to key assets and the road network. The park has seen recent improvement, including the development of the play area and upgrading two bridges, accommodating active travel arrangements. However, the park must not rest on it's laurels as it has much more to offer that would serve to benefit the health and well-being of the town and it's visitors.

The public survey received a wide variety of suggestions including *'Celebrate heritage and biodiversity together, and celebrate both jointly as past, present and future'* and *'Create a community garden on top of the viaduct and incorporate into a heritage trail that takes in pubs, cafes and restaurants.'* Other aspects such as accessibility, parking, trails, eco park and activities featured at the top of the agenda.

Situated within the park is the **Viaduct**, little is known about the industrial heritage of the place, and there are aspirations to open the top and improve the space under the arches.

The streetscape has become dilapidated and there is a strong desire for buildings and gap sites throughout Dromore to be improved, repaired and brought back into use.

The culture and heritage of Dromore is in abundance, but respondents acknowledged that this heritage aspect of the place is untapped and undiscovered. This place has great potential and is ready to embrace heritage improvements and developments.

6.2 HAVING ADAPTABLE BUILDINGS AND SPACES

Dromore, as a community, are very **adaptable**. They have adapted to the population growth and expansion of the town and also to our changed patterns of work, social and home life following external factors. However, the buildings and spaces within Dromore have not adapted nor developed in tandem with the growth of the town. Whilst this commuter town continues to expand, the adaptability of the buildings and housing stock is seriously lagging behind.

The stark statistics are that Dromore has a **vacancy rate** of 25.2%, which equates to 32 of 127 properties. This is the highest vacancy rate in the Borough and above the Northern Ireland average of 22.8%. Notably, the vacancy, dereliction and disrepair is having a negative impact on the streetscape and the Conservation Area.

Disrepair includes inappropriate shop fronts and facade treatments, damaged gutters, damaged roofs, vegetation growth and loss of original heritage fabric.

The buildings and streetscape of the Conservation Area could greatly benefit from coherent external and internal maintenance and renovations to regenerate these properties, enabling the adapting and reuse of buildings and activating the network of streets in Dromore.

In terms of gap sites and development opportunity sites, there have been some screening projects in the town to tidy up the boundaries on the streetscape. However, further engagement, collaboration and support for landowners is required to bring forth development and activation of the sites. Notably the sites in Market Square, Meeting Street, Castle Street, Church Street and Bridge Street, are the most prominent and referred to in public and multi agency engagement.

Collaboration, funding and forward-drive between key stakeholders such as private land and building owners, the Historic Environment Division, Strategic Investment Board, Department for Communities, Council and other government bodies holds the key to unlocking the stagnation and dereliction problems.

A survey respondent noted *'The dereliction of these sites feeds into a negative mentality and view of the town, given its prime location on the Belfast-Dublin corridor it should be a thriving place to live.'*

Re-use, redevelop and re-thinking of the **existing building stock**, together with strategic, informed and well designed new developments will go a long way to serving the desires of the local community, businesses, enterprise and visitors to the town.

A recent example of this is the redevelopment of the listed Ulster Bank Building on Church Street into a thriving hub for local businesses and enterprises together with external space being utilised for monthly markets. A second example, is the redevelopment of a vacant building on Princes St into a modern coffee shop, designed with a traditional shop frontage in keeping with the heritage fabric and Conservation Area.

It will be important to review the existing business services in town, to ensure that the town attracts businesses to fulfil current gaps and avoid displacement of the current offering to other nearby towns. There is also a need to attract businesses which will support the day time economy and to stimulate an evening economy to ensure dwell time and vitality for the town.





6.3 TOGETHERNESS, COLLABORATION AND LIVING WELL

Dromore is a town that collaborates well together, with a 'village' sense of **unity and inclusivity** focused on ensuring health and well being is a key feature of activity in the area.

Dromore has a wide range of sporting clubs and groups who work well together for the greater benefit of the town.

Whilst the town has a good provision of sporting and activity assets, these are struggling to keep up with the demand and growth of the local community. Opportunities may be available to address this demand, however there are challenges to future development of assets such as pitch and play provision, utilisation of halls and community facilities. A review of demand and needs analysis should be undertaken.

Levels of anti-social behaviour (ASB) are relatively low in Dromore compared to other towns within the Borough. Only 28 ASB accounts were recorded in the area in 2022. This is testament to several elements including: a cohesive community, a proactive relationship between residents, PSNI and initiatives with local businesses to assist youths in learning new **life skills** for their **personal development**.

These approaches should be further encouraged and enhanced. The survey responses and engagement with the youth groups clearly pointed to a need to continue the provision of play and sport in the town, with better opportunities to get the youth groups more involved in future developments.

In terms of education, 61% of the public survey respondents deemed their educational assets as being 'good.'

Dromore has one Secondary School (Dromore High) and two Primary Schools (Central and St. Colman's) together with a good offering of nurseries. Dromore High School plans to develop a new school on Education Authority lands. In 2024, the Minister for Education confirmed the new build project would progress to planning. The school is also keen to continue to serve the wider community with shared use of facilities and space for community groups.

Following this development, the challenge will be around future use of the redundant school site and the existing vacant primary school site. These two prime sites are at strategic locations adjacent to the **heart of the town.** Careful, progressive and collaborative thought needs to be given as to how these sites are developed to afford maximum benefit to the area, its people, and visitors to Dromore.

Dromore has a vibrant series of **community and charity initiatives** that help to bring the town together and serve the needs of all sections of the community. An example of this is Via Wings who provide a social supermarket together with a range of mental health and well being services. There are various initiatives through Higher Ground and the Repair Cafe which are gathering momentum; this energy should be harnessed, promoted and developed to ensure the benefits are maximised for the community of Dromore. A neutral community space would go a long way to assist with the development of similar initiatives.

There may be opportunity for the Area Integrated Partnership Board to work in partnership to improve health and wellbeing for the local community of Dromore.

6.4 BEING WELL SERVICED AND CONNECTED

In terms of being **strategically located** in Northern Ireland, and within the island of Ireland, Dromore could not be better placed for business, industry, innovation and transport. It is nestled around the A1 road between Newry and Belfast and sits on an optimum location along the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor (DBEC.) This location serves to ensure that Dromore is well located for access to local and regional transport routes, airports, logistics hubs and railway stations. Dromore could capitalise on its location as one of its unique selling points, therefore offering an **attractive opportunity for developers**, investors, innovators, entrepreneurs and businesses, across a range of industry sectors.

Access off the A1 carriageway is afforded at several locations along the western sides of Dromore. Future improvements to these will go a long way to increasing the safety of access to and from Dromore.

Many of the responses to the public survey and throughout the engagement pointed to a desire for improvements at these welcoming points and 'gateways' to Dromore.

Areas of land at **Quillyburn Business Park** located off the A1, may provide an opportunity for economic, industry and enterprise growth and development. Adjacent lands owned by the Education Authority could provide an exciting location for a modern new build for Dromore High School, which is at a project planning stage.

Dromore is well served by the public **bus service** between Newry and Belfast (238), however the usage of this service also has a negative impact as it creates congestion in the local streets and car parks with commuters who park up all day. There could be an opportunity to explore a park and ride scheme to alleviate this congestion which would require needs identified by DFI and would be subject to planning consent.

There are opportunities within Dromore to improve physical connectivity with a new bridge from Meeting Street Car Park to the town, which may ease congestion from Market Square; and a potential riverside walk to connect from the Motte and Bailey through the town to Dromore Community Centre.

Throughout the engagement process, several Dromore residents noted the need for accessibility improvements within the town with these suggestions focussing on improvements to accessible parking provision, safer walking routes through the town and improvements to accessible toilet facilities.

The provision of a reliable, efficient and modern telecommunications, utilities and infrastructure network is also essential across the place to ensure the community and economy are appropriately served and enable growth such as attracting future businesses, smart working hubs and provision of EV charging points.

The **leisure and amenity offering** of Dromore has seen substantial investment (circa £3.2 million) in recent years including the extension at Dromore Community Centre and Ferris Park pitch and tennis court replacement.

The Community Centre has a new gym, studios, extended opening hours and new activity programmes. This is a thriving site and with future upgrades of the paths and active travel interventions to promote walking and cycling will make people feel that the Community Centre is better connected and easier accessed from the Town Centre.

There is an opportunity to hold more indoor and outdoor community events in this space.





6.5 BEING SUSTAINABLE

The thought of '**sustainability**' and its meaning and how to improve it can often raise more questions and challenges than providing opportunities and solutions. It is important to think of sustainability as not just an aspect that covers 'green' issues but that it covers **economic, social and environmental** issues. Whilst many of the public survey respondents were undecided whether Dromore is currently a sustainable place, there were many ideas and suggestions for initiatives on how Dromore could be more sustainable in relation to the three aspects noted above.

Dromore has already turned a corner and is gaining momentum with regards to sustainable approaches across the town including elements such as the Repair Café and Higher Ground (the Community Gardening Group). It will be important that these groups collaborate to develop complementary projects and encourage involvement by the wider community.

Biodiversity improvements have an important part to play in the future of Dromore. Biodiversity has a multitude of positive benefits for the community and visitors to Dromore from protection and enhancement of crucial flora and fauna, climate change improvements, education, improved ecosystems and right through to health and wellbeing improvements. Dromore should seek to improve it's positive contribution to biodiversity to ensure that ideas and actions are supported and implemented for the overall benefit of the area. An important aspect of this could include the provision of community gardens/ allotments with 86% of the public survey respondents indicating a desire for this.

A potential **River Walk** for Dromore has much to offer from a sustainability perspective. Not only would it promote opportunities for people to leave their car at home and to enjoy the outdoor environment, but it also identifies a diverse array of spaces and landscape types that can be enhanced and improved for the benefit of the riverside habitats and green infrastructure. This River Walk would also create crucial linkages to key features across Dromore.

With a strong desire for **built environment** improvements and historic restoration throughout the town, it will be crucially important to ensure that sustainable building methods, materials and approaches to net zero carbon developments are adopted. This in itself will pose many challenges, particularly with regards to historic properties and redevelopment works, but solutions to these challenges can be achieved through collaborative working between community, stakeholders and government departments.



6.6 MULTI-LAYERED PURPOSE AND MEANING

Located within a **commutable distance** to the cities of Belfast, Lisburn and Newry, Dromore is a town where many people have chosen to buy a house, raise their family and enjoy its assets and rural surroundings. The town has seen many new residents over recent years who have integrated well with the established communities within the town.

