



DUMFRIES AND
GALLOWAY COUNCIL

Local Development Plan

Supplementary Guidance

Adopted February 2015

Whitesands Masterplan

A New Vision Whitesands



Whitesands Regeneration Masterplan Finalised report

February 2015

Dumfries
& Galloway





► Veiv looking across River Nith to Whitesands



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The Design Team for the Whitesands Charrette was led by a Gillespies team of urban designers, planners, architects and landscape architects. Gillespies were supported by DG Design, community engagement specialists CADISPA, and planners and property consultancy GVA. Gillespies urban design team included architects and urban designers John Thompson and Partners.

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Cover Image Courtesy of Brian Sherman Photography





► Aerial view of Whitesands looking north



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Brief

In August 2012, Dumfries and Galloway Council commissioned Gillespies LLP and DG Design to prepare a Masterplan for the Whitesands Area of Dumfries Town Centre.

There is a general consensus that a plan is needed for the Whitesands. It is an under-utilised area of the town centre and an outstanding asset of great potential. The uncertainty with regard to the provision of future flood protection from the River Nith has and continues to have an impact on the regeneration of the Whitesands area, which in turn has influence on the performance and future planning of the wider town centre.

The overarching aims of the Study are twofold: to increase the vitality of the town centre as a whole and, to address particular flooding issues associated with the banks of the River Nith. The outputs of the Study are to:

- ▶ Create a coherent vision for the future of the Whitesands area
- ▶ Produce a Flood Management Solution
- ▶ Identify development and property opportunities
- ▶ Enhance the quality of life of local people
- ▶ Produce a Delivery and Implementation Strategy

Background to the Study

The flooding of the River Nith in the town centre at Whitesands is an issue for Dumfries. The recent frequency of the river bursting its banks and inundating the Whitesands has impacts on the town - blocking the area for through traffic, bus services, and parking, causing disruption to trading and damage to property. There is a widespread will that something needs to be done and a solution found to address the problem.

Dumfries & Galloway Council has undertaken a number of studies into the flooding issues on the Nith where it passes through Dumfries including hydraulic modelling works, which has helped to inform the team and the development of the masterplan.

The level of protection expected by the Scottish Government through planning policy is between 1 in 100 and 1 in 200 years, which would cause a physical intervention that would create an unacceptable level of visual severance between the town and the river. When a climate-change factor is added to these heights, it results in barriers that could not be fitted into the Whitesands without significantly damaging the visual amenity and the contribution that the environmental asset of the river makes to the town.

The area that is subject to the flooding is within a Conservation Area and contains listed buildings. The townscape of the Whitesands and the adjoining streets is an integral part of the town centre built heritage. Furthermore, it is an area of high

visual amenity for the town's residents and is a tourist attraction in its own right. The visual impact of a flood barrier and the height to which it is built within this sensitive environment is therefore a matter of careful consideration.

One of the main charrette tasks was to make an assessment of the visual impact of flood barrier heights, give consideration to alternative approaches and make a proposal as to what the maximum acceptable height of a flood barrier would be within Whitesands. Related to this, a key objective of the charrette was to develop a vision and determine the best possible future for the Whitesands, should flood protection be put in place, and the resultant benefits that could be achieved for the whole town.

Approach

Given the multiple objectives of the Brief, it was agreed that a 'charrette' would be a useful tool in bringing together the views of a range of stakeholders and the community. Charrettes involved a series of interactive design workshops held over a number of days where the public, local design professionals and project consultants worked together on developing a detailed vision for a site. The process also includes meetings, which enable all stakeholders to discuss the key policies and issues relating to the site. A key benefit of this approach is that local residents, retailers and stakeholders are involved throughout the duration of the design process, heightening awareness of development issues and informing them on decisions on the future of their community.



The Design Team for the Whitesands Charrette was led by Gillespies, urban design and landscape architects. Gillespies were supported by architects and urban designers JTP, community engagement specialists Cadispa, and planners and property consultancy GVA. Several key officers from Dumfries and Galloway Council were fully engaged in the Charrette process with the Gillespies team.

Evolution of the Masterplan

The vision and broad ingredients of the masterplan came out during the charrette and were summarised as 'key themes' – the main points of consensus that people expressed, based on flooding, parking, heritage, environment, activity, movement, engagement and working together.

In addition, many design options and ideas were conceived and drawn up during the charrette, some of which also formed the basis of masterplan interventions and projects.

The design team listened and took on board everything that was said during their eight days in Dumfries, at the same time processing, sieving and discussing options aimed at resolving competing dilemmas. At the end of the eight days, everything was brought together into one plan that seeks to address the main points of consensus whilst addressing technical and other planning and economic related requirements.

The team tested emerging ideas and options with Dumfries and Galloway Council during every day of the charrette and made an interim presentation of the 'emerging plan' to the community, before making adjustments and presenting the final masterplan proposition.

The Masterplan

The new Whitesands is seen as a special place within South West Scotland. The Vision incorporates the following features:

- ▶ The outstanding riverside walkway and national cycle route with remarkable proximity to centre of the regional capital is retained
- ▶ The existing riverside car parks and bus terminus are transformed into a high amenity landscape
- ▶ The leafy countrified riverbanks that exist immediately upstream and downstream of Whitesands are extended into the town centre with both banks at Whitesands and Mill Road becoming a tree-lined setting for the Nith
- ▶ The new Whitesands urban edge would provide a linear counterpoise to the High Street. As well as being an attractive destination, it would be a place of arrival for the town centre visitor by bus, cycle and car.
- ▶ The leafy landscape and café-stop quality of the new Whitesands riverfront would contrast with the retail and civic role of the High Street. Between these two historic thoroughfares, run the secondary streets and tertiary pedestrian routes and also Irish Street. This important town centre area could be revived by a series of heritage-

led regeneration projects that work with the surviving building fabric and remnant mediaeval patterns of plot shapes, wynds and closes.

It is proposed that the level of protection that should be adopted for the Whitesands is at least 1 in 25 year flood event. This would allow a significant degree of confidence to return to this part of the town centre, allow insurance cover to be explored and avoid the nuisance of regular inundation. Importantly, it would allow the amenity and integrity of the Whitesands to be maintained.

Future refinement of 1in25 protection to seek a more resilient protection without compromising views will also be explored in future stages of the project to reflect SEA processes and discussions with SEPA.

Where there is greater width within the Whitesands site, a landscape bund is proposed as the engineering flood protection device. This would be constructed behind the existing riverbank wall and riverside walkway. At the top of the bund would be an elevated walkway from which enhanced views of the river could be enjoyed.

The Masterplan Report

This report summarises the outcomes of the Whitesands Charrette and ongoing consultation processes, including a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report. It sets out an Action Plan for the implementation of future works to Whitesands and environs, over the short, medium and longer term.



► Veiv looking across River Nith to Whitesands



1 INTRODUCTION

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The overarching aims of the Study are twofold: to increase the vitality of the town centre as a whole and, to address particular flooding issues associated with the banks of the River Nith. The outputs of the Study are to:

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This report summarises the outcomes of the Whitesands Charrette and sets out an Action Plan for the implementation of future works to the Whitesands, over the short, medium and longer term.

Section 2 of this report is a record of the public days of the charrette and the following Sections 3 - 6 describe the proposed masterplan approach and solution, which was played back to the community at the end of the charrette. Section 7 presents an Action Plan for the way forward, which was undertaken following the charrette.

Section 2 - a summary of the participation days of the charrette, concluding with the summary of emerging 'key themes'

Section 3 - describes the urban analysis undertaken to inform the design response in parallel with the outcomes of the public sessions of the charrette

Section 4 - describes the issue of flooding and the suggested approach to flood protection that arose through the process

Section 5 - explains the regeneration vision for both the Whitesands and the wider town centre

Section 6 - provides an urban design framework for both town as a whole and specifically for the Whitesands

Section 7 - sets out an Action Plan for implementation of the masterplan



The Charrette Event - around town

2 THE CHARRETTE

WHAT IS A CHARRETTE?

“An inclusive, design-led approach to gathering information, analysis, option generation and formation of design proposals.”

OVERARCHING AIMS OF THE BRIEF?

“... to increase the vitality of the town centre as a whole and to address particular flooding issues associated with the banks of the River Nith”

This section summarises the discussions and activities undertaken on the participation days of the charrette leading up to the design response, concluding with the ‘KEY THEMES’ to emerge from the process.

The Whitesands Charrette took place between Wednesday 12 - 19th September 2012, primarily in the Cairndale Hotel in Dumfries town centre. The week long programme is set out below:

Day 1 Wednesday 12 September, 2012

Team Tour of the Whitesands and the wider town context, with briefing from key DGC officers and the Dumfries Civic Pride

Day 2 Thursday 13 September, 2012

Stakeholder workshop with attendance from key DGC representatives along with Scottish Water, SNH, SEPA, Historic Scotland, Swestrans, Loreburn Housing Association, Loreburn Community Council, Wide Open, Holywood Trust, Chamber of Arts, Dumfries Civic Pride, Dumfries Historic Building Trust and two local primary schools.

Day 3 Friday 14 September, 2012

Public open event involving open discussion in the morning and themes workshops in the afternoon. Two workshops were held with local primary school children, who presented their work at the beginning of the public session. A meeting was also held with the Traders Association in the evening.

Day 4 Saturday 15 September, 2012

Public open event involving open discussion in the morning and themed workshops in the afternoon. A further meeting was held with key members of the Traders Association at Whitesands to discuss issues in more detail.

Day 5 Sunday 16 September, 2012

The design team worked at the Cairndale Hotel.

Day 6 Monday 17 September, 2012

The design team continued to work up design solutions and an interim review of the emerging plan was undertaken by DGC in the afternoon and then at a public meeting on Monday evening, to which everyone was invited.

Day 7 Tuesday 18 September, 2012

The design team continued to work at the Cairndale Hotel.

Day 8 Wednesday 19 September, 2012

The proposed Whitesands masterplan was presented to the public in the evening.

In advance of the charrette itself, the team gave a presentation to DGC Strategic Projects Group in late August to refine the charrette programme and discuss the anticipated outputs. The team also ran an Introductory Workshop on 3rd September to which wider DGC members and stakeholders were invited, to explain what the charrette will involve and ways to participation.



Team Walkabout



Wider Town Tour



FAMILIARISATION

► Day 1 Wednesday 12 September, 2012

Familiarisation

The initial day was one of familiarisation for the Design Team, involving a walkabout and bus tour. The walkabout provided an insight into the historic core of Dumfries and the remnants of the wynds and closes that were originally part of the urban grain. The linkages that some of these closes still provide for pedestrians was noted. The mediaeval High Street and secondary streets down to the river were walked, with commentary on some of the Listed Buildings and residential development opportunities being provided by members of the Loreburn Community Council and Dumfries Civic Pride and Historic Buildings Trust.

The flood issues were discussed at Whitesands and the relative heights of flood events that had been applied to some lamp posts were noted.

The bus tour allowed a wider appreciation of the town and core area to be understood in context. Local areas to be visited were Green Park and Dock Park with areas further afield including the peripheral retail and business locations, potential sites for the new hospital, the Crichton campus, Kingholm and possible development sites.



Team Walkaround



1. 'Planning' Briefing



2. 'Transport' Briefing



3. 'Flooding' Briefing



4. 'Civic Heritage' Briefing



Site Walkaround with Stakeholders

STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

► Day 2 Thursday 13 September, 2012

Thursday was a day of technical presentations, discussions, site visit and workshops. Presentations were on the Charrette process and the programme, on planning, flooding and roads and transportation and on the history of the town.

Workshop groups provided a further opportunity to gain a knowledge of the issues with the core presentation subjects being discussed as well as heritage, regional positioning, place competitiveness and regeneration.

In the evening there was an event for Whitesands and town centre retailers in the hotel venue which allowed a forum for concerns and aspirations to be expressed and noted. Further visits to the traders in their premises were undertaken on Friday morning.

The following pages record the discussions and recommendations arising from each group, under the themes of:

- Regional Capital
- Development and Heritage
- Flood Protection and Landscape
- Arts, Culture and Education
- Movement



Hands on Planning



The Regional Capital

What attributes do regional capitals have?

- USP heritage, build environmental and culture
- D+G Environmental Gateway

What is the regional offer?

- Employment centre
- Education
- Culture
- Liveability
- Growth and development

Drawbacks?

- County town or regional capital
- Mismatch in local vs. visitor perception/mentality

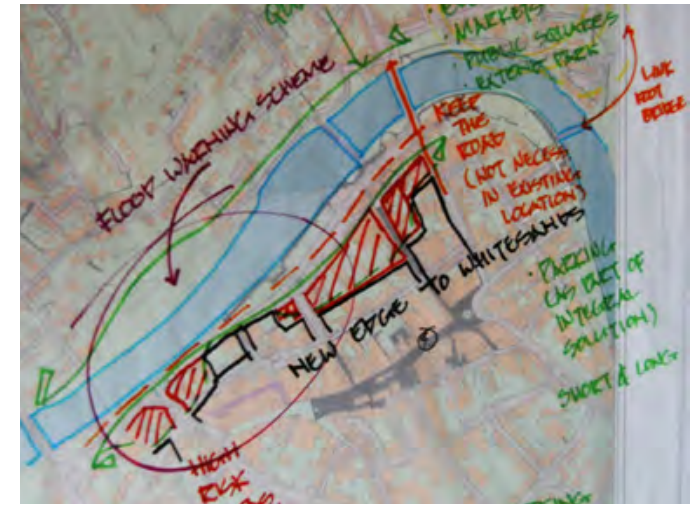
PATHWAY TO A REGIONAL CAPITAL?