This town has it's own unique 'personality' and drive, with an energetic spirit of creativity and innovation and a desire to 'get things done.'

Dromore has witnessed business growth recently, with a variety of independent businesses opening from health and beauty, professional services to food and drink offerings. The town has a new monthly 'Courtyard Artisan Market' hosting talented artisans and skilled crafters.

It is important that initiatives are realised to increase the '**dwell time**', both day and night time, in the town for residents and visitors.

These initiatives will develop Dromore into a place where people want to spend time and make the most of its offering and diverse activities.

Dromore Chamber of Commerce offers business networking opportunities, activities, meetings and peer to peer support. There are 1,110 VAT/and or PAYE registered businesses within the District Electoral Area (DEA) and 40 businesses within the town centre. Whilst the survey responses noted 56% of people were working outside of Dromore, there was a swell of interest in people keen to work in Dromore if the **opportunities and facilities** were available.

An **Enterprise and Innovation Hub** within an appropriate site in Dromore could be an important development to address the current need for flexible co-working spaces, light industrial space, start up business space and offices for professionals. This hub could dovetail with other community and health facilities. The integration, **collaboration and collective spirit** of these sectors working in a hub would serve well for the sharing of ideas, minds and skills.

The public survey included a question on asking people why they visit Dromore for certain activities and how often. A notable statistic from this was that 63% of respondents said that they never visit Dromore for **Heritage, Arts and Culture interests** and that 55% of people rate these assets as 'poor.' The survey also highlighted that people had 'no knowledge' or 'basic knowledge' of heritage stories or assets within the area. Given the wealth of potential opportunities for Heritage, Arts and Culture within the town, it is imperative that these assets are realised, enhanced and developed to their full potential.

From the survey results, there was a clear interest from the community and visitors to **get involved** or further involved in activities within the town. The main activities that sparked interest included health and wellbeing, talks and exhibitions and picnics in the park.

The survey responses indicated a high desire for improvements to existing walking routes and the provision of new routes. Residents also indicated a willingness to get involved with new activities and programmes if they were available.





6.7 BEING SAFE AND WELCOMING

Dromore is a safe and welcoming town with the majority of survey respondents noting that they feel the town is **inclusive** and that they feel safe during the day and the evening. However, it has been widely noted through the public survey that there is a complete lack of an **evening economy** in the town with 67% of survey respondents noting it as 'Poor'. 73% of respondents also noted that the tourism and accommodation offering in Dromore is 'Poor.'

There could be opportunities to improve the evening economy through the ongoing business collaboration in the **Chamber of Commerce**, suggestions by the public included; food and drink businesses could extend their opening hours into the evening, café culture promotion, business promotion and evening entertainment. Community groups could further collaborate with businesses to deliver evening activities and community events for all ages.

Currently there is an **overall negative appearance** of the town centre due to the high volume of derelict/ vacant buildings and gap sites. Which contributes towards a perceived lack of safety and does not promote a welcoming environment for visitors to the area. Strategic and holistic approaches to tackle this degradation will go a long way to address these issues, to activate the street network and to promote safety and security within Dromore. Engagement with the land and property owners is key to bringing these spaces back into use, and **encourage a mix of appropriate town centre uses** to help create a vibrant heart of the town throughout the day and night.

The **public realm** investment of £1.2 million in Dromore town centre, culminated in the completion of improvement works around Market Square and adjoining streets in 2021.

There is a desire from the community for further public realm enhancements and interventions with a focus on creating **safer streets**, improved accessibility, enhanced crossing points and safer routes to schools. Connected linkages and well illuminated routes should be considered together with a holistic approach to Active Travel improvements across the town.

Parking, car dominance and car reliance in the town continues to provide challenges for residents, businesses and visitors. The dominance of vehicles and the lack of available parking often discourages visitors and people coming in for their messages or visit the local shops and businesses. The majority of survey respondents (45%) noted they spend less than 1 hour in Dromore when they visit.

The principle of 'dwell time' is almost non-existent, impacted by factors such as 'all day' parking issues, congestion and the limited offering, all of which need to be addressed head-on to afford plenty of reasons and opportunities to spend a day in Dromore and then to stay on to enjoy the evening economy.







7 OUTCOMES

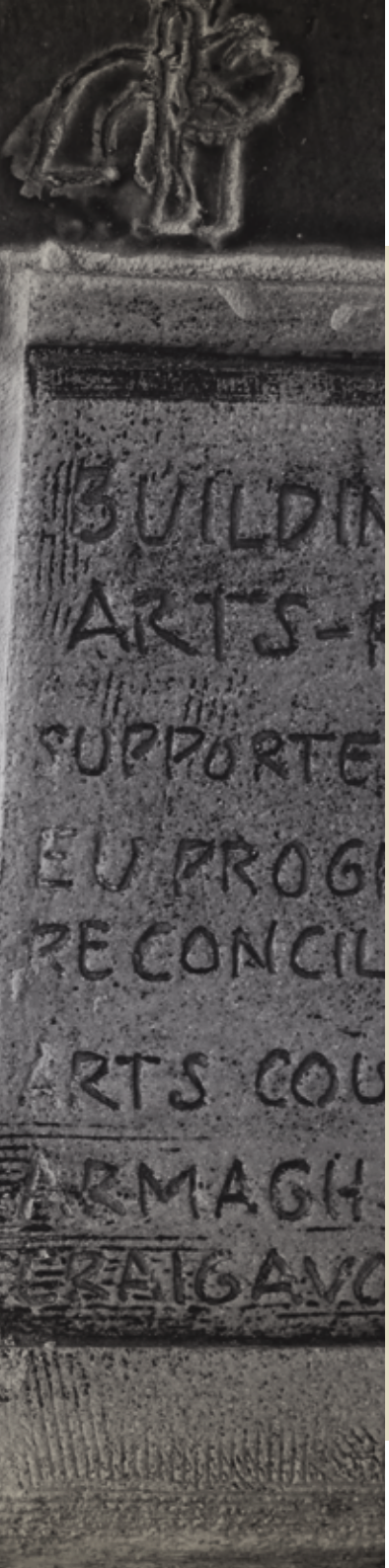
7.0 OUTCOMES

The discovery phase engagement, and consultation findings from stakeholders and community has helped to identify five outcomes for a Dromore where people wish to work, live and spend time in.

These outcomes identify key aspects and attributes of the town that currently exist but need to develop and shape in a way to meet the current needs of the residents, businesses and visitors. The outcomes align to the key strategies locally and regionally and seek to deliver aims of the ABC Community Plan: Connected.

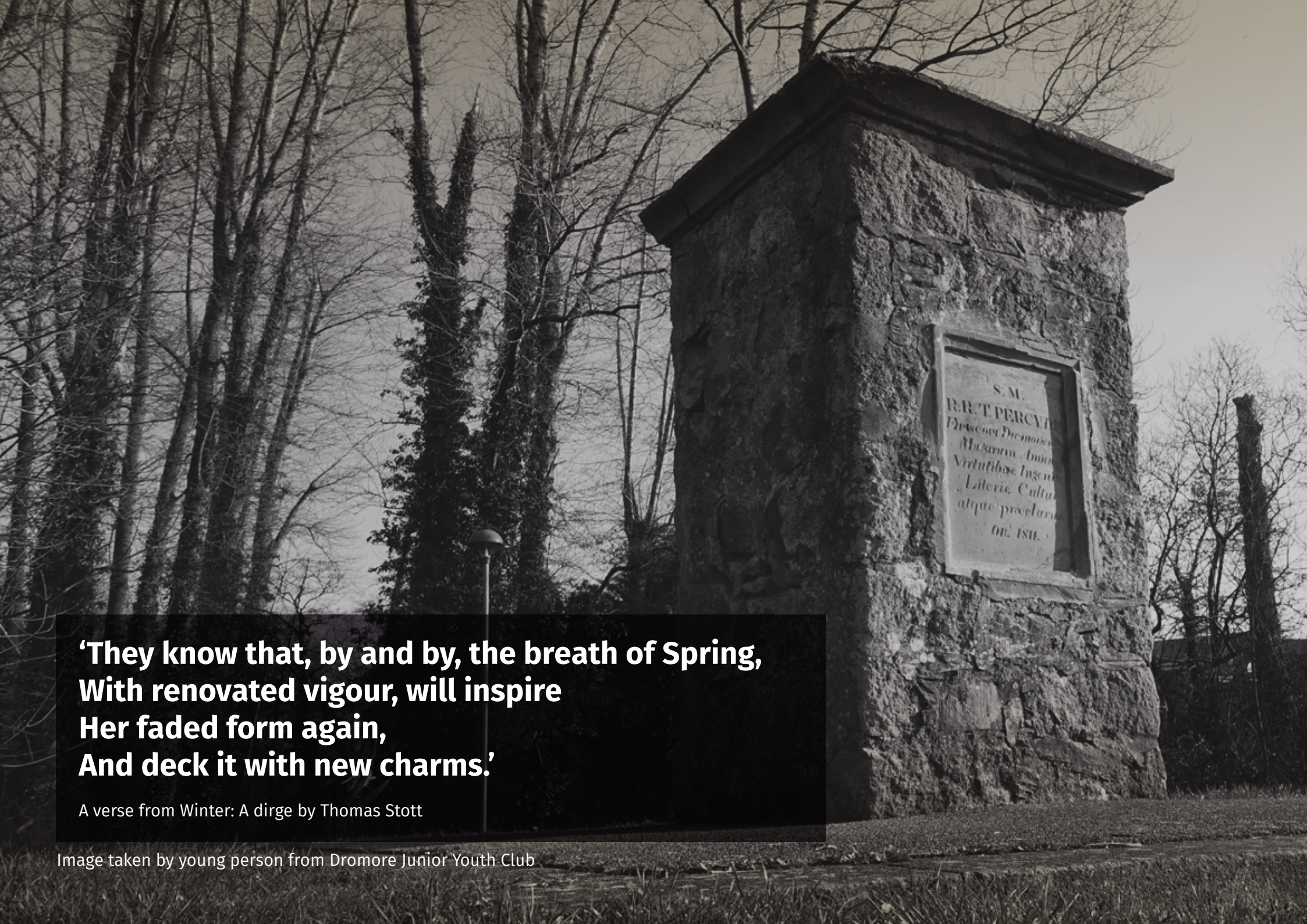
The outcomes are a reflection of the 4 Big Ideas and 37 actions that have been identified as a result of the discovery and development phases which will provide a framework for addressing the needs, aspirations and growth of the community.







THESE OUTCOMES ARE FURTHER EXPLAINED ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES >>



**‘They know that, by and by, the breath of Spring,
With renovated vigour, will inspire
Her faded form again,
And deck it with new charms.’**

A verse from Winter: A dirge by Thomas Stott

Image taken by young person from Dromore Junior Youth Club



7.1 HISTORIC DROMORE

A thriving heritage town

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Dromore is a unique Historic Market Town within the Borough with a wealth of heritage aspects that includes the built environment, natural environment, the people and the place. For a small town, the heritage aspect is relatively untapped and could be harnessed in a way for multi-faceted benefits for all sections of the community and potential visitors to Dromore. There is a strong need to protect and improve the heritage to ensure that the unique characteristics of the town are not lost but are utilised to inform and shape developments in Dromore into the future.

Dromore has an abundance of listed buildings, and a range of other protected structures and natural features. The Conservation Area encapsulates the heart of the town which once was a hive of activity on Market Days with trading and social interaction providing a buzz through the network of streets.

The Heritage Lottery 10-year Strategy 'Heritage 2033' has four strands to its vision that encompass: 1) Saving heritage 2) Protecting the environment 3) Organisational sustainability and 4) Inclusion, access and participation. All of these strands are directly relevant to Dromore and the town, and there may be an opportunity that Dromore could benefit greatly from any heritage led fund and initiatives.

HOW CAN DROMORE CELEBRATE IT'S PAST WHILST LOOKING TO THE FUTURE?

A vibrant and historic Dromore should be reflective of its past, present and future. Much work has been done over recent years to celebrate the heritage of the town and its community including development of listed buildings, the heritage trail and research into the heritage assets. This has laid a great foundation for further interventions and actions including re-opening the Dromore Viaduct for public use, Motte and Bailey improvements, interpretation and initiatives focussed on celebrating the towns heritage.

Owners of listed buildings need to be offered sufficient support, guidance and opportunities to apply for funding and grants. This would enable properties to be developed and maintained preventing further decline and save them from dereliction.


MARKET SQUARE
OFF SALES
15
calm
Dromore Town Centre
You are here
Road with pavement
Building with entrance
Fence/wall
Bollard
Pedestrian crossing
Steps
Ramp
Parking
Disabled parking
Taxi rank
Bus stop
Seating
Bin
Telephone box
Tree
Planter
B Bridge Street
C Cenotaph
CS Church Street
G Gallows Street
L Lower Mount Street
M Market Square
P Princes Street
Stocks
T Town Hall and Library



7.2 STOCKED DROMORE

A vibrant town stocked with new businesses, economic growth, assets and life

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

'Stocked' Dromore relates to the filling up or re-stocking of the place. In terms of the built environment, the vacancy rate of Dromore is the highest in the Borough (25.2% vacancy compared to the Northern Ireland average of 22.8%). This outcome for Dromore relates to how the buildings and gap sites will be sustainably redeveloped, reused, brought back to life, from the ground level and upwards. The town will be stocked of new businesses, new homes, skills, education and innovation.

In terms of the hinterlands, the surrounding habitants will revisit the town and the relationship with its centre will be re-built. The natural assets will be sustainably optimised with its community benefits realised. Dromore will have regained its purpose, with visible growth, harnessing it's creativity, community life and forward-thinking energy.

HOW CAN DROMORE GROW STRATEGICALLY AND DEVELOP FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE TOWN?

'Stocked' Dromore is a thriving town that is making the best use of it's assets.

A careful review of the assets will be undertaken with a roadmap developed to ensure areas of most need are targeted for actions, funding, support and interventions. Vacant properties and gap sites will be brought back to life through various actions and collaboration. Opportunities for innovation and investment will be realised through the development of new businesses and enterprise spaces, benefiting from the strategic transport links. The skills and education of the community will be enhanced through improved facilities and support networks. New homes will be developed on available and zoned lands.

The heritage assets will be dusted off, reimagined, and better understood, with improved interpretation at the Motte and Bailey, a refreshed heritage trail, improved community appreciation of the viaduct and Dromore Castle. All of which will be interconnected and linked together through a future riverside walk.



Lifelong involvement in sport and physical activity will deliver an active, healthy, resilient and inclusive society which recognises and values both participation and excellence.'

Source: Active Living - The Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for Northern Ireland (Vision)



7.3 ACTIVE DROMORE

An energetic town with a wealth of activity opportunities

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Dromore has good provision for activity, sport, amenity and leisure and the related assets have seen a substantial level of investment in recent years. The growth and development of the town requires these assets to be reviewed to ensure that they meet the needs of the community for the years ahead. The current provision serves the community well and there is a collaborative bond between sporting teams and clubs across the town. There may be opportunities to enhance and progress this provision for the physical and mental benefits of these activities to be developed further.

The *'Get Moving ABC Framework'* from ABC Council together with their *'Play Strategy 2018-2026'* and the Local Development Plan evidence base set a well informed, diverse and strong foundation which will allow Dromore to grow its 'activity' assets and initiatives.

HOW CAN DROMORE BE A MORE ACTIVE AND HEALTHY PLACE TO LIVE?

Active Dromore will be a place where sporting teams, clubs, community members and visitors can take part in a wide range of all-year round activities, across a suitable range of facilities, outdoor spaces and diversity of landscapes around Dromore. The community of the future will be more active, healthier and will be more cohesive through activity participation and integration.

The Dromore Community Centre is a vibrant and busy hub that could be further enhanced as membership continues to grow based on needs. As buildings and gap sites are brought back to life, further opportunities for indoor activities, for all sections of the community, will be realised in years to come. Dromore is very much a 'walking' and 'dog friendly' town, a network of upgraded and connected trails will ensure that people can immerse themselves in the outdoors whilst improving their physical and mental well-being. Dromore Park is a 'green lung', well placed within a few minutes walk of the heart of the town. Further interventions focused on outdoor recreation, water sports and reopening access to the Viaduct will ensure this amazing asset is enjoyed by all.



Image taken by young person from Dromore Junior Youth Club



7.4 DISCOVERED DROMORE

A charming town with an abundance to explore

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Dromore is a unique town with a diversity of attributes that are either untapped or should be further harnessed for the benefit of the town. This will encourage the community and visitors to spend more time in the town enjoying all it has to offer. It's not just about visitors discovering what to do in Dromore, it's also about residents uncovering more about their town and surroundings but also to promote personal self-discovery. There are a wealth of interesting places, stories, hidden secrets and characters waiting to be found and enjoyed. It's important that these elements are discovered and opportunities are provided to acquire knowledge, to learn and find out about these unique assets and for a lifetime of memories to be made.

HOW CAN DROMORE, AND IT'S PEOPLE, BE UNCOVERED AND DISCOVERED?

Discovered Dromore creates opportunities for experiencing the area in a new light and from different perspectives. The wealth and diversity of heritage assets and their stories can help to activate the town through improvements to the heritage trails, nature trails, new linkages, interpretation and being a part of community life.

Opportunities such as improving access to the Motte and Bailey, the Viaduct, Dromore Castle and the potential for enhancing Dromore's relationship with the River Lagan will allow environments, views, exercise and wildlife to be discovered.

Business and community connections are being formed and developed through the vibrant local network yet, there remains opportunities for support and development to ensure that features such as markets, food tours, immersive events and hands on activities encourage 'dwell time' and discovery of the area.

A community notice board to share what's on would foster local connections by sharing details of events, programmes and opportunities.



“Need walking places and health promoting facilities”

Survey response



7.5 CONNECTED DROMORE

A sustainable town with physical and community linkages

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

The connectivity of Dromore not only relates to physical linkages across the town but also to community interconnectivity and cohesion. The physical and community fabric of the town is interwoven with opportunities to do more to ensure that Dromore celebrates its features and collaborates better to instill and further develop a sense of pride in the town.

Cohesive sustainable connections between Dromore and its people are vital to the future development of the town. ABC Councils 'Connected Community Plan' 2017-2030 notes 'We believe connectivity is integral to improving quality of life. Through our plan we will work to transform and connect all areas of our borough physically, digitally and socially through shared collaborative approaches.'

Connectivity can provide a wide diversity of benefits for Dromore and it's regional location on the A1 and on the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor should also be utilised for future growth, investment and development of the area.

HOW CAN DROMORE BE BETTER CONNECTED?

Dromore has the opportunity to maximise the potential of its sustainable connections, linkages and accessibility through town-wide improvements of key sites. Enhancing its green spaces, natural resources and biodiversity opportunities will lead to a healthier environment for its residents.

Public realm enhancements could be further supplemented through a variety of accessibility improvements and parking reviews could be undertaken with a focus on reducing congestion in the area.

Linkages can be achieved through developing interlinking paths, trails and rights of way together with adjacent places and sites being cohesively developed to ensure a series of benefits to crucial areas around the River Lagan.

The provision of a reliable, efficient and modern telecommunications, utilities and infrastructure network will play an important role in making Dromore an attractive place for investors and entrepreneurs.


Dromore Town
Viaduct
740 yds
770 yds



8 HOW DO WE GET THERE?


No 130



8.0 HOW DO WE GET THERE? BIG IDEAS & THEMATIC CLUSTERS

Four ground-breaking 'Big ideas' have been identified for Dromore that will transform future business and community life. These will unlock the greatest potential and will have the most effective benefit for the people and the environment of this historic market town.

37 actions have been identified as suggested projects or initiatives to support the transformation of Dromore for its people. These aspirations were identified during the engagement and consultation of the place plan.

The actions range from projects to be delivered on the ground through to initatives which will bring the community together to assist with improvements across Dromore. These actions have been clustered into interrelated themes according to their attributes, deliverability and intended results. Holistically, they are aimed at bringing about change to meet the needs of residents, business community, stakeholders and visitors to the area and are tailored to meet the short, medium and longer terms needs of the town.

The **37 Actions** are spread across the following **6 Thematic Clusters**:

- BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND STRATEGIC GROWTH
- HISTORY AND INTERPRETATION
- SUSTAINABILITY
- THE GREAT OUTDOORS
- COMMUNITY LIFE
- HEART OF THE TOWN

Please note: The implementation of all the outcomes and actions which are being promoted in the Plan will be subject to all relevant consents, including planning permission, being obtained in advance.



8.1 THE BIG IDEAS FOR DROMORE

These are the key areas for development requiring focussed attention, innovative concepts and a collaborative energy to achieve improvements that will see positive impacts on economic, social and environmental factors. These big ideas have a variety of actions related to them that will assist in the delivery of exciting, fresh and creative vitality and regeneration in the area.