- Hearts and minds campaign
- Cordon Blue burns supper - the home of the burns supper
- Leaders
- Ambassadors



Development and Heritage

- The Historic and heritage asset of the Whitesands should be respected
- Whitesands is in a Conservation Area and contains Grade A, B and C listed buildings
- The Whitesands is the centrepiece of Dumfries
- Notions sacrificing or abandoning lower areas of the historic town centre should not be entertained
- Enough has been lost, embarking on a new edge to the town would be a long and expensive process without precedent on this scale
- A solution to the residential development blight within the SEPA flood contour line needs to be found for the heritage context of Dumfries town centre



Flood protection and landscape

- 'Do we or do we not' go for an expensive flood solution?
- The flooding issue is a question of balance - assessing Risk / Vulnerability
- Reduce Risk Vulnerability - convert business use to parking
- Increase Risk Vulnerability - convert business use to residential
- Need to balance value of the town centre with the prime agricultural land
- Annual probability
- 1 in 100yr flood event = 1% chance in any given year = costly solution
- Is it worth doing a 1 in 25?
- Use the high risk areas to inform the creation of new urban edge - refurbishment or abandonment?



Arts, Culture and Education

- There are four schools within the town centre - but 4-6th years may move out to Crichton in the future
- This will result in loss of young people in the town centre
- Many community groups leading arts and creative activities
- Spread out across the town and disjointed
- Gracefield Art College has potential to expand
- Desire to attract Scottish Ballet, Opera etc
- Possible new multi-purpose Cultural Centre in the 'The Market'- centre of town location for everyone which would create a tourist attraction
- Arts installations and lighting schemes in the vennels
- Green 'sculpture park' along the river
- Rosefields and Arts School converted into housing
- 'Literature in Landscape' theme



Movement

- North end of Irish Street is ok but the rest is not attractive and appears as the backs of shops
- Coaches should only drop off on the Whitesands as they should park in the Brooms Road car park.
- The KM Cycle trail is an important historical cycle link in the town
- Parking should be concentrated into 3 main car parks
- 7nr 'Go Bike' hire sites around the town
- The West side of the river is seen as the 'wrong side of the river' in relation to parking and accessing the town.
- Open space areas should be connected with walking routes.
- The Whitesands is the missing link in the river green corridor network.
- The eastern area of residential development is lacking any 'green' links or off road cycle routes.



Traders Meeting

- 'We need someone to lead us out of this negativity'
- 'The perception is that there is no will to change things' (within the Council)
- 'Whitesands is the artery of the whole town'
- 'If we want the town to survive we need to move with the times - bring Dumfries into this century'
- 'There is a lot of retail quality in the town - you just need to know where to find it'
- The key issues are parking and flooding
- If the parking in Whitesands is removed it will kill businesses
- We need to work with what we have got: we've been coping with the flooding for years
- Retailers have had to adapt to cope with flooding eg. Coach and Horses concrete basement
- Absentee land lords cause a problem as they aren't there when the buildings flood
- Perceived that events such as the Rood Fair and the Tour of Britain Cycle Race create problems for Whitesands Traders
- Whitesands Traders need support from the Council



St Michael's Primary School



Lorburn Primary School



PUBLIC DAY 1

► Day 3 Friday 14 September, 2012

Two local Primary Schools sent delegations to the Charrette venue to participate in a workshop on the Whitesands with facilitators from the Design Team and the class teacher. The children's visit concluded with a presentation by them at the start of Friday's public consultation event. A working session was also held with Dumfries Academy.

An early morning visit with some local retailers also helped the team better understand the commercial issues of the Whitesands and the struggle that local retailers face.

The public event had two discussions on the Whitesands of today and the Whitesands of tomorrow. Post-it sessions covering issues, dreams and solutions were used to record responses and gain an understanding of public concerns. Over the course of lunch, Gillespies gave a presentation on the characteristics, issues and solutions found in other small towns in Scotland.

There was a presentation on flooding issues in the afternoon followed by a walkabout with a workshop and feedback session.



Discussions with local retailers



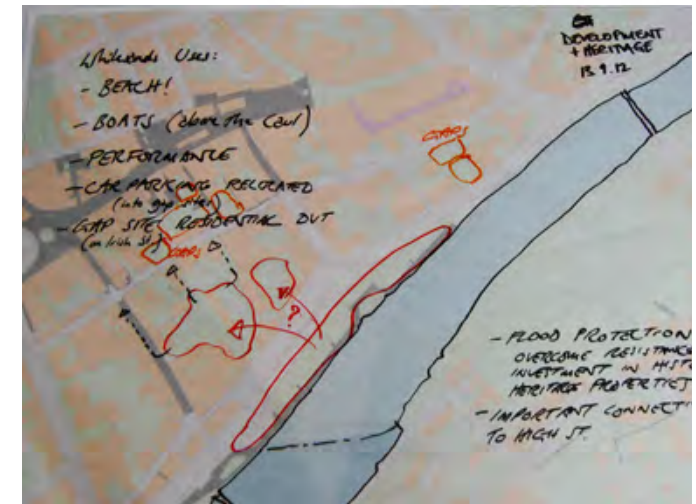
'Small Towns' presentation over lunchtime



Post it: problems, dreams, solutions



Public sessions



Flooding

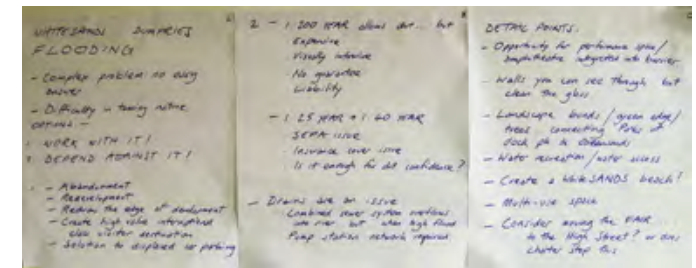
Complex problem - no one answer
Difficulty in 'taming nature'

- Work with it!
- Defend against it!

Options:

- Abandonment
- Redevelopment
- Reduce edge of development
- Create high value international visitor attraction

- 1:200 yr flood measures are expensive, intrusive and high liability
- 1:25 yr will SEPA object, building insurance (?)
- Drains are an issue
- Opportunity for performance space
- Walls you can see through
- Landscape bunds/green edge/trees/parks
- Create Whitesands beach
- Consider moving the fair





Parking and management

- 'There is a happy medium but what is it?' Is it linked to mobility?
- Make more of the Sands by relocating parking
- Provide a multi-storey car park with active edge
- Keep the road through Whitesands but consider:

- 1 Change character
- 2 Introduce speed restrictions
- 3 Different surface
- 4 Retain Tour Coach drop-off and County bus terminus on Whitesands
- 5 Provide a small area of short stay (2hr) parking to support businesses



Diversifying Uses

- The footbridges should offer destination spaces on the Whitesands that provide a series of squares with key linkages off these around the town
- One main civic space to the centre of the sands at the sandy opening offering civic space for children and possible access to water
- A soft edge could be integrated to allow water to approach the space, perhaps with floating pontoons within this more natural environment
- Flood protection should be part of the landscape design and integrated into the streetscape
- The Rosefield Mill building should be exposed to the river edge i.e. trees on river bank removed



Bundes Bank

- Recognise and protect the landscape within the town - Dock Park, Deer Park, Greensands
- Opportunity to green the river along its length
- Strengthen the green quality at Mill Road
- Create multi purpose civic space on Whitesands
- Utilise parking and other left over spaces to consolidate parking from Whitesands into the 'Market' site
- Temporary access can be gained to parking (when events are on) along Irish Street
- Maintain vehicular route through the Whitesands

PUBLIC DAY 2

On Saturday, a stall was set up in Dumfries High Street to take the Charrette out to the public. Two of the Design Team met with passers-by to explain the Whitesands study and seek their views.

The lunchtime presentations were on the theme of exemplar flood protection schemes and finding a way forward for Dumfries and the Whitesands.

The afternoon also had a walkabout and the public event concluded with a workshop and feedback session with a review of what the Design Team had learned and how they would be working collaboratively to prepare emerging proposals for a public session on Monday evening.



Post it: problems, dreams, solutions



Public sessions





Movement around town

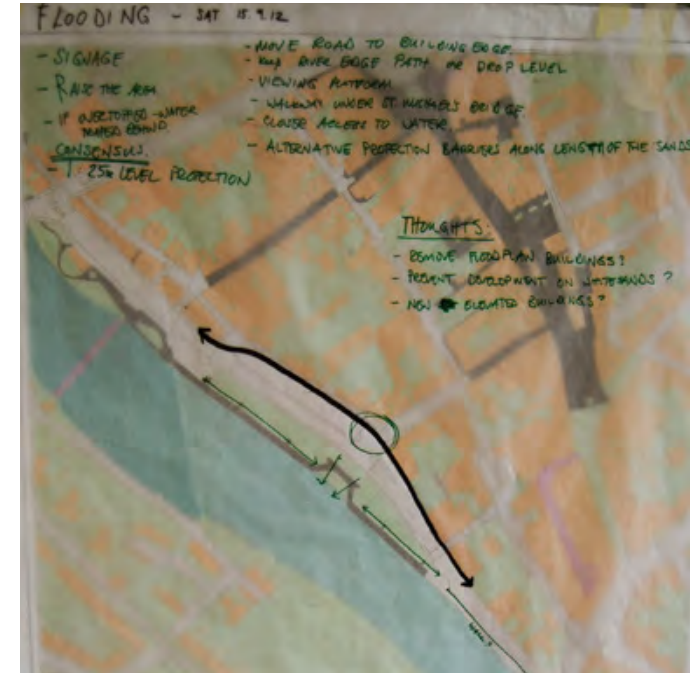
- Traffic circulation is confusing for visitors
- Cycling is dangerous in parts of the town centre and cyclists often have to share the road with fast traffic
- Boy racer loop around the town limits and congregate on the Whitesands in the evenings
- Create one continuous pedestrian loop around the river
- Remove parking from the Whitesands
- Create a new multi-storey car park next to the Whitesands and a green heart of the town by extending green ribbons along the river



Culture and Events

- Two tier catchment: First - Local / Second - Regional & Tourist
- Dumfries's natural audience 50's to 70's
- Need to target 18-35's and families
- Build around existing attractions/facilities
- Provide better linkages by revitalising closes and wynds
- Stitch new venues into existing buildings as 'Flood Fit' refurbishment

- Introduce new iconic building as a new focal point on Whitesands
- Introduce a new bridge crossing at bank Street
- Provide new multi-plex cinema and under storey car park on Market site
- Create new link through Markets development to Irish Street
- Animate the river with floating restaurant, pontoons, historical vessels
- Water based recreation above the Devorgilla Bridge



Flooding

- Raise the land within the Whitesands to protect it from the flood water
- If the barrier is overtopped by flood water it may become trapped behind - what's the solution for removing it? flood gates within the barrier that can be opened?
- Move the road towards the building edge to offer more space for Whitesands flood protection measures
- Retain the river edge walkway as it is (outside the flood protection) - OR reduce the levels here so closer to the water edge
- Include viewing platforms
- To retain access along the water edge, add a floating walkway under St. Michaels Bridge so pedestrians don't have to cross at busy road junction
- Alternating flood protection barriers should be installed along the length of the Sands depending on the adjacent landscape usage, i.e. earth mounds, wall, gates.
- The consensus of the group was to protect against the 1:25 yr flood level and deal with the consequences of the larger flood events
- Alternative thoughts: remove all building within the Whitesands flood plain; prevent any new development on the Whitesands; replace existing buildings with new elevated building on stilts
- The bottom of Bank Street should be a focal point to the Whitesands

MARKET STALL





► View of Whitesands from Deer Park

KEY THEMES

FLOODING

Whitesands is an historically important place in the heart of Dumfries but it is currently blighted by flooding. Participants felt that the blight affected not only Whitesands but had a negative knock on effect on the rest of the town compounding some of the wider economic challenges. Flood mitigation was discussed in detail and most people felt that flood protection against 1 in 25 year flooding would be an appropriate solution that would end years of uncertainty and provide the opportunity to start making plans for the regeneration of the area, allowing people and projects to move forward.

“ Nothing can happen until the flooding is sorted”

PARKING IN WHITESANDS

Many participants felt that the predominance of parking in Whitesands is inappropriate in what is potentially a great public space in the heart of the town. Others stressed the importance of parking for the economic health and competitiveness of businesses in the town centre in general and Whitesands in particular.

If future plans for Whitesands displace parking there, alternative provision should be provided that serves Whitesands. Dumfries and Galloway Council have commissioned consultants to undertake a Parking Study for the town centre. The Study incorporates proposals for Whitesands and potential changes to nearby parking provision. Its outputs will be integrated to ensure parking provision is appropriately addressed.

“ Why should the cars have the best view?”

HERITAGE

Dumfries has a rich architectural heritage and people are rightly proud of their town. However, much of its historic fabric around Whitesands has suffered from a lack of investment as a result of complex land ownership issues and uncertainty associated with flooding issues.

Buildings often lie empty, fall into disrepair and then are demolished. Participants felt that this creates a poor impression and represents a real missed opportunity to preserve and enhance a key asset in the town.

Locals are passionate about heritage led solutions and keen for such an approach to be progressed.

“ The town has a fantastic Georgian heritage and we’re busy ruining it”

“ Please restore the quality of the built fabric!”

QUALITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

The River Nith is seen as one of the town's most important assets as an amenity for residents, an attraction for visitors and an important natural habitat. Through the integration of new flood defences within an attractive landscape design participants felt that Whitesands would become a revitalised civic space in the heart of the town. This could be connected with Mill Green, Dock Park and Deer Park to provide a beautiful landscape amenity around the river and a stunning natural setting for the town.

“ Whitesands should be landscaped as the green heart of the town.”

“ A big green ribbon – alive and lively.”

A BUSTLING HEART OF THE TOWN

Many participants were pleased to see Whitesands used as part of the Tour of Britain and wanted to see the area stage many more events throughout the year, although local traders were concerned about the potential impact on parking if the focus of the area was altered. A regenerated Whitesands could include cafes, restaurants and places to meet and relax and host a wide range of recreation and cultural activities. It was felt that attracting people to Whitesands would help the vitality of the town as a whole and complement the retail focus of the High Street. Participants also stressed the importance of creating opportunities for new housing within the town centre to help bring life back into the centre and support local business.