1. TACKLING VACANCY AND DERELICTION

The key to future development within Dromore hinges around unlocking the regeneration of derelict buildings and prominent vacant sites in the town. It is vital that these buildings and spaces are brought back into positive use, creating social, economic and sustainable development opportunities.

A lot can be learnt from case studies within the Borough, such as the recent Townscape Heritage Schemes in Armagh and Lurgan and from projects further afield.

The actions, listed on the following pages, that relate to this big idea include:

- Back to Life: Restore & Revive! (BS1)
- Housing for Dromore (BS7)
- Restore Dromore (HI5)
- Community Meeting Spaces (CL1)
- Adapt and activate vacant properties and gap sites (HT2)
- Deliver town centre support, revitalisation and regeneration (HT5)

2. QUILLYBURN LANDS

The zoned lands adjacent to Quillyburn Business Park are well placed on a strategic location off the A1 and along the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor.

Whilst there is a lapsed planning approval for education use on site, the zoned area in the existing area plan is for industrial / business use.

There is an opportunity to unlock and enable strategic growth, as these lands have the potential, subject to planning, to be developed for a variety of uses such as industry and business innovation.

The actions, listed on the following pages, that relate to this big idea include:

- Quillyburn Development (BS2)
- New build for Dromore High School (BS3)
- Enterprise and Innovation Working Hub (BS5)
- Maximise Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor Opportunities (BS9)
- Sustainable Businesses (SY5)





3. DROMORE VIADUCT

This iconic structure, spanning across the River Lagan and within Dromore Park, once served as a vital link between Knockmore and Banbridge for industry and economic development.

This historical landmark offers a prime opportunity for restoration with a diverse array of benefits including heritage promotion, recreation, park development and community use.

There are many opportunities for heritage investment within the Heritage 2033 plan and collaboration with crucial stakeholders including the Historic Environment Division.

The actions, listed on the following pages, that relate to this big idea include:

- Celebrating our Heritage (HI1)
- Heritage improvements (HI4)
- Active Travel interventions (SY2)
- Get up and Grow: Dromore's Green Finger Projects (SY3)
- Viaduct over and under (G01)
- Dromore Park revitalisation (G02)
- Go with the Flow: River Lagan corridor improvements (G03)

4. ACTIVE RIVERSIDES

The River Lagan meanders through the heart of Dromore linking a wide variety of assets across the town including the town centre, Motte and Bailey, Dromore Park, the Community Centre and a variety of heritage features.

This riverside setting provides a golden opportunity for development that focusses on improved connectivity, park improvements and utilising rear-facing yards, gardens and gap sites. There are knock-on benefits for biodiversity as well as unlocking health and well-being activities.

The actions, listed on the following pages, that relate to this big idea include:

- Explore Biodiversity (SY1)
- Active Travel Interventions (SY2)
- Get up and Grow: Dromore's Green Finger Projects (SY3)
- Viaduct over and under (G01)
- Dromore Park revitalisation (G02)
- Go with the Flow: River Lagan corridor improvements (G03)
- Dog Friendly Dromore (G05)
- Meeting Street and Market Square - Bridge Connection (HT1)

The sections that follow introduce each of the Thematic Clusters, set out in tables that identify key partners, next steps, timescale and resources required. The actions are aligned to the outcomes which they meet. Accompanying illustrations capture the inspiration, bring the ideas to life and help to tell the story of the future possibilities for Dromore.

S = short-term (0-2 years) // M = medium term (2-5 years) // L = long term (over 5+ years)

8.2 BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND STRATEGIC GROWTH

Dromore is growing, its built environment and assets need to develop in tandem with it's progression.

The declining buildings and availability of gap sites within the town centre of Dromore afford great opportunities to positively respond to the community's desire for built fabric improvements and provision of accommodation, community hubs, enterprise, commercial and retail units and co-working spaces, with a focus on saving heritage properties from being lost.

Peripheral areas, strategically located off the A1 and the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor offer diverse opportunities for growth with a multitude of benefits for community, business, industry and visitors to the area.



ACTIONS	WHAT'S THE IDEA?	SUGGESTED PARTNERS	NEXT STEPS	RESOURCES NEEDED	TIMESCALE	OUTCOMES
BS1 // BACK TO LIFE: RESTORE & REVIVE!	Due to the high vacancy rate within the town and the amount of visible derelict and declining buildings/sites it is imperative that this is addressed to open up development and investment opportunities. • It will be important to conduct a study and road map to strategically breathe life back into Dromore's built fabric, including vacant and derelict buildings and gap sites. Working with landlords and private developers to create ways and means to move this stagnant element forward is key. • The establishment of a Development Trust to bring a portfolio of property back into community use. • Consider next steps and concept ideas for key site redevelopment. Linked to BS7, HI5, SY4, HT2.	ABC Council, DFC, HED, NIHE, Invest NI, Private owners, SIB	• Under take a study • Explore the Development Trust set up • Initiate discussions	Collaboration Funding Research	S	
BS2 // QUILLYBURN DEVELOPMENT	Encourage the development of the land zoned for industry adjacent to Quillyburn Business Park to enable investment, innovation and job creation in Dromore. • This action will support the development of economic lands by engaging with public and private landowners and commercial agents to attract businesses and investors. • Considerations under the development of the Local Development Plan.	ABC Council, EA, Invest NI, Private owners and developers, SIB	• Lands assessment study • Initiate discussions • Representation to Local Development Plan • Plan for new economic development lands • Promotion of Investment opportunities	Collaboration Engagement	L	
BS3 // NEW BUILD FOR DROMORE HIGH SCHOOL	This project will involve the planning and development of a new Dromore High School on lands owned by Education Authority located within Dromore as announced by the Minister of Education in February 2024. This project is important as the existing High School site is no longer fit for purpose and there is a need for a new modern education facility together with appropriate outdoor spaces and pitches, to meet the needs of 21st Century pupils. The new school will enable the growth of education provision in the area.	EA, Dromore High School, ABC Council, SIB	• Business case development • Planning permission and statutory consultation • Design and build process	Collaboration Engagement Funding	L	

ACTIONS	WHAT'S THE IDEA?	SUGGESTED PARTNERS	NEXT STEPS	RESOURCES NEEDED	TIMESCALE	OUTCOMES
BS4 // PARK AND RIDE SCHEME	Assessment of suitable sites for the provision of a Park and Ride facility within Dromore on lands with sufficient parking space and with access to the A1. This will: • Ease pressure on town centre parking sites. • Provide a suitable facility for Dromore's commuter population. • Provide quick access from Dromore to local key towns within the Borough, and to Newry and Belfast. • Provide more sustainable means of transport.	DFI, Translink, SIB ABC Council	• Feasibility options study • Initiate discussions • Consultation	Funding Land availability	L	
BS5 // ENTERPRISE AND INNOVATION WORKING HUB	To provide a multi-purpose working hub within Dromore for use of local people and visitors to the area which will assist with building and developing Smart Businesses and a thriving and agile economy. There is a need to provide appropriate space for new business start ups and existing businesses that are growing and developing. The project will: • Be important for existing and new businesses to receive support and assistance to promote creativity, sustainable approaches, digital technologies, enterprise and innovation. • Provide an alternative working location for people who are currently 'working from home' and who would like to 'work close to home'. • Create opportunities for collaboration. • Encourage business and networking opportunities. • Provide mini offices for flexible use and/or rental for small local businesses, entrepreneurs and professionals. • Provision of space to aid growth across business sectors. Linked to HT2	Dromore Chamber of Commerce, Invest NI, DFC, ABC Council, SRC, BPA, MSW Growth Deal, Banbridge Enterprise Centre, Local businesses, HED	• Feasibility options study • Initiate discussions • Consultation	Funding Partnership and collaboration approach	M-L	
BS6 // FORMER PRIMARY SCHOOL SITE	The former Dromore Central Primary School site has been dormant for several years and is a prime opportunity for reuse. This will: • Breathe life back into a keynote built structure and site that has many important links and memories for the people of Dromore. • Reinvigorate the site.	EA, SIB	• Undertake an internal assessment for educational use of the site	Consultation Engagement	L	

ACTIONS	WHAT'S THE IDEA?	SUGGESTED PARTNERS	NEXT STEPS	RESOURCES NEEDED	TIMESCALE	OUTCOMES
BS7 // HOUSING FOR DROMORE	There is a need to carry out a feasibility study to identify opportunities to increase the supply of affordable housing in Dromore. The feasibility study will: • Identify and assess housing development sites in Dromore which can contribute to vibrant, safe and cohesive communities. • Increase the supply of affordable (social and intermediary) and accessible homes which will address the housing needs of a growing population. • Consider options for re-purposing derelict historic buildings as residential. Linked to HT2	NIHE, ABC Council, Private Developers, HED	• Under take a feasibility study to establish existing and projected needs	Collaboration	S-M	
BS8 // VISITOR ACCOMMODATION PROVISION	Dromore has limited offering for accommodation. With it's strategic location and appetite to grow and develop further, it is important to assess it's current 'stock' and assist with strategic development for future visitor accommodation. Consider options for re-purposing derelict historic buildings as short term lets. Linked to HT2	ABC Council, Tourism NI, Invest NI, Existing local accommodation providers, HED	• Desktop research and study	Research Engagement	M	
BS9 // MAXIMISE DUBLIN BELFAST ECONOMIC CORRIDOR OPPORTUNITIES	• Development of clusters in growth sectors along economic corridor. • Promote investment messaging of the economic corridor. • Promote opportunities as gateway to internal and external markets to international investors. • Develop infrastructure projects along the economic corridor including green and sustainability projects. • Maximise partnership working with Councils and other economic stakeholders along the economic corridor.	ABC Council, DBEC, DFE, Invest NI, Banbridge Enterprise Centre, BPA	• Consider and implement findings of the DBEC studies and research.	Funding Partnership and collaboration approach Research	M-L	

8.3 HISTORY AND INTERPRETATION

The history of Dromore is multi-faceted with strands of heritage interwoven through the fabric of past, present and future life in this vibrant market town. The heritage crosses many inter-related features including built and natural assets, traditions, industry, sports and stories.

Dromore has many untapped and underutilised opportunities to develop the town through keeping one eye on the past and one on its promising future. Its current community life and the potential to encourage people to spend time in Dromore could benefit greatly from developing it's heritage features, such as the Motte and Bailey, heritage trail and listed buildings and utilising interpretation for creative, fun, business, tourism and educational purposes. This will help the town thrive to become a unique flagship for heritage development.



ACTIONS	WHAT'S THE IDEA?	SUGGESTED PARTNERS	NEXT STEPS	RESOURCES NEEDED	TIMESCALE	OUTCOMES
HI1 // CELEBRATING OUR HERITAGE	To celebrate the past, present and future heritage of Dromore through a variety of ways that allow for participation and input from all sections of the community with the common goal of celebrating its history to be enjoyed for many years ahead. • To ensure key elements of Dromore's heritage assets and stories are appropriately documented, displayed, interpreted and enjoyed. • To provide exposure of all of Dromore's heritage to educate it's people and those who visit Dromore. Utilising online resources and archives e.g. HERoNI. Projects could include the following: • Heritage Research - to understand the past, present and future heritage of Dromore. • Heritage Activities/Programme- Including Linen Stories, Harry Ferguson, historical Minecraft, blue plaque projects, historical artworks, historical interpretation, sculpture, artwork (including murals), celebration of Dromore's historical and sporting figures, industrial heritage, model railway, exhibition of documentation, historical photos and artefacts, encourage participation in the Heritage Open Days. • Living Memories Project(s)- These could provide opportunities to create projects capturing and documenting Dromore's living memories, including; - Photographic collections preserving history and memories. - Historical talks to document the amazing heritage stories from local historians.	ABC Council, HED, Tourism NI, DFC, SRC, Libraries NI, PRONI, EA Local schools, residents, historians, groups and societies, Heritage Place Project	• Through collaboration pilot heritage projects • Undertake local research • Environmental scan for funding opportunities	Collaboration Funding Partners Research Heritage Interest Group	S-M	
HI2 // MOTTE AND BAILEY SITE	Develop knowledge and raise local awareness of the Motte and Bailey history through improved interpretation, sign posting and re-enactment activities. Consider installation of appropriate directional signage at key locations for visitors. This site currently does not have any parking and is not accessible for all. It could also benefit by exploring options for future car parking and access improvements with HED and adjacent landowners.	HED, DFC, ABC Council, Libraries NI Local schools, Private Landowners	• Explore accessibility and parking options • Interpretation improvements and awareness activities • Visitor directional signage	Collaboration Funding Partnership working Research	M	


BEER GARDEN
CASTLE

ACTIONS	WHAT'S THE IDEA?	SUGGESTED PARTNERS	NEXT STEPS	RESOURCES NEEDED	TIMESCALE	OUTCOMES
HI3 // REINVIGORATE THE INTEREST OF DROMORE'S HISTORY	Encouraging the people of Dromore to re-ignite their Historical Society or similar interest group for the mutual benefit of those involved, the surrounding community and visitors to the area. Involve schools and youth to explore Dromore's history, using local projects. The key aim would be to explore Dromore and to find a variety of means to share its history. Linked to HI1	ABC Council, HED, Libraries NI, CVSP, local residents, schools and youth groups	• Initiate discussions and engagement • Capacity building support	Engagement Heritage Interest Group Research	S	
HI4 // HERITAGE IMPROVEMENTS	Dromore has a series of heritage assets which are underutilised and the place could benefit from their development. There are untapped opportunities to encourage people to feel more positive about the history of the area. Projects could include the following: • Heritage trail improvements, interpretation, QR code locations, actors tour, heritage open days, capital led heritage regeneration, reminiscence trail. • Conservation and sensitive redevelopment to improve key assets such as the Viaduct, the Tower House (Dromore Castle) and the Motte & Bailey State Care Site. Linked to HI1, HI2, HI5, GO1	ABC Council, HED, Tourism NI, DFC, SRC, Libraries NI, EA, Local schools, residents, historians, groups and societies	• Desktop research to inform a heritage road map for improvements • Environmental scan for funding opportunities	Engagement Funding Research	M-L	
HI5 // RESTORE DROMORE	'Save the Buildings' initiative to encourage owners to maintain and look after their buildings. There is an opportunity to support and upskill the owners of historic buildings and construction trades in areas such as conservation, refurbishment and retrofitting. Engagement with property owners as individuals or in a forum would be beneficial. Exploring other local and government funding opportunities for repairs to historic buildings. Lessons can be learnt from key initiatives such as the SPAB 'Maintenance Week' and learning from case studies in the borough and NI. Linked to HT2, SY4, BS1	HED, DFC, ABC Council, SRC, Property owners, construction industry	• Initiate discussions and engagement • Capacity building support and skills development from heritage and conservation professionals	Collaboration Funding Partnership working Skills	S-M	

8.4 SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is an aspect of Dromore that is relatively untapped and it is important to think of the various strands of sustainability that covers the spectrum of economic, social and environmental issues.

These factors are interwoven across many aspects of community and business life within the town and relate to the built fabric as well as the diversity of environments throughout Dromore including open spaces, riverside landscapes, planting and wildlife habitats.

With improvements to buildings and gap sites being high on the agenda, together with opportunities for environmental and leisure developments through to sustainable initiatives, there are a variety of small, medium and large projects that can be realised to ensure Dromore gets the sustainable boost it needs to serve the current and future need of its residents and business communities.



ACTIONS	WHAT'S THE IDEA?	SUGGESTED PARTNERS	NEXT STEPS	RESOURCES NEEDED	TIMESCALE	OUTCOMES
SY1 // EXPLORING BIODIVERSITY	It is vitally important that Dromore's biodiversity 'assets' are assessed to identify those that have the potential to provide more benefit in terms of improvements for flora, fauna, sustainability and for the enjoyment of it's people and visitors. Projects could include; Biodiversity Audit - into Dromore's biodiversity credentials and identify opportunities to improve the biodiversity value in Dromore with an aim to increase the town's positive contribution to biodiversity for its people and the place. The audit could also provide recommendations for a series of interventions to improve natural assets ensuring a wide diversity of beneficial habitats, landscape settings and species rich environments. Pollinator Plan - for Dromore with the key aim of boosting it's bee (and insect) population for the benefit of flora and fauna in the town and the knock on benefits for the community. Water Quality - Research into the water quality of the River Lagan Linked to SY3, SY4 and GO3	ABC Council, DAERA, CVSP	• Undertake biodiversity audit • Public awareness and engagement	Collaboration Engagement Research	S-M	
SY2 // ACTIVE TRAVEL INTERVENTIONS	To create a series of interventions with the important aim of improving walking and cycling throughout the town and moving around more sustainably. These interventions would encourage other means of travel that are not car focussed, and have the potential to ease pressure on the congestion in Dromore and its parking sites. Active travel interventions will in turn improve interactions with the outdoor environment boosting overall health and wellbeing. The survey responses indicated a high level of community interest in walking and running within Dromore. With this in mind, there may be opportunity to; • Improve cycling infrastructure and potential for cycle hire • Improve walking and running routes in the area • Introduce wellbeing walks / highway to health routes • Upgrade and better connect existing active travel routes • Introduce walking trails (guided and self-guided) These interventions could dove-tail in with any current early stage projects that DFI are developing and with their recent policy - 'Planning for the future of transport time for change (2021)'. Linked to GO2, GO3, CL2, HT1 and HT4.	DFI, Sport NI, ABC Council, Tourism NI, Local clubs and societies, landowners	• Undertake a study to assess existing and potential routes as contribution to the DFI Active Travel Plan • Explore future funding opportunities • Stakeholder discussions	Collaboration Engagement Funding	M	


HISTORIC
DROMORE
DROMORE RAILWAY STATION
HISTORIC
DROMORE
DROMORE VIADU
Litter

ACTIONS	WHAT'S THE IDEA?	SUGGESTED PARTNERS	NEXT STEPS	RESOURCES NEEDED	TIMESCALE	OUTCOMES
SY3 // GET UP AND GROW: DROMORE'S GREEN FINGER PROJECTS	Dromore and it's people have a strong appetite and desire to further develop 'green finger' projects. These may include: • Planting projects across the town, gardening skills, social skills and intergenerational working including local schools. • Opportunities may be available to create allotments and/or social farm on the edge of town with agreement from local landowners, site options would need consideration. • Biodiversity programmes to enhance local skills including nature trails, tree trails and maintenance. These projects could include sponsorship/support from local businesses. Collaboration with local community groups, schools, charities and the social supermarket will be important.	ABC Council, DAERA, CVSP, Higher Ground, Youth Clubs, Local schools and businesses, Dromore Chamber of Commerce	• Public awareness and engagement • Capacity building and support • Research and best practise • Scanning for funding opportunities	Collaboration Engagement Funding Partnership approach	S-M	
SY4 // SUSTAINABLE CONNECTIONS INITIATIVE	A series of physical and social activities with a focus on creating and promoting awareness of sustainability and how interventions and projects could be achieved to boost this important credential within Dromore. Opportunity to improve conservation skills and to improve the sustainability of historic buildings. Research opportunity into sustainable outcomes of re-using buildings and products.	DAERA, ABC Council, EA, CVSP, Local groups and schools, HED	• Public awareness and engagement • Partnership working • Explore funding opportunities	Collaboration Engagement Funding Partnership approach	M	
SY5 // SUSTAINABLE BUSINESSES	This could be a range of initiatives to assist local businesses to review and develop their sustainable assets and features for the benefit of running the business, maximising energy efficiency and reducing the carbon footprint of Dromore.	Invest NI, SRC, ABC Council, MSW, BPA, Local businesses and industry	• Support initiatives and programmes • Sharing learning and best practise	Collaboration Research	S-M	
SY6 // PUBLIC BODIES AS CHANGE CHAMPIONS	Public bodies showing shared leadership in adopting sustainable behaviours. Research ideas and inspiration on initiatives such as zero waste, rewilding, tree planting, carbon neutral, air quality improvements, sustainable travel, employment support, sustainable drainage systems, water infrastructure improvements, sewage network improvements and social value procurement.	CPSP, CVSP	• Collaborative Research • Sharing learning and best practise	Collaboration Funding Partnership working Research	S-M	

8.5 THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Dromore's outdoors are diverse and varied affording a wide range of opportunities for activities and chances to spend time within the external environment.

The diversity of natural spaces and places across Dromore ensure residents and visitors have the opportunities to walk their dog alongside the meandering River Lagan or take a run on the riverside path whilst listening to the sounds of the rhythmic rush of the river, birds singing and the hum of insects.