“ The high street should be for shopping and the Whitesands for culture and recreation”

“ A place to meet relax, eat, drink, be entertained, watch the river in cafes/bistros”

MOVING AROUND

Many participants felt that the traffic system around the town does not match the fine grain Georgian form. Although there are significant pedestrianised areas there are barriers to movement for pedestrians and cyclists caused by the one way system.

The location of bus stops is an issue and participants felt that with the regeneration of Whitesands it would be a good time to review movement, parking and bus stances in the town centre.

YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people often experience the town in different ways from adults and those who participated in the charrette wanted to see more facilities for children. Adventure and water parks were a key theme.

“ We need more activities for families”



WORKING TOGETHER

Dumfries has an active community with many groups all doing important and exciting things, although much of what goes on happens independently and is not coordinated. The local community council wants to act as stewards of the town and play an active role in many of the decisions that are made, but need to work with others to achieve this.

However, many participants felt that through a shared vision, better communication and co-ordination, this activity could be strengthened.

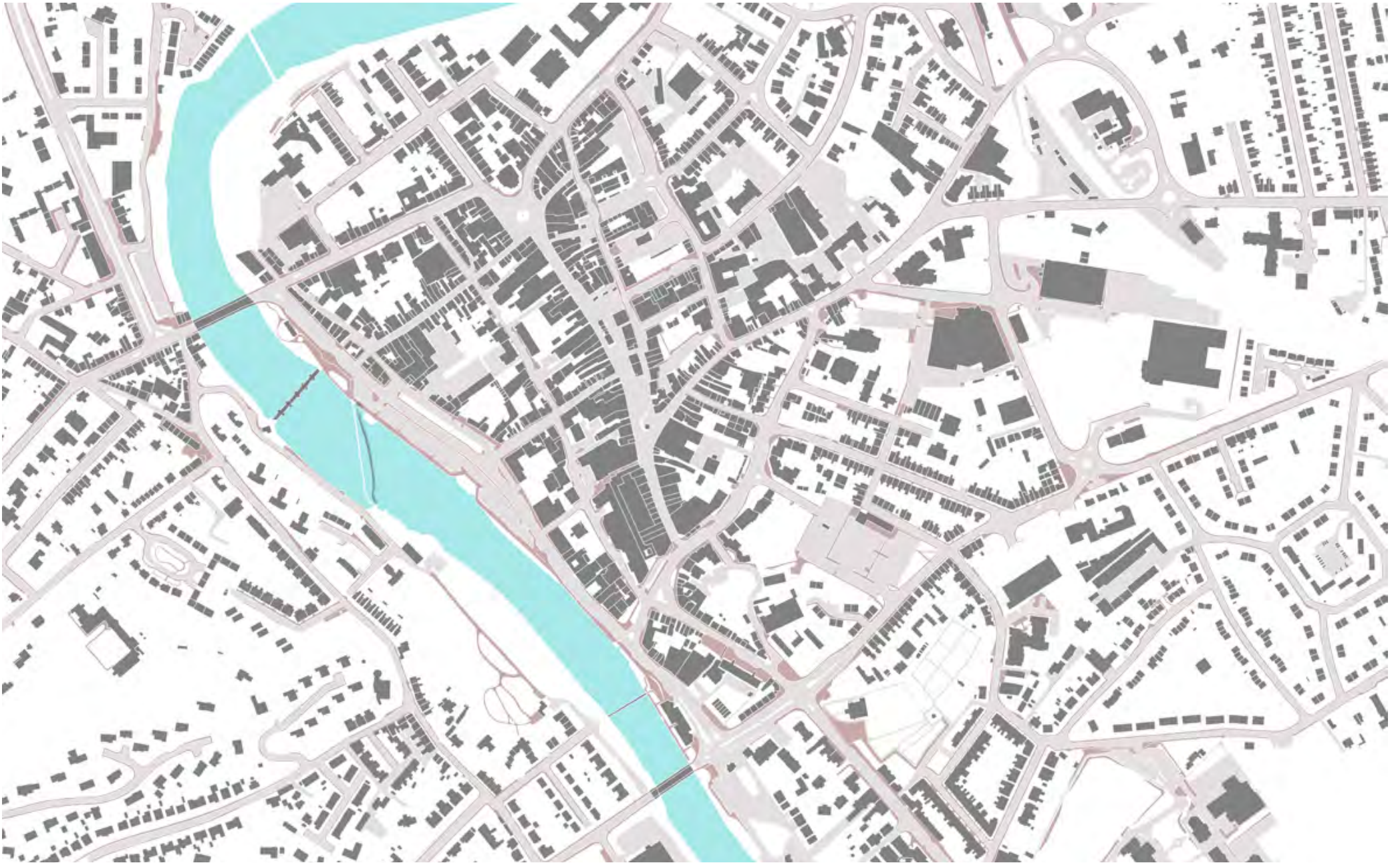
“ We need more joined up thinking”

CONTINUING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Dumfries has an active community with many groups, but many participants said they felt separated from decision-making affecting their town. Despite some initial scepticism, people appreciated the opportunity to participate in workshops and walkabouts during the charrette. People wanted to see the town’s aspirations raised through the creation of a Vision for Whitesands.

Commitment by the council and elected members was seen as key in taking forward the Whitesands project and the establishment of a facilitated Whitesands ‘team’ or ‘forum’, open to everyone, would continue the process and keep the momentum going.

“ We need a balanced process not controlled by any one group ...”



Dumfries Town Centre - figure ground mapping

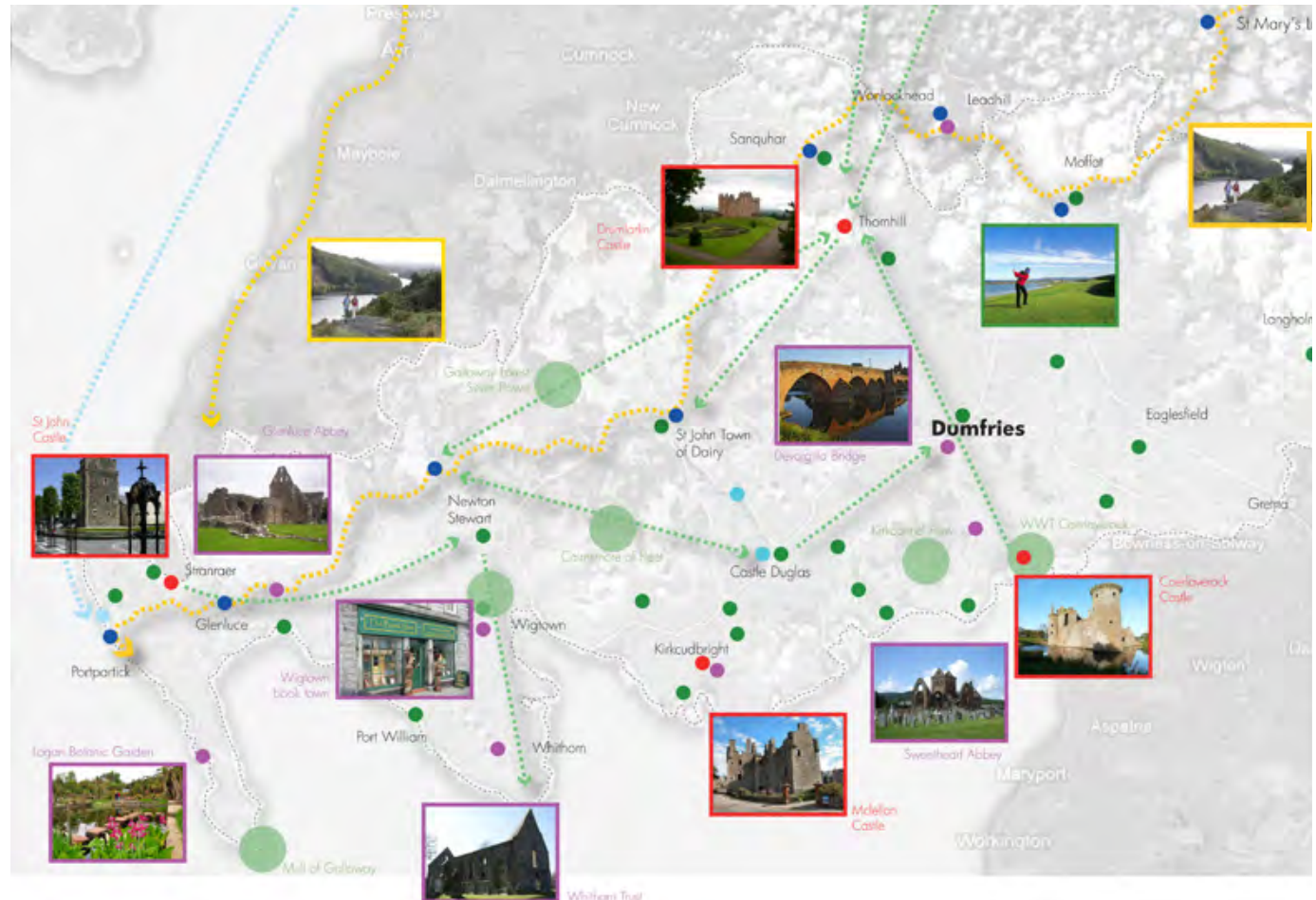
3 URBAN ANALYSIS

This section explains the analysis work that informed and was prepared as part of the Charrette process.

Whitesands and Dumfries Town Centre need to be understood in its wider context as well as in detail. The illustrations below serve to indicate the investigation that has been undertaken and the desk-top and site-based information gathering that has helped to map out some of the layers of information that contribute to an understanding of place.

Regional

The place of Dumfries as a regional capital has been considered and the competition it faces from other regional centres such as Carlisle, Ayr and Glasgow. The relationship to other smaller and closer settlements has also been considered.



URBAN ANALYSIS



Wider Dumfries and Nith Valley & Development Sites

An examination of key community uses i.e education, health and employment centres, demonstrates that a significant amount of traditional town centre uses are now or are planned to be located on the outskirts of the town.



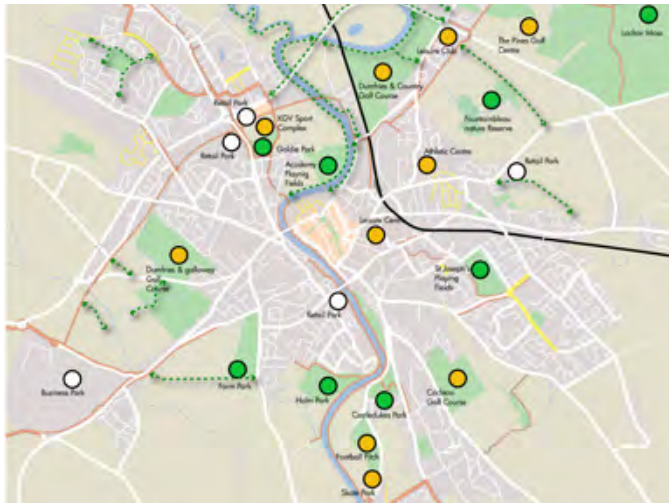
The ease with which it has been possible to develop in the periphery of the town and the availability of less constrained sites comparatively with the Whitesands area means that 'people' are not using the town centre in the same way.

The 'out of town' offer is a situation by default that is compounding the issues of the town.



A new configuration for the town centre is needed - one which redefines its relationship with the rest of the town - moving away from a 'competing' role to a 'complementary' role and focussing on the unique heritage-led opportunities in the town centre.

The consideration of this future 'role' was a key element of the charrette.



Retail Centre - Sport & Leisure - Parks

The wider extent to which the town of Dumfries needs to be considered has been explored. In the same way that the Whitesands is part of a river network that extends upstream and downstream, Greater Dumfries takes in a wider area.



Historical

A range of historical maps, photographs of old Dumfries and architectural publications have been referred to in obtaining an understanding of the town's origins and growth. This has helped inform an appreciation of the existing urban form.



Transport

This plan maps the transport provision and facilities.

URBAN ANALYSIS



Road Network

This plan identifies the core network of accessible roads.



Pedestrians

This plan maps the main pedestrian areas.



Car Parks

Whitesands is currently dominated by parking. An important task has been to gain an understanding of how public parking currently works in the town centre and how proposals by D&G Council fit in to proposals. The plan indicates the current distribution of public car park around the town centre.



Open Spaces

The proximity of designated open space to the town centre and Whitesands can be noted from this plan.



Civic Spaces

This plan indicates how the site relates to existing civic spaces.



Attractions

This plan maps visitor attractions and facilities.

URBAN ANALYSIS



Vegetation

This plan indicates public green space in and around the town centre






5 km radius

This plan overlays dimensions on the extent of the built-up area to ascertain distances for transport modes, such as car, bus, cycle and pedestrian journeys.