It is evident that the community in Dromore enjoy being in the outdoor environment that is scattered between the built fabric and rolling topography and to gain peaceful time to clear their heads whilst taking in the sights and sounds of the local environment.

These diversities offer a unique array of opportunities for investment and to respond to the requirements of the local community. The opportunities will serve as a benchmark for celebrating life in The Great Outdoors.



ACTIONS	WHAT'S THE IDEA?	SUGGESTED PARTNERS	NEXT STEPS	RESOURCES NEEDED	TIMESCALE	OUTCOMES
GO1 // VIADUCT OVER AND UNDER	Dromore's Viaduct is a landmark icon of the town and a crucial heritage asset nestled in Dromore Park and highly visible from the adjacent A1 road. Restricted access has led to intrigue and interest in re-opening this asset on top for the benefit of the people. This action could involve: • Exploring opportunities for opening access to the top of the Viaduct, as a view point or linear park. • Exploring the potential to create an improved public area 'under the arches'. • Exploring options to improve the 'welcome and arrival point' via the car park. • Research into rail and industrial heritage. • Improvements to these key assets will help to improve tourism opportunities for Dromore and will attract visitors to spend time discovering the town. Improvements to these key assets will help to improve tourism opportunities for Dromore and will attract visitors to spend time discovering the town. Initial steps are to progress a condition survey of the structure, and investigate options to develop a project. Linked to HI1, HI3 and HI4	ABC Council, DFI, DFC, HED, Local history interest group, Local residents	• Heritage Open Day opportunities • Scoping study to determine project options and phasing plan	Collaboration Funding	L	
GO2 // DROMORE PARK REVITALISATION	Encourage more people to use the town park, creating a welcome and safe place. The park is an amazing natural asset within Dromore, with crucial linkages into the town centre and across the town. While there has been recent investment in the play area and footbridges, there are suggestions to improve remaining parts of the park to ensure that those who use it feel safe and welcome. • To encourage more dwell time in the park suggested interventions may include picnic tables, multi-use spaces, informal recreation opportunities and a range of park programmes. • Other initiatives may include; new entrance signs, improved parking, nature trails, eco park, interpretation and activities, improved lighting and trees/plant maintenance. • Aesthetically improve the 'Welcome' and sense of arrival at the Viaduct car park and the underpass entrance experience. Linked to SY2, GO1 and GO3	ABC Council, HED, DFI, Local residents	• Undertake scoping study to understand needs • Develop options and phasing plan	Collaboration Funding	M-L	



ACTIONS	WHAT'S THE IDEA?	SUGGESTED PARTNERS	NEXT STEPS	RESOURCES NEEDED	TIMESCALE	OUTCOMES
GO3 // GO WITH THE FLOW: RIVER LAGAN CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS	Dromore owes it's location and history to the River Lagan. This important natural and meandering feature affords many opportunities to benefit the physical and mental well being of the community as well as the town setting. Improvements may include: • A riverside link between the Motte and Bailey and Dromore Community Centre. • Further opening up of the riverside walk could be explored to improve connectivity across the town. • Phase development of improvement works would enable project delivery as and when funding becomes available. • Recreational use of the river could be explored including activities such as kayaking and angling where the water conditions are suitable. • Water Quality - Research into the water quality of the River Lagan. • Riverside business and landowners could explore utilising rear-facing yards, gardens and gap sites for development and/or business initiatives. Linked to SY1 and SY2	ABC Council, DFC, DFI, Private landowners, Local clubs, Riverside businesses, DAERA	• Develop feasibility study and options including a phased approach • Initiate discussions with landowners • Explore funding options	Collaboration Feasibility Study Funding Partners	M-L	
GO4 // SPORTS FACILITIES AND OFFERING IMPROVEMENTS	Dromore has a great range of sporting facilities and there is a strong sense of collaboration between Council, Education Authority and sporting clubs. There is a need to review the facilities and offering to assess whether the provision meets the needs of the clubs and the community. Sporting activities offer a wide range of benefits to physical and mental well-being as well as social, economic and cross community. • Clubs could work together to improve access and offering to sports across Dromore. Including physical assets and programmes on offer across the sites. • Explore options to expand other sports provision and infrastructure in the area. • It will be important to analyse sporting needs, pressures, capacity and asset utilisation to assist with a road map for future initiatives. • Consider the options for the establishment of all weather and multi-sport pitch facilities.	ABC Council, EA, Sport NI, Local sports clubs and associations.	• Undertake a needs, demand and capacity analysis • Continued collaboration	Collaboration Funding Partners Research	M-L	
GO5 // DOG FRIENDLY DROMORE	Dromore has a vibrant dog owner community but the town is lacking in spaces and activities catering towards the dogs and their owners. It is important that dog owners are responsible for their dogs respecting the local environment and other users of these spaces. There may be opportunities to create a dog friendly place such as introducing dog training, dog friendly cafes, dog walking clubs and responsible dog owners learning and development. Dog themed market days have happened recently and have received a lot of interest.	ABC Council, Libraries NI, Dog owners, local vets, local businesses	• Raise awareness and promote dog friendly opportunities	Collaboration	S-M	

8.6 COMMUNITY LIFE

A sense of community is the life-blood of Dromore. The close knit village-feel and collaboration has played a key role in the development of the town over past and present days. Strong connections between business and community life have created a unique vibrancy and momentum within the town that is realised through a strong community spirit and appetite to regain pride within the town.

This spirit together with the development of initiatives within the town can be harnessed and encouraged to help the town thrive into the future and to encourage other members of the community to get involved.

Currently Dromore is not seen as a destination town, but with the right investment, development, tools and encouragement, opportunities will be created to ensure people spend greater time in the town for the benefit of the people and the place.



ACTIONS	WHAT'S THE IDEA?	SUGGESTED PARTNERS	NEXT STEPS	RESOURCES NEEDED	TIMESCALE	OUTCOMES
CL1 // COMMUNITY MEETING SPACES	Dromore engagement suggested the need for additional integrated and inclusive spaces so the community can take part in wide range of activities and initiatives. While there are several meeting spaces available, there are limited opportunities for a shared space for social enterprises to utilise as hubs for shared collaboration, development and a meeting of minds. • It will be important to review existing hall and facility provision to ascertain the need. • Vacant properties could be brought back to life for community use. The integrated space could be used by community/social owned enterprises and offer skills support for all user groups. Linked to BS1	ABC Council, DFC, CVSP, Local community groups, Property owners, Local businesses, Dromore Chamber of Commerce	• Scoping study and review of current facility provision and future needs • Raising awareness and promotion of available and bookable spaces in town	Collaboration Engagement Funding Promotion	S-M	
CL2 // DROMORE COMMUNITY CENTRE ENHANCEMENTS	The Dromore Community Centre is a very well used and thriving facility, which offers a range of activities and programmes, located on the edge of town. There is an opportunity to enhance the offering at the centre to continue to meet the needs of society in the future. Suggested enhancements are: • To improve the physical connection (walkway) between the site and Dromore Town Centre. • To adapt the overall programmes of activity and the built fabric according to need and demand at the centre. • To improve the pitch offering at the Community Centre through maintaining good grass pitch standards. Linked to SY2	ABC Council, Sport NI, DFI	• Engage with DFI Active Travel team • Assessment of Dromore Community Centre and implement service improvements based on needs	Engagement Funding	S-M	



ACTIONS	WHAT'S THE IDEA?	SUGGESTED PARTNERS	NEXT STEPS	RESOURCES NEEDED	TIMESCALE	OUTCOMES
CL3 // WHAT'S HAPPENING?	Co-ordination and communication across the place of what's happening, could be improved to raise awareness of activities and programmes, encouraging people to get involved and develop social connections. Better communication could be achieved by using physical or e -community notice boards, social media platforms and other sources of promotion such as 'UrbanABC'. Communication methods should be inclusive and accessible for all.	Local clubs, societies, schools, churches and businesses, CVSP, PSNI, NIFRS, Tourism NI, ABC Council, Dromore Chamber of Commerce	• Communication plan and co-ordinated approach	Collaboration Partnership approach	S	
CL4 // COMMUNITY LED PROGRAMMES, EVENTS, ACTIVITIES AND CLASSES	There is an energy among the people of Dromore to create an inclusive and vibrant community and support the local residents. It is important that the numerous groups and societies come together to share their vision for their community outreach plans to avoid duplication. This coming together would encourage collaboration and cooperation to deliver mutual and inclusive benefits for all participants. Local community groups and social enterprises could benefit from • Facilitated networking sessions • Support in terms of skills, governance and funding applications in order to build their capacity. Suggested programmes below, which community groups could get involved or lead on; • Arts and crafts initiatives including art group, book club, language classes, youth programmes and initiatives. • Community classes and upskilling opportunities- beekeeping, food handling etc. • Youth focussed activities including street art projects, short term apprenticeships and/or life skills courses and training. • Collaboration to deliver local events such as 'Spend a day in Dromore' initiatives, Dromore Fair, Celebrate Dromore Day, School Sports Parade, Meanwhile/ Pop up projects. • Food related events across the town in co-ordination with the local food establishments.	CVSP, Local clubs, societies, schools and businesses, ABC Council, PSNI, NIFRS, EA Youth Service, Dromore Chamber of Commerce	• Facilitate networking sessions • Signposting and capacity building • Local activity plan	Collaboration Funding Networking Group	S-M	

8.7 HEART OF THE TOWN

Dromore is an amazing place to live, work and visit. The actions under the 'Heart of the Town' focus on activating, recovering and promoting the assets of the town to create; a people-focused environment, a unique retail and service offering, increased dwell time, improved evening economy, attract new business and better connectivity across the town.

These suggested ideas and actions also reflect the current disconnect between the urban centre of the town and its rural hinterland. Enhanced connectivity is essential to reaffirm the relationship and ensure that the growth of the town is cognisant and responsive to its context.