Walking distances

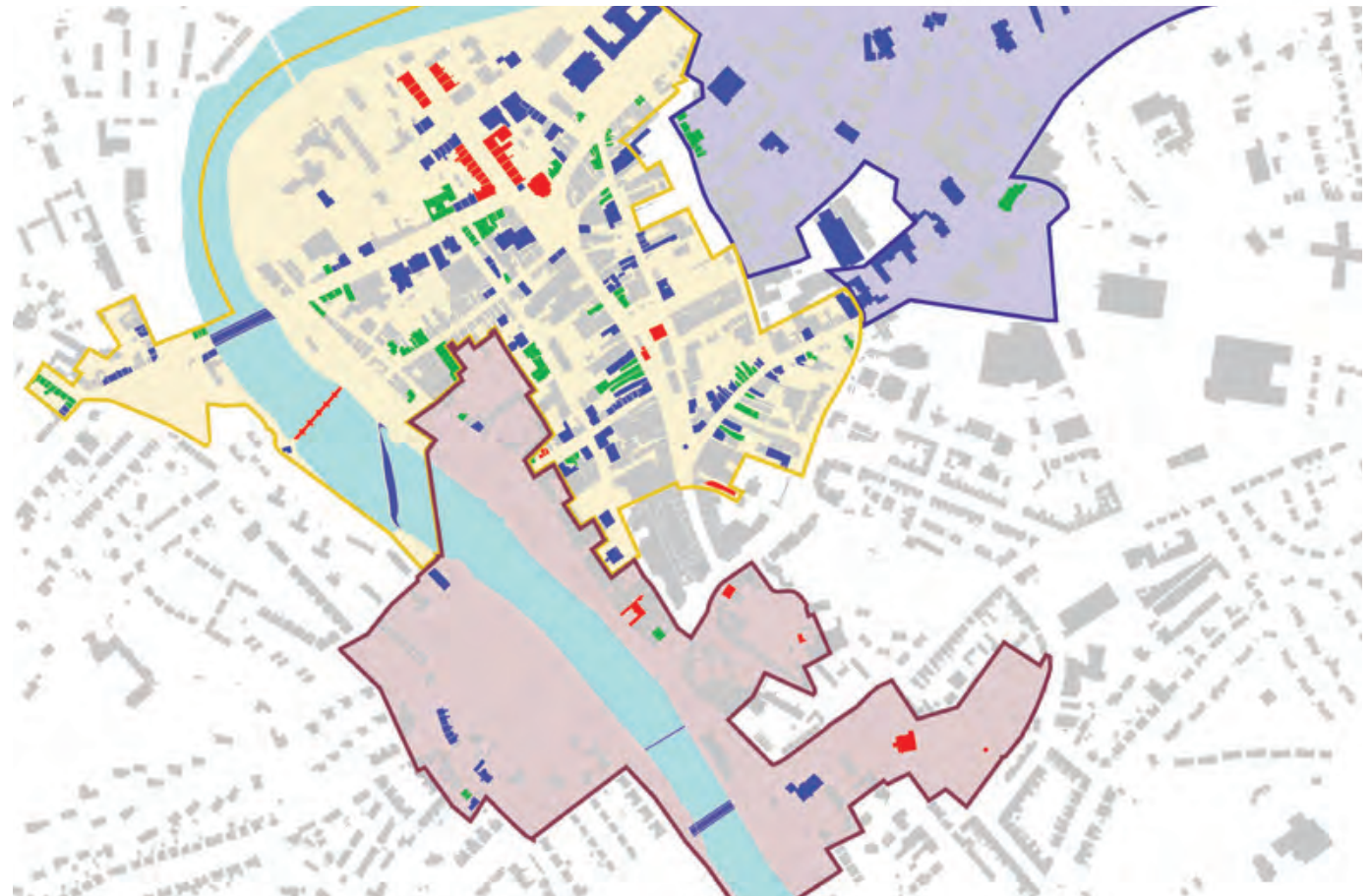
This plan gives an understanding of relative distances for walking and other modes, such as to and from car parks or between facilities.

-  A Listed Building: National importance or particularly fine examples of a style or period
-  B Listed Building: Regional importance and other importance examples of a style or a period but which may have been altered
-  C Listed Building: More local importance or where alterations have lessened their value

Conservation and Listed Buildings

The site lies within the Whitesands Conservation Area which contains several Listed Buildings.

The boundary of the Conservation Area and the location of the Listed Buildings with their status designation has been noted on this plan.



Listed Building Plan



▶ Whitesands in a recent 1 in 25 year flood event

4 FLOODING AT WHITESANDS - FLOOD PROTECTION AND PLACE MAKING

The flooding of the River Nith in the town centre at Whitesands is an issue for Dumfries. The recent frequency of the river flooding and inundating the Whitesands has impacts on the town. These include blocking the area for through traffic, bus services, and parking, causing disruption to trading and damage to property.

The water level that the flood incidents of recent years have reached has been relatively low and all within the 1 in 10 year event. Nevertheless these events have caused considerable disruption. There is a widespread will that something needs to be done and a solution found to address the problem.



1 in 200yrs + cc

1 in 200 yrs

1 in 100 yrs

1 in 25 yrs

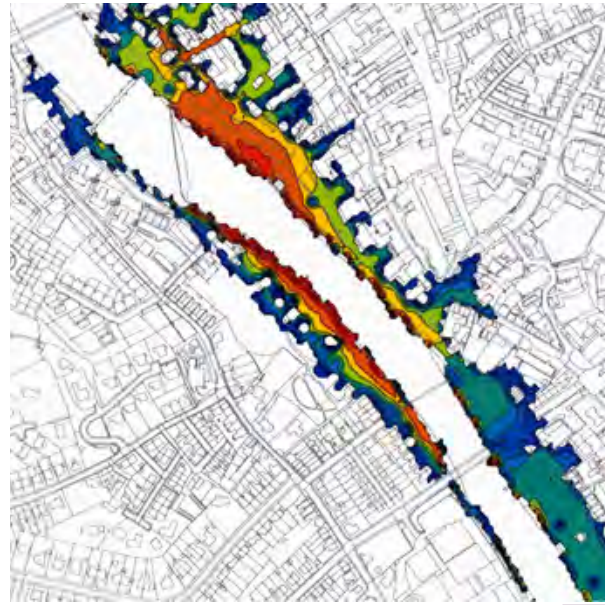


Flood incident markings at the Whitesands

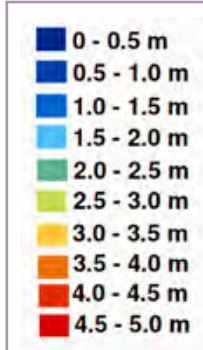
FLOODING AT WHITESANDS



Anticipated 1 in 25 year flood event scenario



Anticipated 1 in 200 (plus climate change) year flood event scenario



LEGEND

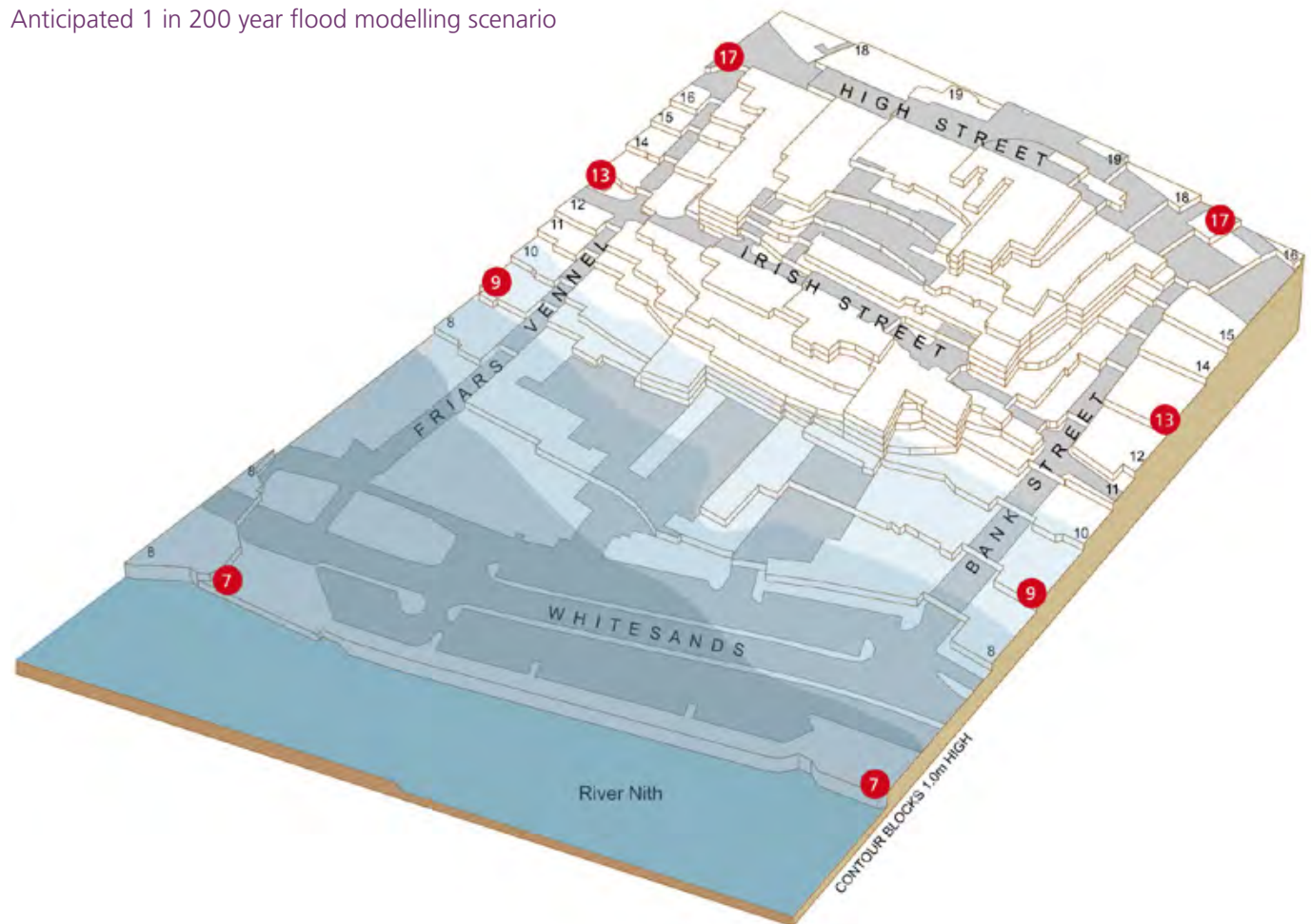
Dumfries & Galloway Council has undertaken a number of studies into the flooding issues on the Nith where it passes through Dumfries including hydraulic modelling works. The illustration opposite shows an excerpt from one of the plans that is zoomed in to the Whitesands area (with such mapping available for a range of flood event scenarios). This data has helped to inform the development of proposals.

The area that is subject to the flooding lies within an Archaeologically Sensitive Area and a Conservation Area containing numerous listed buildings. The townscape of Whitesands and the adjoining streets is an integral part of the town centre built heritage. Furthermore, it is an area of high visual amenity for the town's residents and is a tourist attraction in its own right. Proposals for development, including those contained within this report, require consideration against the Dumfries Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

Greater flood events require higher flood defences. The rare events which can be described as 1 in 100 years and 1 in 200 years have significant heights relative to human scale within a townscape environment. When a climate-change factor is added to these heights, it results in barriers that could not be fitted into the Whitesands without significantly damaging the visual amenity and the contribution that the environmental asset of the river makes to the town.

One of the Charrette tasks has been to make an assessment of the visual impact of flood barrier heights and make a proposal as to what the maximum acceptable height of a flood barrier would be within Whitesands. It is noted that different heights of barrier are needed at different points along the Whitesands in order to achieve the same level of protection. The highest barrier is needed at the bottom of Bank Street while the lowest height of barrier is needed towards Buccleuch Street Bridge and towards the Suspension Bridge.

Anticipated 1 in 200 year flood modelling scenario



FLOODING AT WHITESANDS

It has been noted as part of this study, that the normal standard of protection expected by the Scottish Government is between 1 in 100 and 1 in 200 years. The stipulation by SEPA that residential development should not be granted local authority planning consent within the 1 in 200 year plus climate-change flood contour has also been noted. These standards however present significant challenges to the amenity and integrity of the Whitesands.

The 1 in 200 years solution would create a significant level of visual severance between the town and the river. A Charrette task has been to determine how low the flood barrier height should go and give consideration to alternative approaches that can respond to greater flood events.

One such response, for example has been to consider a more flood-resilient construction being adopted incrementally for properties that are within the large event contours.

At the time of the charrette it was proposed that the level of protection that should be adopted for the Whitesands is the 1 in 25 year flood event. This would allow a significant degree of confidence to return to this part of the town centre, allow insurance cover to be explored and avoid the nuisance of regular inundation. Importantly, it would allow the amenity and integrity of the Whitesands to be maintained. This degree of protection happens to concur with the approval of a report to PHES Committee on 13th December 2011.

The image of the Whitesands opposite indicates the different flood barrier heights that are required in different areas in order to address the 1 in 25 year event. (A minimum freeboard of 400mm is required in any flood defences to allow for wind and wave action raising the water levels). This key data informed the charrette and the design for an engineering solution to the flood threat as part of a comprehensive place-making solution for the area.

While outline assessment and charrette responses indicate a preference for a 1 in 25 year solution, over a 1 in 200 year, further refinement of flood modelling and potential protection alternatives, including options for temporary flood protection measures for existing buildings, should be undertaken to provide a more robust level of flood protection where feasible and supportive of the overarching aim of promoting regeneration for the Whitesands and Dumfries Town Centre. Where feasible, the Flood Protection Scheme should be designed to facilitate the future expansion of flood protection levels in order to address the long term effects of climate change and increased flooding.