ACTIONS	WHAT'S THE IDEA?	SUGGESTED PARTNERS	NEXT STEPS	RESOURCES NEEDED	TIMESCALE	OUTCOMES
HT1 // MEETING STREET AND MARKET SQUARE - BRIDGE CONNECTION	There is an opportunity to create a vital link, with a new footbridge between the car park at Meeting Street across the River Lagan to the town centre. This idea was originally tabled in the 2015 Masterplan for Dromore and the survey responses show an appetite for this still to be delivered. This footbridge connection has potential to alleviate congestion in Market Square and reduce traffic driving through the town from Meeting Street. Discussions and agreements with landowners, funding and viability will all need to be assessed for this project to be realised. Linked to SY2 and HT4	ABC Council, DFC, HED, DFI, land owners	• Feasibility study detailing options • Identify and engage with relevant stakeholders, land owners and residents	Engagement Funding Partners Options	L	
HT2 // ADAPT AND ACTIVATE VACANT PROPERTIES AND GAP SITES	Vacant properties and underutilised gap sites are one of the key issues in Dromore. It is vitally important to look at opportunities for these sites to be repurposed, adapted and activated which will realise a myriad of benefits for the town, consideration should be given to sustainable development and energy efficiency. To stimulate the activation engagement with relevant stakeholders for support is essential. Survey responses indicated a high desire for these sites to be brought back into use. This action could be delivered by: • Engaging with owners to re-develop or provide a meanwhile use • Support refurbishment and re-utilisation of buildings in the Conservation Area. • Empty to Occupied future rounds. • Vacant to Vibrant future rounds • Upper floors, living above the shops opportunities • Reuse of former school site in Dromore. This idea should dove-tail with BS1, BS6, BS7, BS8, HI5, and CL1	HED, DFC, ABC Council, NIHE, Invest NI, Estate agents and developers, Private owners	• Engagement with property and land owners of vacant sites • Scope out funding initiatives • BS1 Roadmap	Collaborations Engagement Funding Partners	S-M	
HT3 // DAY-TIME AND NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY INITIATIVES	Dromore has a growing day time economy but a limited night time economy. There is an appetite from the local community to improve the night-time offering within the town so that locals have an opportunity to enjoy Dromore in the evening, resulting in increased dwell time and increased footfall encouraging restaurants, bars and shops to extend their opening hours and attract new business. This would enhance social connections in the town and would indirectly help reduce anti-social behaviour. Collaboration amongst local businesses, hospitality, entertainment and community representatives is important to build this evening offering. Linked to CL3, CL4 and HT6	ABC Council, DFC, Tourism NI, Invest NI, BPA, Hospitality Ulster, Local businesses, local entertainers and community groups, Dromore Chamber of Commerce	• Undertake an exercise to understand the current day and night time offering and identify gaps in the offer • Review ENTE Plan	Collaboration Engagement	M	

ACTIONS	WHAT'S THE IDEA?	SUGGESTED PARTNERS	NEXT STEPS	RESOURCES NEEDED	TIMESCALE	OUTCOMES
HT4 // DROMORE LINKAGES PROJECT	It's vitally important that people feel safe within the town and while they are travelling through and enjoying its environment. Dromore has invested in public realm improvements recently but there remains opportunities to improve people's movement and pedestrian 'comfort zones' to achieve people centred streets within the town. Improvements to linkages and connections from town centre to periphery are required with a focus on safety, navigation, maintenance and enhancement of public realm to ensure it is kept in a clean and safe state. • The importance of safe walking routes including those to schools. Safe school linkages between Mossvale Road and Market Square and the potential for new routes e.g. Mount Street to Mossvale. • Improve linkages between car parks and Market Square • Well lit pedestrian routes and install necessary information panels signage to enhance experience. • A 'busy bus' provision to better connect the hinterlands of Dromore with the town, with a focus on benefits for older sections of the community and residents with accessibility needs. • Consideration of any future public realm schemes, to complement the works carried out in Market Square, Church Street and Bridge Street, should ensure accessibility, lighting and safe walking routes, and public spaces as important priorities. • Explore options to improve to pedestrian 'comfort zones' through and around the square. Linked to SY2, HT1 and HT8	DFI, DFC, ABC Council, EA, Translink, SIB	• Scoping study of potential linkage projects and new transport initiatives • Explore funding opportunities • Engagement with stakeholders • Explore options to improve to pedestrian 'comfort zones' through and around the square.	Collaboration Funding Partners	M-L	
HT5 // DELIVER TOWN CENTRE SUPPORT, REVITALISATION AND REGENERATION	There are opportunities to revitalise and regenerate Dromore Town Centre, it's business offering, the streetscape and harmonious improvements across the town. This could take the form of a range of initiatives such as; • Further shop front/facade improvements and incentivisation schemes, improvements should be sensitive in keeping with the Conservation Area guidance. • Capacity building to regenerate businesses. • Streetscape/ environmental improvements in the town centre to improve the experience. • Deliver the Town Centre Action Plan. • Continue to collaborate with Dromore Chamber of Commerce. • Enhance town centre lighting including upgrade of seasonal lighting. This action could cross reference several actions to improve the Heart of the Town.	DFC, HED, ABC Council, BPA, Local businesses and industry, Dromore Chamber of Commerce	• Engagement with stakeholders • Identify initiatives as needs arise • Explore funding opportunities	Collaboration Funding Partners	S-M	

ACTIONS	WHAT'S THE IDEA?	SUGGESTED PARTNERS	NEXT STEPS	RESOURCES NEEDED	TIMESCALE	OUTCOMES
HT6 // LOCAL BUSINESS-ATTRACTING NEW OPPORTUNITIES AND PROVIDING BUSINESS SUPPORT	Dromore is a town brimming with entrepreneurs, artisans, professionals and creators. To sustain and support growth of the place it is important to ensure that relevant stakeholder support is available to allow new and existing businesses to develop to their optimum ability such as • Enterprise courses for start up businesses and SME. • Upskilling opportunities for businesses and employees. • Attract skilled labour to the area. • Joint partnership initiatives with the local youth groups- e.g. Public body and local business collaboration for life skills development. There maybe opportunities to ensure that Dromore puts it best foot forward such as; • Promote the town to attract new commercial business opportunities, such as banking hub, filming, restaurants, professional services and gaps in current provision. • Enhance the market offering. • Strategic business matching to suitable premises supported by a commercial agent, if needed. Linked to HT2, HT3, HT5, BS5 and BS9	BPA, Invest NI, SRC, DFC, ABC Council, Banbridge Enterprise Centre, Local businesses, Local schools, PSNI, Youth Clubs. Dromore Chamber of Commerce, HED	• Engagement and collaboration with business support providers and stakeholders • Engage with young people and businesses to develop ideas and initiatives • Deliver actions from the ABC Market Strategy	Collaboration Environmental scanning Funding Partnership approach	S-M	
HT7 // AI GATEWAY PROJECTS	It is important to celebrate the 'gateways' into Dromore to ensure people are welcomed into the town and to allow visitors the opportunity to easily identify the key routes into the town. This idea could be considered following the delivery of the Dept for Infrastructure A1 Junction Phase 2 project, and depends on the outcome of this. Gateway improvements may include using appropriate signage at key locations, planting, features and safer access.	DFI, ABC Council, Tourism NI	• Gateway improvement scoping options • Identify funding opportunities • Engagement	Collaboration Funding Partners	S-M	
HT8 // IMPROVE PARKING ACROSS DROMORE	Parking (and lack of opportunities) are at the centre of quite a few issues across the town, there could be opportunities to improve the visitor experience and better understand how traffic flow could be improved to the benefit of pedestrians. • Review of parking provision, including accessible spaces and EV charging points. • Businesses to continue to collaborate with organisations and churches in relation to developing parking agreements for businesses and staff in town to use, freeing up spaces for their customers. • Explore opportunities with land owners for new pedestrian access between car parks and Market Square e.g. Cross Lane car park and Meeting Street car park. Linked to HT1	DFI, ABC Council, DFC, Private landowners, Local businesses, Dromore Chamber of Commerce, SIB	• Scope out current parking provision • Encourage collaboration • Identify funding streams • Engagement with land owners	Collaboration Funding Land availability Partners	S-M	





9 THEORY OF CHANGE


Castle
Town Hall & Library
Dromore Town Park
Town Centre



9.0 THEORY OF CHANGE

The table below clearly outlines the relationships between the planning of activities related to the Dromore Place Plan and a high level overview of the delivery and outputs. It is crucially important that this Place Plan delivers the identified big ideas and actions and that there is momentum following the launch that will ensure positive progress into the years ahead for Dromore.

The categories below outline the resources needed to help drive the Place Plan forward and the activity clusters within which the big ideas and actions are grouped. This provides clear organisation and a strategic clustering of interrelated projects and initiatives that can thrive together towards fruition.

Key outputs have been identified that range from small, medium to large projects and initiatives with a range of different timescales. These outputs also relate to some or all of the outcomes and noted impacts for Dromore and this will ensure holistic and responsive delivery for positive improvements across the town.

PLANNING		DELIVERY		
RESOURCES	**ACTIVITY CLUSTERS**	**KEY OUTPUTS: DELIVERABLES**	**OUTCOMES: THE RESULT**	**IMPACT OVERVIEW**
• Public investment • Community Planning Partners • Business Owners • Residents • Infrastructure • Research • Community Groups	• Built Environment and Strategic Growth • History and Interpretation • Sustainability • The Great Outdoors • Community Life • Heart of the Town	Physical, conceptual, research and partnerships to include 37 actions. There are 4 Big Ideas that encompass many of the actions: • Tackling vacancy and dereliction • Quillyburn lands • Dromore Viaduct • Active Riversides	• Historic Dromore • Stocked Dromore • Active Dromore • Discovered Dromore • Connected Dromore	• A unique Market Town • A town rich in built and natural heritage • A town primed for strategic growth • A town with potential for boosting well-being • The River Lagan is a vital place

THE WAY FORWARD...