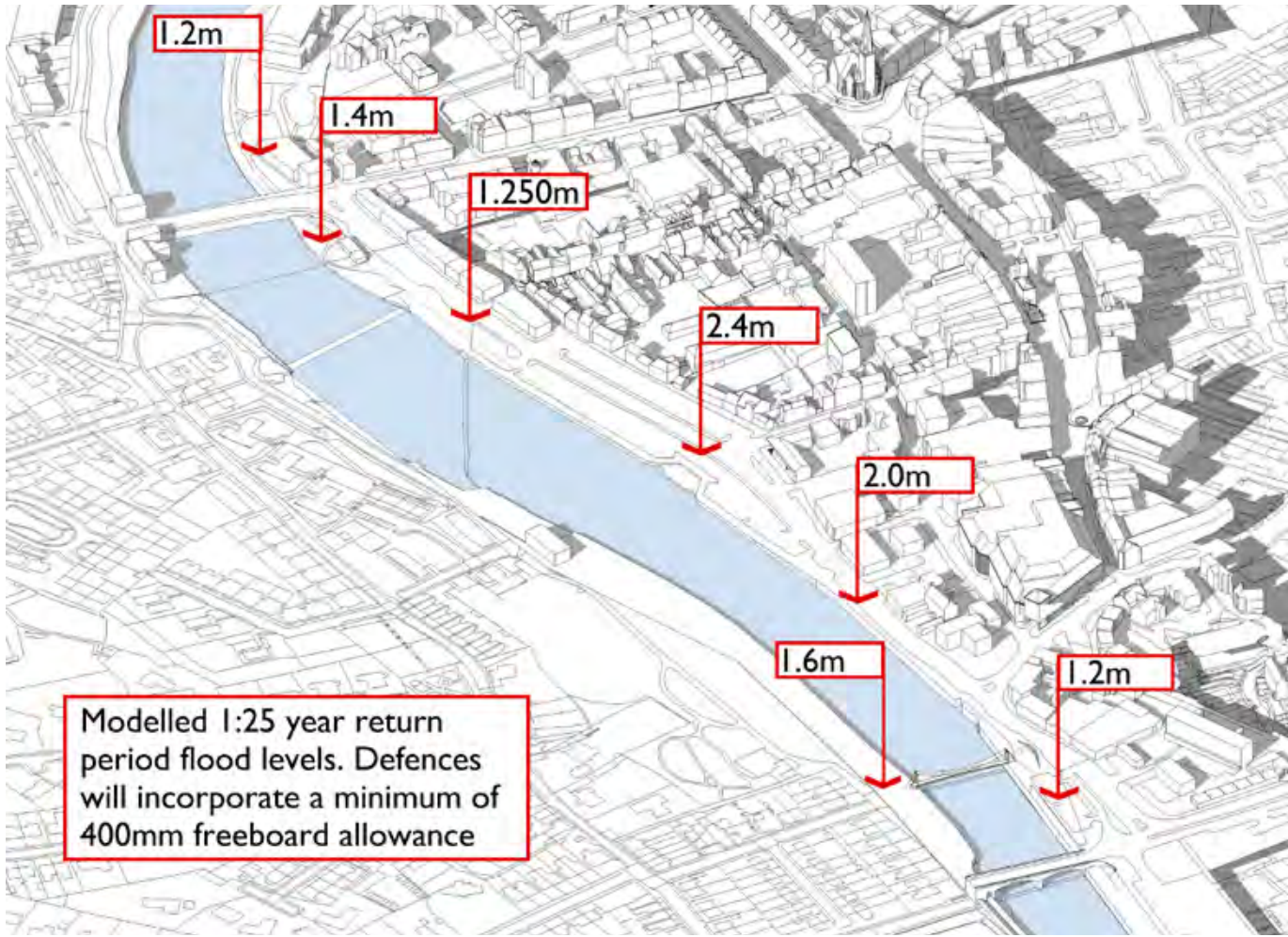
Future refinement of 1 in 25 year protection to seek a more resilient protection without compromising views will also be explored in future stages of the project to reflect SEA processes and discussions with SEPA. It is necessary that the nature of the design concept should also be future-proofed against Scottish Government and climate change requirements so that

it is capable of being modified to a greater height either before detailed design or retrospectively after installation without extensive abortive work.

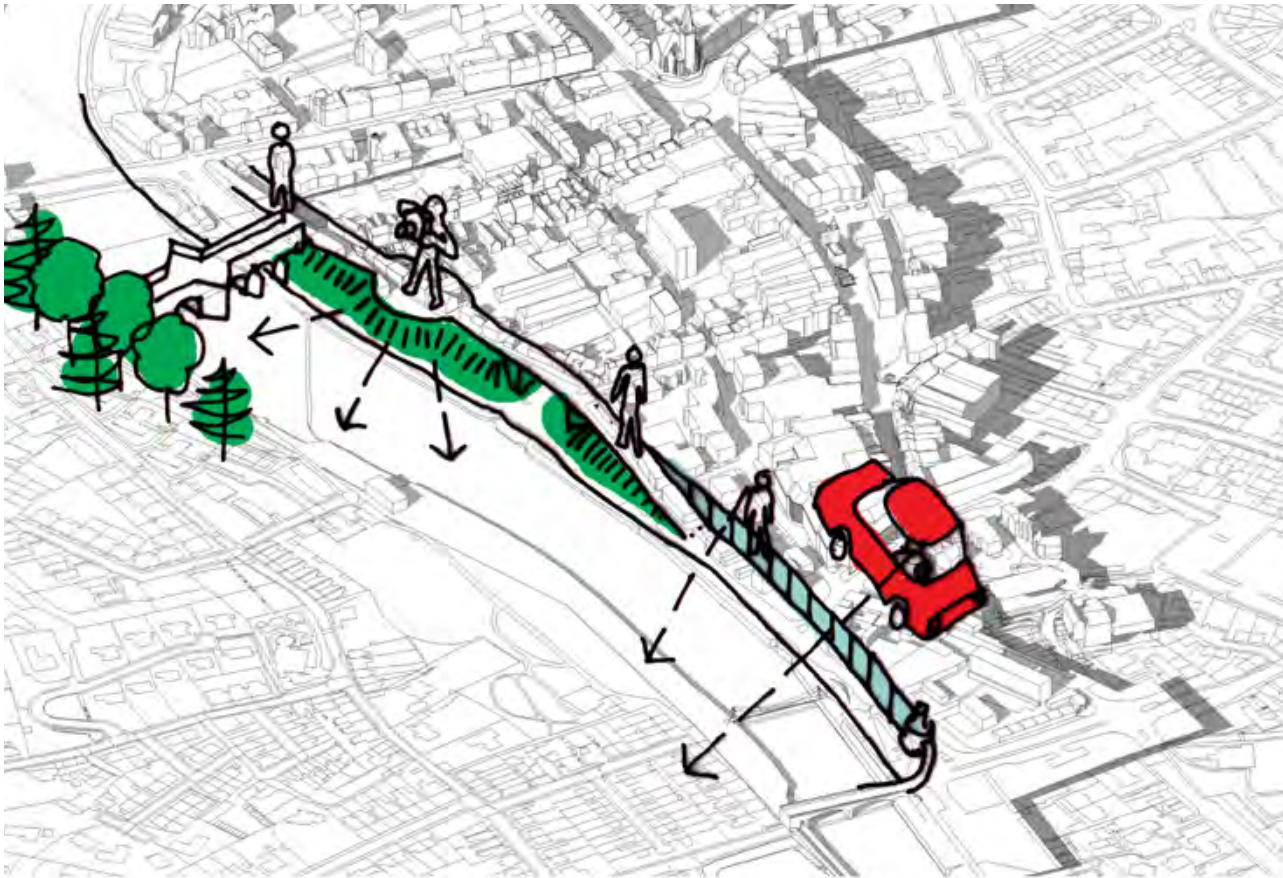
Whilst the emphasis of the Flood Protection Scheme will be on the Whitesands and the Town Centre, it shall be designed to ensure that there will be no significant increase in flood impact on areas up and downstream of the project.

Where there is greater width within the Whitesands site, a landscape bund is proposed as the engineering flood protection device. This would be constructed behind the existing riverbank wall and riverside walkway. At the top of the bund would be an elevated shared use path from which enhanced views of the river could be enjoyed. This route would run in parallel with the existing riverside walkway and NCR7 Cycleway.

The bund would start near Buccleuch Street Bridge and reach its greatest height at the bottom of Bank Street where a gap in the bund would maintain views towards the river from High Street.



FLOODING AT WHITESANDS



Landscape Bund 'concept'

Where Whitesands narrows to the south of Assembly Street, the engineering solution would transition to a vertical flood barrier wall topped by a continuous line of large structural glass panels to maintain river views. (The design is described in greater detail later in the report in the section, Whitesands Design Guidance.) Fundamental to the proposal for a flood protection solution is that it should give some enhancement to the location, make Whitesands more attractive to the visitor – not less, and seize the problem of flooding as a positive place-making opportunity.

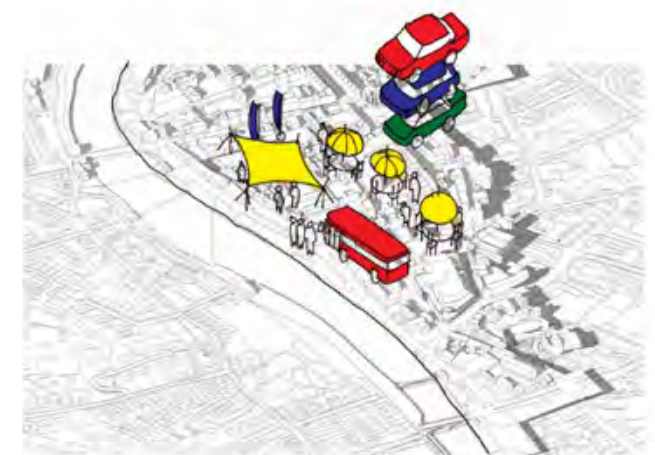
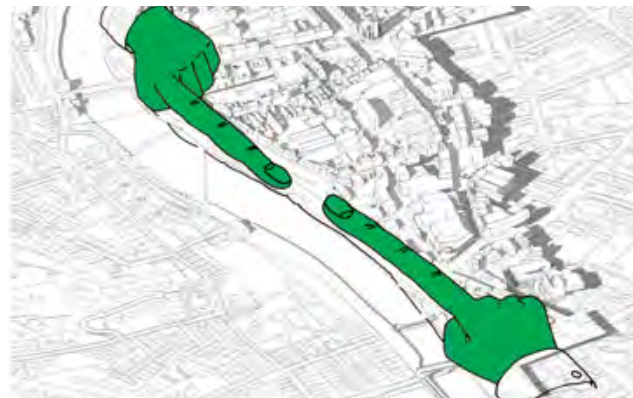


Flood protection barrier of glazed panels at Waterford, Ireland



► Indicative Sketch Proposal

5 WHITESANDS REGENERATION VISION - LOOKING TO THE RIVER



The new Whitesands is seen as a special place within South West Scotland. The Vision would incorporate the following features:

- The outstanding riverside walkway and national cycle route with remarkable proximity to centre of the regional capital is retained.
- The existing riverside car parks and bus terminus are transformed into a high amenity landscape.
- The leafy countrified riverbanks that exist immediately upstream and downstream of Whitesands are extended into the town centre with both banks at Whitesands and Mill Road becoming a tree-lined setting for the Nith.
- The opportunity to enhance the wider Green Network and local riverside biodiversity, through such features as native species planting, bird/bat boxes, etc. is also acknowledged.

The green fingers of Greensands and Dock Park extend into the town centre.

- The car park dominated area between Brewery Street and Bank Street is transformed into a well organised quality streetscape, providing generous sunny footways for cafes, a flexible-use pedestrian area for events, new bus stances away from the river and nearer the town centre and access to multi-level parking to the rear of a restored and completed building frontage.
- The connection with the natural amenity and ecology of the river is enhanced by providing vantage points to view the river and an opportunity to access onto an area of beach.
- Whitesands can be a place for play, recreation and enjoyment for children and families



Whitesands Masterplan

Legend

1. **Irish Street improvements**
Streetscaping, lighting, street trees, façade overcladding, boundary treatments
 2. **Historic vennels upgrading**
New lighting, resurfacing, windows, art installations, boundary treatments
 3. **Replacement of Social Work Council Office**
New mixed use/ residential character buildings fronting Irish Street
 4. **Retention of existing rear accesses**
Existing fire exits, parking, and delivery zones retained for retailers
 5. **Surface car park**
Potential access from Irish Street.
 6. **Historic warehouse conversion**
Mixed use/ residential at upper floors
 7. **Concealed multi storey car park**
2 - 3 storey car park at Whitesands level
 8. **Crafts Quarter**
Workshops, galleries, shops, live/ work units, apartments above
 9. **Crafts Quarter vennels**
New vennel network connecting Whitesands, Friars Vennel, and Irish Street
 10. **Market vennel**
New vennel with weekend market stalls
 11. **Whitesands opportunity sites**
New infill/ replacement buildings to reinstate historic urban edge
 12. **Irish Street infill site**
Residential courtyard development to repair building line
 13. **Bank Street environmental improvements**
Streetscape improvements
 14. **Service buses stances**
 15. **Tourist buses drop off/pick up**
 16. **Pedestrianised temporary events space**
Shared surface access to Brewery Street
 17. **Extended landing at Devorgilla Bridge**
 18. **Special viewpoint area at the Caul**
 19. **Existing river wall, walkway and NCR7 retained**
 20. **Elevated shared use path at top of bund**
 21. **Bridge over 17m wide opening**
Ground-recessed hydraulic flood gates
 22. **Natural treatment to Sandy Opening**
 23. **Disabled parking**
 24. **Transition treatment between bund and glazed screen wall**
 25. **Opening in wall at Grade A listed building**
Ground-recessed hydraulic flood gates
 26. **Transition into Suspension Bridge landing area**
 27. **Tree planting and footpath connects to St Michael St Bridge wall**
 28. **Wall treatment within Dock Park**
 29. **Community Garden / Viewing Platform**
 30. **Screen planting above Mill Road**
- ▶ **Car Park Vehicular Access Point**



WHITESANDS REGENERATION VISION - LOOKING TO THE TOWN

The new Whitesands urban edge would provide a linear counterpoise to the High Street. As well as being an attractive destination, it would be a place of arrival for the town centre visitor by bus, cycle and car.

The leafy landscape and café-stop quality of the new Whitesands riverfront would contrast with the retail and civic role of the High Street. Between these two historic thoroughfares, run the secondary streets and tertiary pedestrian routes and also Irish Street. This important town centre area could be revived by a series of heritage-led regeneration projects that work with the surviving building fabric and remnant mediaeval patterns of plot shapes, wynds and closes.

The Vision would incorporate the following features:

- Be development of an appropriate scale to a Conservation Area, in terms of building floor plate dimensions and volume.
- Seek to repair the urban fabric of Irish Street by sensitive development of gap sites, and small intervention projects to ameliorate the negative impacts of large modern developments.
- Incorporate some of the displaced car parking from the proposed Whitesands within a new multi-level car park that is concealed behind new development and uses the slope of the site to integrate the mass of the structure into the townscape.
- Incorporate new development that respects and in some areas recovers the historic organisation of the quarter, with animated street frontage and new imaginative uses or environmental improvements, e.g. art installations, landscaping, 'green walls' or hanging baskets, for the pedestrian closes and vennels.
- Seek to recover the important tertiary pedestrian links between High Street and Whitesands as attractive alternative routes.