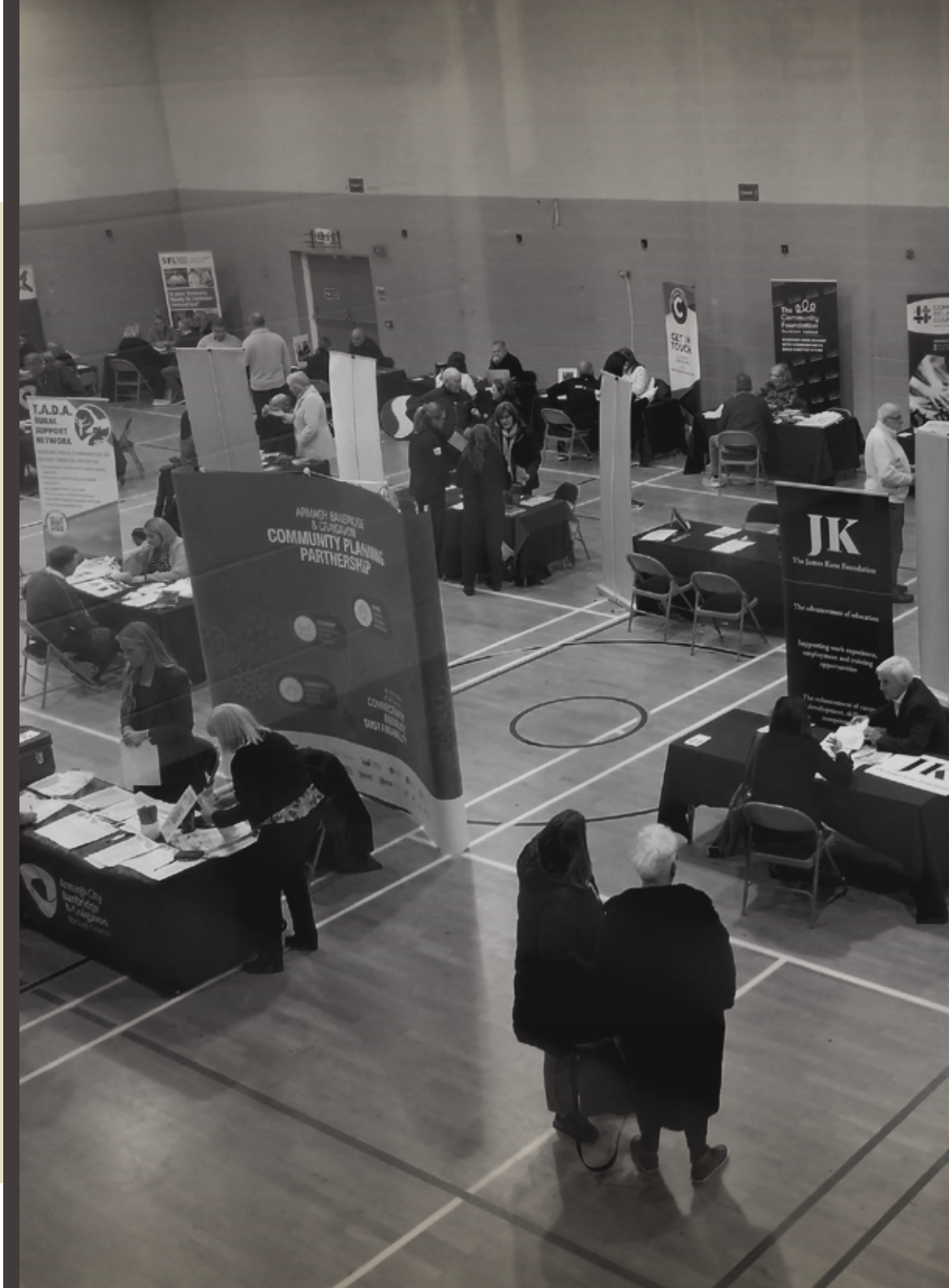
The Community Planning Partnership recognises that the successful delivery of the big ideas and thematically clustered actions is reliant on commitment, engagement and strong relationships to realise the vision, outcomes and full potential for Dromore and it's people.

The Partnership will continue to engage with its strategic partners, the Community Voluntary Sector Panel, the local community, businesses and residents to assist and support the development of the big ideas, suggested actions and continue to scan the environment for funding opportunities.

Implementation of the Place Plan, funding and delivery of the actions is the collective responsibility for a wide range of partners as mentioned above. There is an opportunity to build and foster a sense of community ownership and pride, particularly through the Community Life cluster. This place plan can only be delivered for everyone by working together.

Council's Community Planning Department on behalf of the Community Planning Partnership, will monitor the progress of the big ideas and clustered actions, the progress of outcomes will be measured against baselines within the population indicator place dashboards.

The Place Board Sub Committee will report on the progress of the delivery of place plans and priorities within the places to the wider partnership



SUPPORT AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The success of the Dromore Place Plan delivery will be largely dependent on collaboration, support and available funding to assist in the realisation of the identified big ideas and actions. Each of the projects and initiatives identifies potential partners, but there are also a wide variety of organisations and funds that can be approached to assist with support, guidance and potential funding.

Different streams of funding and grants become available at various times and pipeline opportunities should be identified and tracked to ensure that the community, ABC Council and the strategic partners are all working in harmony with the common goal of improving Dromore into the years ahead.

Please find detailed a selection of local organisations that provide differing levels of support, advice and funding that would be suitable for the big ideas and actions identified within the Dromore Place Plan:

ABC Council Funding Hub
Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF)
Arts Council Northern Ireland
Central Good Relations Fund
Community Foundation NI
DAERA
Department for Communities (DfC)
Grantfinder
Groundwork (Northern Ireland)
King Charles III Fund
Live Here Love Here
National Churches Trust NI
National Garden Schemes: Community Garden Grants
National Lottery Awards for All
National Lottery Community Fund
National Lottery Heritage Fund
National Heritage Memorial Fund
NICVA GrantTracker
PeacePlus
Police Property Fund
The Shared Island Fund
Sport NI: Crowdfunder Programme
Ulster Architectural Heritage Society (UAHS)
Ulster in Bloom
Woodland Trust

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Community Planning Partnership appointed HLM Architects to develop the Dromore Place Plan. The Partnership would like to thank HLM Architects for their commitment, innovation and expertise.

To find out more about HLM Architects please visit:
hlmarchitects.com

The Meet the Funder event held in January 2025 provided an opportunity for the community to source advise from funding and support organisations. Further information can be found at armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/meetthefunder

APPENDICES

GLOSSARY

ABC Council
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council

ACNI
Arts Council Northern Ireland

AHF
Architectural Heritage Fund

ASB
Anti Social Behaviour

BPA
Business Partnership Alliance

CCMS
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools

CPSP
Community Planning Strategic Partnership

CVSP
Community & Voluntary Sector Panel, ABC Council

DAERA
Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

DBEC
Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor

DEA
District Electoral Area (Lagan River)

DFC
Department for Communities

DFE
Department for the Economy

DFI
Department for Infrastructure

DOT
Department of Transport

DRD
Department for Regional Development

EA
Education Authority

EV
Electric Vehicle

HARNI
Heritage at Risk Northern Ireland

HED
Heritage Environment Division

LTN
Local Transport Note

MAG
Ministerial Advisory Group

MSW
Mid-South West (Region)

NICVA
Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action

NIFRS
Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service

NIHE
Northern Ireland Housing Executive

NISRA
Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency

PHA
Public Health Association

PSNI
Police Service of Northern Ireland

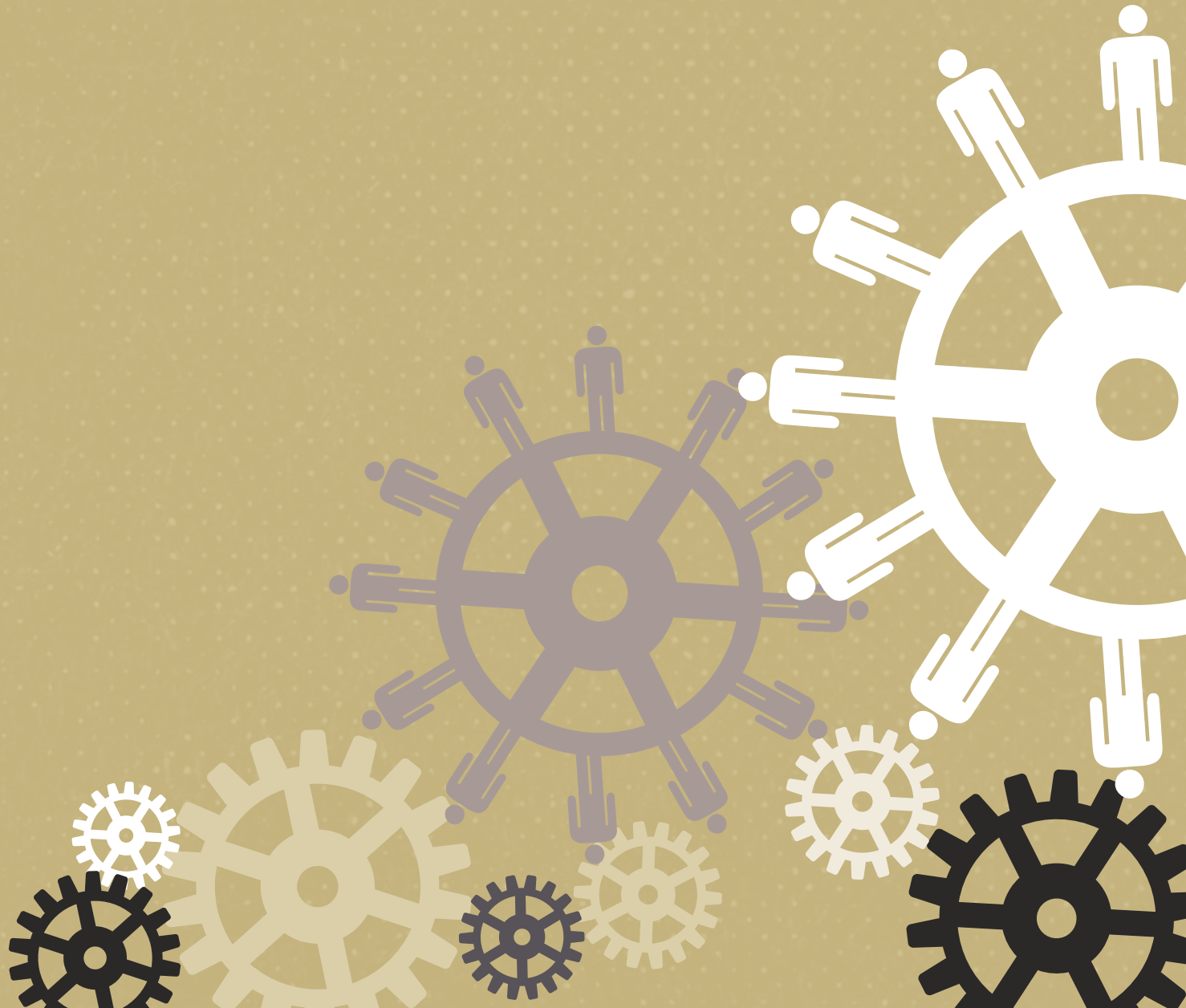
SHSCT
Southern Health & Social Care Trust

SIB
Strategic Investment Board

SRC
Southern Regional College

UAHS
Ulster Architectural Heritage Society







INTERESTED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF DROMORE,

for further information or to get involved with the delivery of an action?

We want to hear from you.

Please contact the Community Planning Department at Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council

0300 0300 900

communityplanning@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

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