- A vision for the future after the existing Social Work Council Office, where employment use can be maintained but a more appropriate architectural development might be envisaged.
- Promote the replacement/co-ordination of street signage to reduce 'clutter' and improve amenity within an enhanced and pedestrian friendly public realm.
- A virtuous cycle of regeneration for the town centre that includes adjoining areas of the Georgian town.

Indicative birds-eye visualisation from Devorgilla Bridge - before





Indicative birds-eye visualisation from Devorgilla Bridge - after



Indicative visualisation looking east to the town from Mill Green - before





Indicative visualisation looking east to the town from Mill Green - after





6 URBAN FRAMEWORK AND GUIDANCE - TOWN DESIGN GUIDANCE

This section of the report is set forth in two parts that cover the two areas of the town centre to the south west of the High Street extending towards the river and of the Whitesands site. That these two areas are linked in the brief reflects the related aspect of these contrasting areas. Taken together, the proposals represent a masterplan framework within which this urban quarter of Dumfries can move forward. The masterplan has a key that identifies particular opportunities for development or features of the proposals. These are referred to with comments relating to the areas as numbered on the plan.



Irish Street - before and after



Town Design Guidance

1. Irish Street Improvements:

Irish Street can be a key heritage-led regeneration project for Dumfries. It has outstanding buildings and intact sections of street frontage despite several more recent interventions which have changed and diminished the quality of the street.

Gap sites can be filled and landscape screening undertaken to existing areas while still allowing the rear servicing of shops to be maintained. Other general improvements would include streetscape works involving lighting, boundary treatments, improvement of street surfaces (including the reuse of materials where appropriate) and possibly façade over-cladding.



Historic vennel upgrade - before and after

2. Historic vennels upgrading:

The ancient closes should be treasured as important public pedestrian routes. They provide a further layer of interest to the town centre and open up the urban blocks in ways that can be exploited positively for commercial and alternative uses.

A vennels project could include new lighting, re-surfacing (including the reuse of materials where appropriate), art installations, boundary treatments and new development that provided active frontage and windows.

Accessibility and safety issues surrounding height changes, lighting etc as well as cycle provision will be considered in design proposals.



3. Replacing of Social Work Council Office:

This anticipates a future where the overbearing presence of this building is replaced by an alternative that provided employment space but as part of a mixed-use development including residential use. A new street edge would reflect the scale, massing and visual interest of the best of the surviving Irish Street.

Replacing this building would require the re-provision of alternative suitable office space elsewhere within the town. This is a significant project and should be seen as a longer term project that requires partnership with Property Services and Social Work departments.

View of Social Work Council Office onto Bank Street - before and after

TOWN DESIGN GUIDANCE



View along Bank Street - before and after

4. Retention of existing rear accesses:

Rather than a fine urban thoroughfare with heritage value, Irish Street has been allowed to develop as a service lane for large retail units of the High Street and much of this cannot now be reversed. Existing fire exits, parking and delivery manoeuvring must be maintained, however there remains scope for enhancing boundary treatments, setting and small gap sites for development.



5. Surface car park:

An area for car parking accessed off Irish Street could be incorporated. This could be public parking or allocated if residential and mixed-use type development was created in this vicinity. This could be accessed from Irish Street or the Whitesands, dependant on the development of a design solution.

6. Historic warehouse conversion:

The Granary building is an impressive structure relating to its location at the Whitesands for the river-borne transportation of grain. The retention and adaptive re-use of the building would be important for Whitesands. Residential use of the upper levels that connected up to Irish Street would seem possible.

7. Concealed multi-storey car park:

It is proposed to remove car parking from almost all of the Whitesands area. Part of this could be displaced into a new multi-level car park within the existing Market car park area. Ideally this would be lined with new single aspect development that would conceal the bulk of the car park levels. This could be accessed from Irish Street or the Whitesands, dependant on the development of a design solution.

8. Crafts quarter:

It would be helpful if a particular character or use could be given to the enclave of closes and courts that could be created off the Whitesands. Several small shop units that have a crafts speciality might be appropriate.





9. Crafts quarter vennels:

The mediaeval pattern of narrow pedestrian routes would be recreated through this area and alongside the Granary building.

10. Market vennel:

To the south west side of the Granary building would be another opportunity to create a narrowed route up from Whitesands but that also maintained existing accesses.

The Crafts Quarter - before and after



11. Whitesands opportunity sites:

Along the river frontage of Whitesands, there exists some prominent sites that are empty, under-used or currently have inappropriate uses for a location with such potential. It is therefore proposed that four sites along the frontage could be redeveloped over time.

12. Irish Street infill sites:

Between the Albert Club and the Grade A listed 29 Irish Street, there is ground that it is currently under-used and unused. It is suggested that sufficient ground could be assembled to form a viable residential development site.



Whitesands gap site - before and after



13. Bank Street environmental improvements:

Bank Street currently presents itself as a vehicle dominated road with a wide carriageway and narrow footways. This is despite it being in proximity to and leading up to areas that are pedestrianised. Bank Street could be brought forward as a public realm project that redressed the priority towards pedestrians and cyclists (as an important cross town route) while maintaining vehicular and service access, possibly with some shared surface domain.

TOWN DESIGN GUIDANCE



Proposed Land Use Plan

These proposals would increase the density of development to the study area creating a more interesting and urban quality to this part of the town centre.

The land use pattern would also change as different uses become part of the Whitesands area. A mixed-use quarter is envisaged that has retail, commercial, leisure, residential, and car parking. Increasing the amount of residential use within the area is important and in a mix of tenure that includes owner occupiers.

Residents support the local economy, are stakeholders who can improve and maintain the environment, provide a presence that gives natural surveillance and bring an important type of activity and range of people into an area.

Issues relating to planning consent stipulations of having safe egress to the flood level above 1 in 200 years flood event (plus climate change) apply at Whitesands. It is recognised that further work needs to be done to explore how Dumfries town centre could be permitted some level of relaxation from SEPA in order to encourage regeneration. The land use plan indicates residential use within the Whitesands.



- Existing Vennel improved
- Re - instated / New Vennel
- Access Required / Servicing / Parking
- Existing Fire Egresses

Proposed Movement Plan

Some of this is at first floor level that would allow flood-escape at high level as part of a route to a place of safety while other residential development that is indicated nearer to the river could not easily achieve such a flood- escape route: without a relaxation, alternative upper uses would need to be considered. Leisure, commercial, food and drink and retail are uses that would be accommodated within robust flood-resilient construction as indicated forming the improved and reinstated frontage to Whitesands.

The proposed movement diagram indicates how proposals could be developed that significantly changed the pedestrian permeability of the area from the High Street down to Whitesands. As a result of the Whitesands proposition, both the pedestrian and cycle permeability will increase, which will create improved and new desire lines and potentially new crossing points.

The existing constraints of escape routes from the rear of properties and rear servicing of High Street shops could be maintained as part of a considered redevelopment of the area.



Whitesands Design Guidance

The Flooding and Place-making section of this report proposed that a level of flood protection that the Whitesands area could sustain would be 1 in 25 years, in terms of visual impact on the amenity and integrity of the place. The engineering solutions adopted for this height of barrier would be a landscaped bund where the site is wide and a vertical wall (with structural glass panels in the upper part) where the site is narrow. For both conditions the barrier would be set back from the existing riverside walk and cycle route to preserve this valuable asset. The masterplan key identifies particular opportunities for development or features of the proposals. These are referred to with comments relating to the areas as numbered on the plan.

URBAN FRAMEWORK AND GUIDANCE - WHITESANDS DESIGN GUIDANCE

14. Service buses stances:

The proposal to move the long distance and rural service bus stops away from the prominent river edge spot means that an alternative nearby location would be required. The existing location also has passengers boarding and alighting on the side of the carriageway away from the town centre, a matter acknowledged by D&G Council as not ideal. It is therefore proposed that bus stances would be created in the set-back area between Brewery Street and Bank Street. This safer and more convenient location would also bring footfall past the adjacent retail frontages on Whitesands and encourage micro-regeneration for cafés with coffee tables and slip out activity on the southwest facing widened footways.

Opportunities to incorporate sustainable transport promotion (e.g. tourism hub integrating car share, park and drive drop-off, cycle hire and bike storage facilities) with appropriate signage should be explored as the detailed design of each intervention and/or the Flood Protection Scheme progresses.



Indicative Whitesands Sketch and Concept

15. Tourist buses drop off and pick up:

Tourist buses would have drop-off and pick-up stances adjacent to the Tourist Information Office rather than further south on Whitesands. Buses would then park-up remotely in designated areas as at present, to be agreed. Tourist bus stances in this location would properly and safely orientate tourists for their visit to the town.





Indicative Sketch Proposal

16. Pedestrianised temporary events space:

The area defined by the building set-back at Brewery Street offers an interesting opportunity for a special place with some urban quality. The northern end of this space is well defined by the façade of the Listed building and encloses an area that could be used for temporary events. A shared surface access route would be provided for Brewery Street with the rest of the area being pedestrianised.

While this may not be a large area, it would be prominent in relation to the bus stances and the linear park attraction and elevated walk of the new Whitesands. Coordination with public realm treatments in the High Street and the Vennel would ensure consistency in the towns key public spaces.

The photomontage shows the existing and a proposed scenario. Temporary structures of bespoke design could be installed in a way that corresponded to and complimented the activity at the Plainstaines on the High Street.

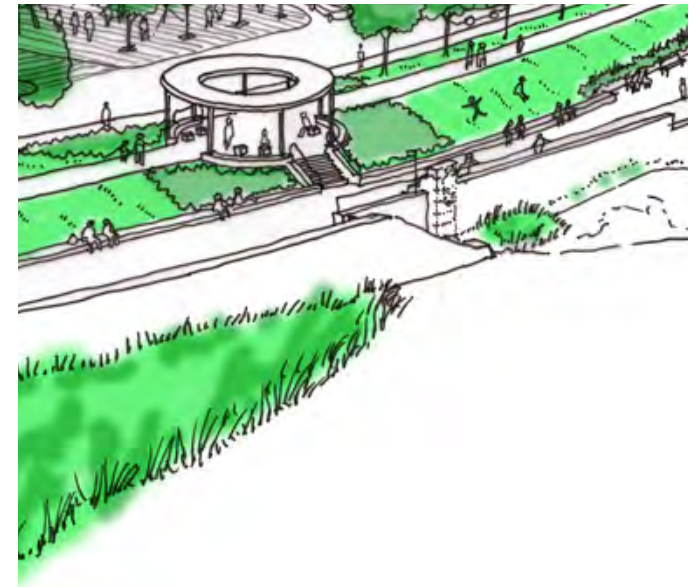


Whitesands Event Space - before and after



17. Extended landing at Devorgilla Bridge:

The integration of the flood protection barrier and the iconic scheduled ancient monument of the Old or Devorgilla Bridge would be important. It can be noted that this key pedestrian route now has a significant steps barrier at the town-side due to the past removal of bridge arches for road widening and land reclamation works. A DDA-compliant access arrangement should be incorporated into the town-side landing and the flood protection barrier provides the opportunity to achieve this. The sketch indicates how new steps and ramps could be arranged into an extended bridge landing at the Devorgilla Bridge.



18. Special viewpoint area at the Caul:

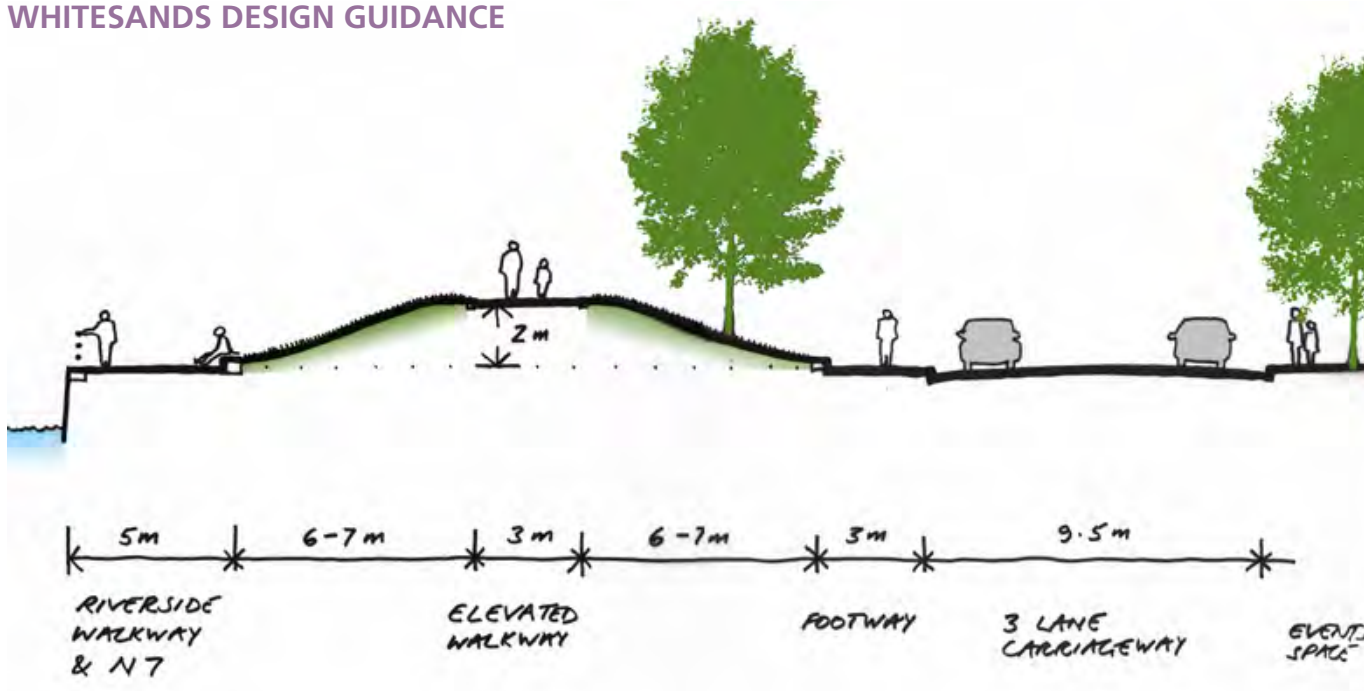
The existing bus stances occupy one of the best positions in Whitesands for viewing the Nith. On the elevated shared use path on top of the bund, it is proposed that this could be widened to form a special viewpoint with seating and possibly a canopy. Grassed slopes on the bund would change to terraced planting where the proportion of path to embankment changed.

19. Existing river wall and walkway retained:

The existing riverside walkway and shared surface cycle path incorporating National Cycle Route 7 is a fine asset and should be retained and enhanced to provide this valuable sense of connection with the Nith. This would be the designated cycle route through the Whitesands, as well as a potential location to install fitness facilities to provide activities for older children and adults. Away from the pedestrian ramps that connect the upper and lower levels, the riverside walkway could be widened at the Caul and gravel islands. This would provide a recess for additional bench seating to compliment the continuous and more informal coping seating at the edge of the bund. The buildability of the flood barrier would be easier, more economical and safer away from the river edge.



WHITESANDS DESIGN GUIDANCE



Indicative cross section of landscape bund



Indicative cross section at sandy opening at foot of Bank Street

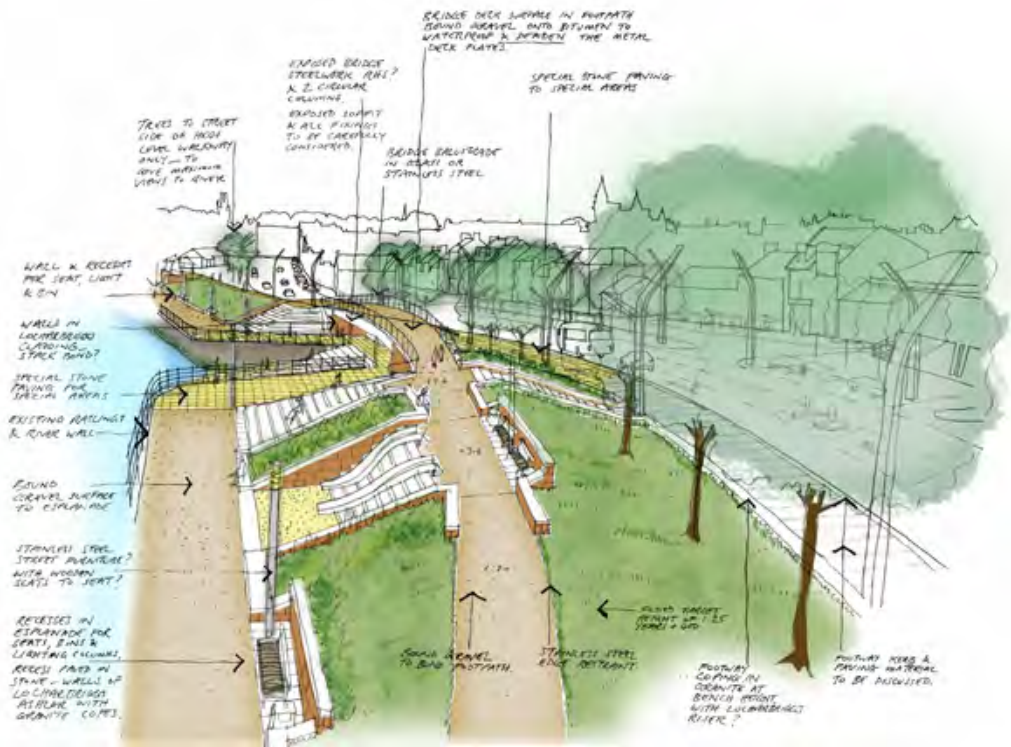
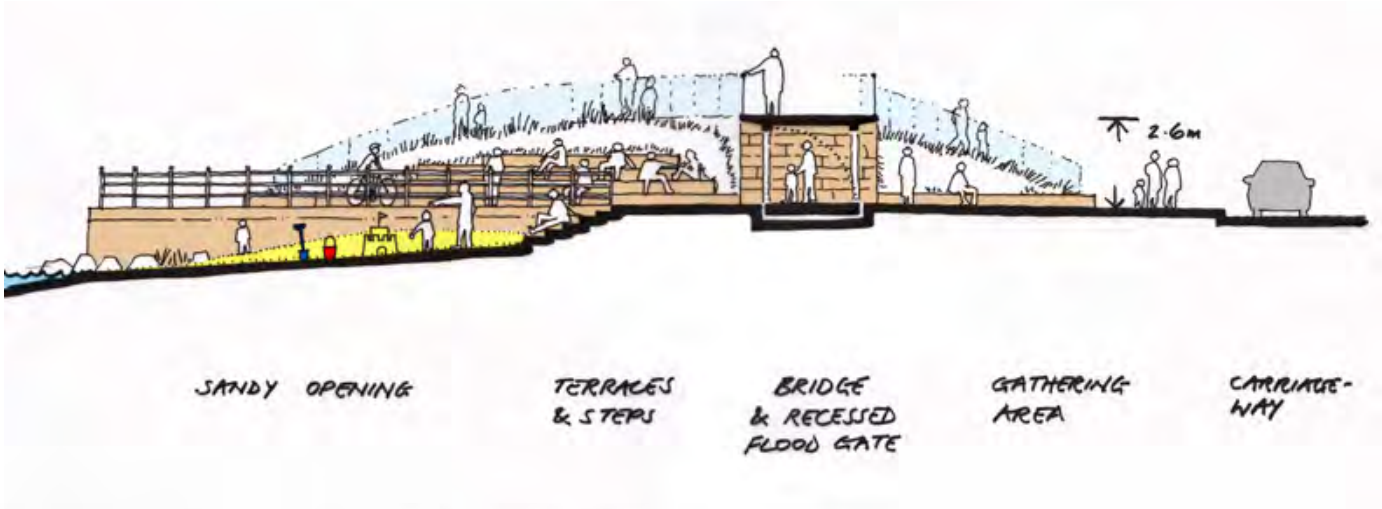
20. Elevated shared use path at top of bund:

The elevated shared use path would be around 3m wide and generally be without railings. The design of this path would be subject to detailed design.

There would be native variety street trees to the carriageway side of the elevated walkway and none to the river side. This would mean that river views were uninterrupted while the trees would in part form a boulevard treatment to the road, making it a more special place to travel along.

21. Bridge over 17m wide opening:

The greatest height of barrier to achieve the 1 in 25 year protection level is at the bottom of Bank Street. With an assumed freeboard of 300mm, an approximate height of at least 2.5m is required. It is considered that this location requires an alternative solution to the bunded treatment to provide the flood protection barrier and that the open aspect to the river down Bank Street should be retained and in some respects improved. It is suggested that as an integral part of an engineered flood protection installation, the elevated shared path would continue but in a bridge form that provided a gap below for pedestrians and cyclists. Ground-recessed hydraulic gates would be raised to dock into the underside of the bridge structure above.



WHITESANDS DESIGN GUIDANCE



View down Bank Street to the Whitesands - before and after

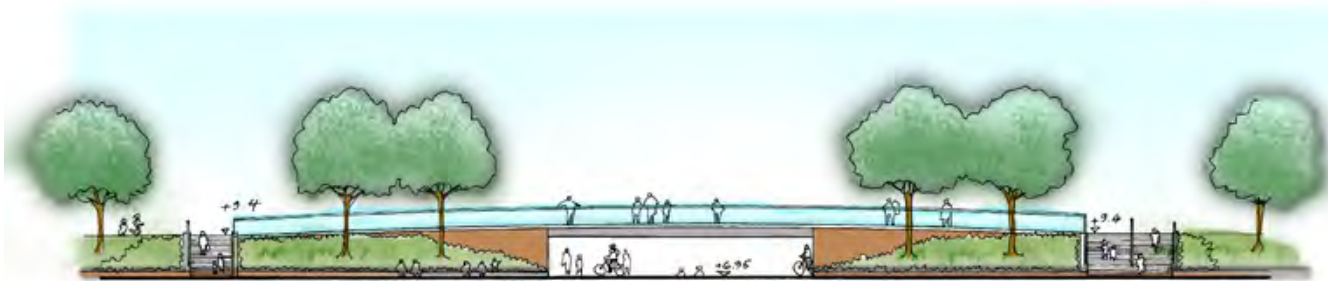
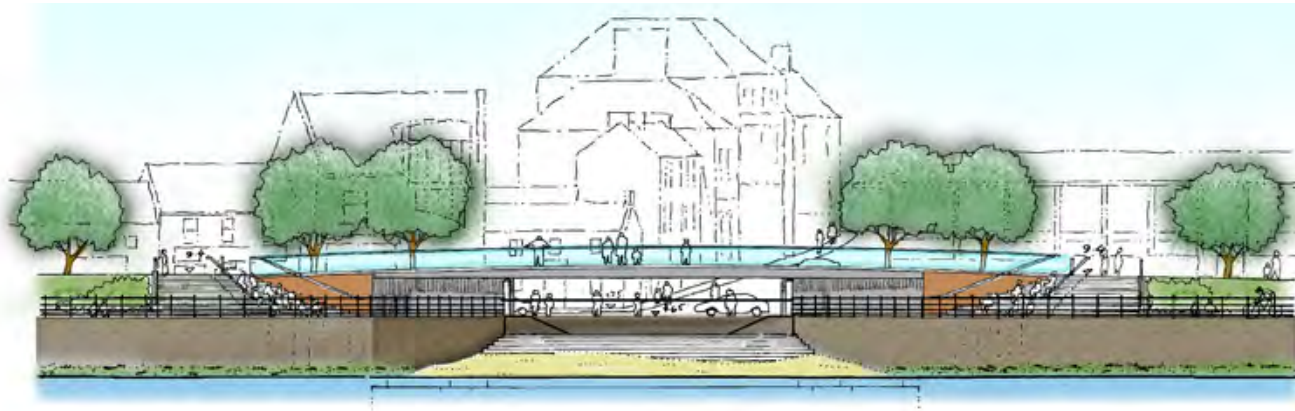
The bridge and opening would together be a special place in the Whitesands. Glass or other visually minimal balustrade details would be adopted for the structure.





22. Natural treatment to sandy opening:

The recessed area of the riverbank at the bottom of Bank Street reflects a historic and natural feature that has been acknowledged with the different treatment that currently exists. It is noted that accumulations of river sand are deposited in this recess. It is therefore proposed that the existing recessed area is modified to create a natural river beach with stepped access down from the riverside walkway. This area would be managed but working with the natural river regime to create a sandy area for play and recreation at the water. The elevated bridge and a feature of terraced seating to either side would make a special place for people watching, child supervision, or viewing wildlife or fishermen on the river. Adjacent play opportunities to the other side of the elevated path could be incorporated, such as using the bunded slope for play-slides into (imported white) sand pits but thereby reinforcing the identity of the place.



Indicative cross section at the bottom of Bank Street

WHITESANDS DESIGN GUIDANCE

23. Disabled Parking, Access and Amenity

The masterplan and public realm proposals seek to emphasise and promote disabled access and amenity where possible. It is proposed that the area of Whitesands adjacent to the Bank of Scotland be re-organised into a designated disabled car park. The planting of native variety street trees in this area along to the Brewery Street set-back would create a boulevard effect to the carriageway and help to better define the recessed area of the town edge at Whitesands, improving the amenity and environment for disabled users.

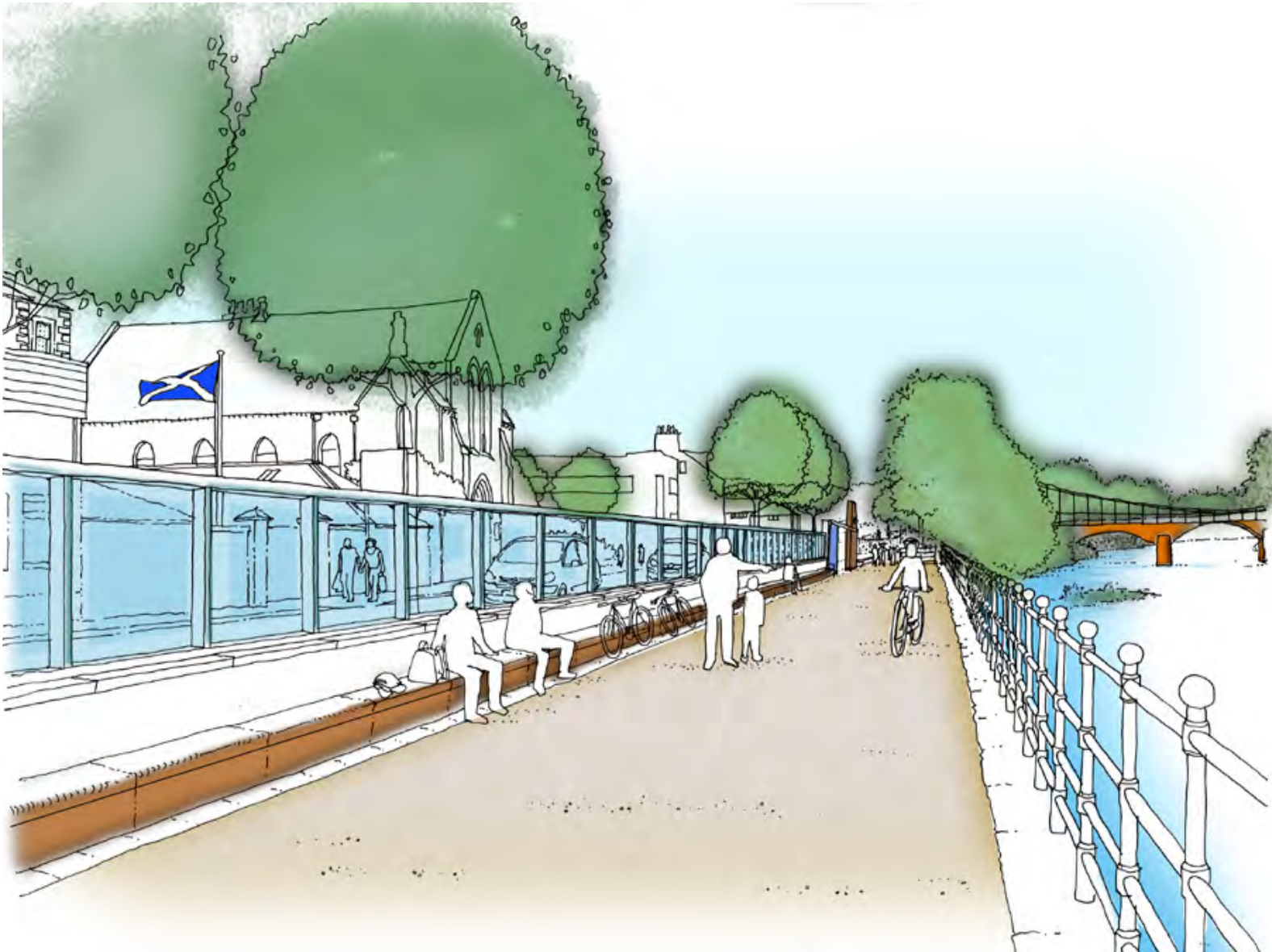


24. Transition treatment between bund and glazed screen wall:

The narrowing of the Whitesands to the south means that the bunded solution and elevated walkway feature cannot be sustained. A vertical barrier, starting as a wall would emerge from the bund as it dropped down. At the narrowest length of Whitesands, the flood wall would comprise a lower base which could incorporate informal continuous seating and a structural glass panel installation above. More regular flood events would only require the base of the wall. Pedestrian and vehicle driver views of the Nith could be maintained through the glass.



Enhancing the setting of the Grade A Listed Building through the use of a glass wall.



25. Opening in wall at Grade A listed building:

As at Bank Street, a gap in the flood protection barrier could be incorporated into the proposals. The glazed wall barrier would have a gap of similar length to Bank Street with hydraulic gates recessed into the ground. The total height of barrier would be around 1.6m. It is proposed that this could be located opposite the Grade A listed building of 29 Irish Street which presents an interesting working courtyard to the riverside that might be partly opened up to the street.

26. Transition to Suspension Bridge landing area:

There will be some complexities to the integration of the flood barrier around the suspension bridge and a solution that provides least visual intrusion and least negative heritage impact to this attractive area should be sought. The masterplan envisages the glazed wall with an off-set and gate so that the existing bank with trees is retained. The N7 cycle route is now indicated on the town-side of the barrier. The riverside walkway can however be maintained at the Suspension Bridge in a similar arrangement to the existing.



27. Tree planting and footpath connects to St Michael St Bridge wall:

This part of Whitesands between the two bridges is attractive but dominated by vehicles. It is proposed that an area of thicker tree planting, incorporating native varieties where possible to promote biodiversity, replaces the convenience car park to better define the linear park concept and make a more positive visual connection to Dock Park to the south. Comparatively minor modifications would be necessary to the riverside environment in order to make it flood protected for the 1 in 25 year event. The river edge footpath and planters can be retained but a walkway between the two bridges would be around 1m higher than at present. The steps down to the riverside would be increased and a ramp integrated into the planter area.



28. Wall treatment within Dock Park:

Despite the increasing distance from Whitesands, the Dock Park presents a flood threat to the town centre area. Barrier continuity from St Michael Street Bridge down into the park would be necessary. A further study into flood barrier solutions that integrate with the park landscape would be necessary but a combination of stone walls and bunding would be the probable solutions. The total height for this would in places be approaching 1.5m. This would have implications for existing trees, views of the river, the route of the NCR7 and the existing fine qualities of the park. A radical solution involving landform and a significant amount of replacement tree planting, incorporating native varieties where possible, and relocation of features may be a practical, economical and in time provide the most appropriate and sustainable solution for Dock Park. The flood barrier would connect across to the existing high wall at the residential development.



WHITESANDS DESIGN GUIDANCE



29. Community garden / viewing platform:

The Whitesands study boundary is sufficiently flexible to incorporate adjacent areas where significant improvements can be made that will make a positive impact on the wider Whitesands environment. The 1960s/70s housing blocks above Mill Road on the eastern side of the Nith from the Whitesands site overlook the Devorgilla Bridge and Caul. Subject to confirmation, it is thought that the open areas between buildings remain in the ownership of D&G Council, who maintain and light the areas. Proposals could be brought forward that enhance these areas, much of which have a left-over quality. A community garden and viewing platform over the town centre could be incorporated into proposals as indicated in the photomontage.



Community Gardens at Mill Road - before and after



30. Screen planting above Mill Road:

The view from Whitesands riverside walkway to the Caul and Devorgilla Bridge is an iconic image for south west Scotland. The opposite bank of the river is an important backdrop to this view.

Unfortunately this is dominated by the housing blocks referred to in item 29. These buildings do not respond to the river setting in an architectural manner but have large blank gables and are of a scale and massing that looks out of place with the quality of the historic view. The mixed ownership of the blocks means that replacement or significant enhancement to the buildings would be unlikely.



It is therefore proposed that areas be selected for tree planting, including the use of native varieties, which would screen parts of the buildings and help to visually break-up the mass of the blocks. The photomontage indicates how this would significantly enhance the view from Whitesands.

View of Mill Road from Whitesands - before and after



Legend

1. **Irish Street improvements**
Streetscaping, lighting, street trees, façade overcladding, boundary treatments
 2. **Historic vennels upgrading**
New lighting, resurfacing, windows, art installations, boundary treatments
 3. **Replacement of Social Work Council Office**
New mixed use/ residential character buildings fronting Irish Street
 4. **Retention of existing rear accesses**
Existing fire exits, parking, and delivery zones retained for retailers
 5. **Surface car park**
Potential access from Irish Street.
 6. **Historic warehouse conversion**
Mixed use/ residential at upper floors
 7. **Concealed multi storey car park**
2 - 3 storey car park at Whitesands level
 8. **Crafts Quarter**
Workshops, galleries, shops, live/ work units, apartments above
 9. **Crafts Quarter vennels**
New vennel network connecting Whitesands, Friars Vennel, and Irish Street
 10. **Market vennel**
New vennel with weekend market stalls
 11. **Whitesands opportunity sites**
New infill/ replacement buildings to reinstate historic urban edge
 12. **Irish Street infill site**
Residential courtyard development to repair building line
 13. **Bank Street environmental improvements**
Streetscape improvements
 14. **Service buses stances**
 15. **Tourist buses drop off/pick up**
 16. **Pedestrianised temporary events space**
Shared surface access to Brewery Street
 17. **Extended landing at Devorgilla Bridge**
 18. **Special viewpoint area at the Caul**
 19. **Existing river wall, walkway and NCR7 retained**
 20. **Elevated shared use path at top of bund**
 21. **Bridge over 17m wide opening**
Ground-recessed hydraulic flood gates
 22. **Natural treatment to Sandy Opening**
 23. **Disabled parking**
 24. **Transition treatment between bund and glazed screen wall**
 25. **Opening in wall at Grade A listed building**
Ground-recessed hydraulic flood gates
 26. **Transition into Suspension Bridge landing area**
 27. **Tree planting and footpath connects to St Michael St Bridge wall**
 28. **Wall treatment within Dock Park**
 29. **Community Garden / Viewing Platform**
 30. **Screen planting above Mill Road**
- ▶ **Car Park Vehicular Access Point**



7 DELIVERY STRATEGY

The masterplan is designed firstly to provide flood protection solutions for the Whitesands but also to ensure that works undertaken here contribute to the vitality of the whole town.

As such, the masterplan envisages 30 individual interventions, grouped into 7 themed projects, throughout both the Whitesands and the town centre as a whole.

In considering the way forward, there are a number of key factors which will determine the deliverability of these projects:

- ▶ size of project
- ▶ physical and infrastructure considerations
- ▶ ownership and site assembly challenges
- ▶ funding requirements or opportunities

and following on from this:

- ▶ ability to fulfil the Whitesands proposition
- ▶ level of priority

The Deliverability Matrix set out in the following pages examines each themed project, and its individual interventions, in terms of their importance in achieving the Whitesands vision.

The Implementation Table then ranks each project in terms of their ability to meet the Whitesands proposition and sets out likely project timescales.

From this analysis we conclude that the most important projects in terms of addressing flood protection to take forward in the short term are the:

- ▶ Whitesands Flood Protection Scheme
- ▶ Whitesands Public Realm Scheme
- ▶ Whitesands Opportunity Sites

These could be individual project, or at least the Flood Protection Scheme and the Public Realm Scheme could be considered as one tender package.

Supplementary critical projects in achieving the vision are:

- ▶ Bank Street Public Realm Scheme
- ▶ Whitesands Craft Quarter
- ▶ Irish Street Conservation Led Regeneration

These projects significantly contribute to the vision. The importance of the relationship between the Whitesands and the opposite bank of the river at Mill Street is considered important and as such two additional independent projects are also identified.

With all proposals, the detailed design stage will address DDA compliance, future maintenance requirements and other procedural and technical requirements, including all relevant planning policy and guidance documents, e.g. Dumfries

and Galloway Local Development Plan, Designing Streets, Designing Places, the Dumfries Conservation Area Character Appraisal, etc. It is also advised that proposals should seek to incorporate best practice in regard to all aspects relevant to place-making, sustainability and sustainable development.

As the projects have been identified and agreed through a comprehensive engagement, and in order to maximise community benefits, we promote the ongoing involvement of local stakeholders, community groups, schools, etc. in the delivery and ongoing management of appropriate interventions.



DELIVERABILITY MATRIX

Ref	Project	Description	Size of site (hectares) or quantum of built floorspace proposed	Physical and Infrastructure	Ownership / site assembly	Funding requirements / sources (Council capital and revenue, Lottery, HLF/CARS, private capital investment)	Deliver the Whitesands Proposition 1 - Strongest 2 - Medium 3 - Weaker	Priority for Implementation 1 – Highest 2 – Medium 3 - Lower
Irish Street Conservation Led Regeneration								
1	Irish Street Streetscape Improvements	Streetscape, lighting, street trees, façade over-cladding, boundary treatments	0.473	Need to maintain traffic flow / servicing arrangements	D&G Council	D&G Council Capital Programme	2	2
2	Historic Vennels upgrade (x4)	Façade and gable end animation, new lighting, resurfacing, art installation	0.1279	DDA compliance	Multiple ownership	D&G Council Capital Programme / Creative Scotland in association with Wide Open, Chamber of Arts	2	2
3	Social Work Council Office (22-24 Irish Street)	New mixed use/ residential character buildings fronting Irish Street	0.0574	Removal of public car parking space 56no.	D&G Council. Replacement offices required. Partnership project with Property Services/Social Work Depts.	Private investment – issue of viability given current value versus redevelopment value	2	2
Crafts Quarter								
5	Surface car park	Potential access from Irish Street and Whitesands (and the Vennel in case of emergency)	0.2ha		Loreburn HA	D&G Council Capital Programme (part)	2	2
6	Historic warehouse conversion	Mixed use/ residential at upper floors	0.0452	Linkage to existing pedestrian routes / streetscape		Private / D&G Council – viability issue	2	3
7	Concealed multi storey car park	2 - 3 storey car park at Whitesands level	0.2ha (x 2floors)	DDA compliance	Loreburn HA	D&G Council Capital Programme (part)	2	2
8	Crafts Quarter	Workshops, galleries, shops, live/ workunits, apartments above	0.38ha	Seek to utilise existing property / retail units before new build	Loreburn HA	Private – viability issue	2	2/3
9	Crafts Quarter vennels	New vennel network connecting Whitesands, Friars Vennel, and Irish Street	0.1836		Loreburn HA	Private – viability issue	2	2/3
10	Market vennel	New vennel with weekend market stalls	0.0984			Private / D&G Council – viability issue	2	3
Infill Sites								
11	Whitesands Opportunity Site A (left to right on plan)	New infill/ replacement buildings to reinstate historic urban edge	0.0194		Willingness of owner to sell / develop	Private / D&G Council – viability issue	1	2

Ref	Project	Description	Size of site (hectares) or quantum of built floorspace proposed	Physical and Infrastructure	Ownership / site assembly	Funding requirements / sources (Council capital and revenue, Lottery, HLF/CARS, private capital investment)	Deliver the Whitesands Proposition	Priority for Implementation
							1 - Strongest 2 - Medium 3 - Weaker	1 – Highest 2 – Medium 3 - Lower
11	Whitesands Opportunity Site B (left to right on plan)	New infill/ replacement buildings to reinstate historic urban edge	0.0127		Willingness of owner to sell / develop	Private / D&G– viability issue	1	2
11	Whitesands Opportunity Site C (left to right on plan)	New infill/ replacement buildings to reinstate historic urban edge	0.0135		Willingness of owner to sell / develop	Private / D&G Council – viability issue – current use value versus redevelopment value	1	2
11	Whitesands Opportunity Site D (left to right on plan)	New infill/ replacement buildings to reinstate historic urban edge	0.0618		Willingness of owner to sell / develop	Private / D&G Council – viability issue	1	2
12	Irish Street infill site	Residential courtyard development to repair building line	0.0138		Willingness of owner to sell / develop	Private – residential use	2	2
Bank Street Public Realm Scheme								
13	Bank Street environmental improvements	Streetscape improvements	0.1552		D&G Council	D&G Council Capital Programme	2	2
Whitesands Public Realm Scheme								
14	Whitesands service buses stances	New bus stances to replace existing	0.0588		Common Goods Land	D&G Council Capital Programme	1	1
15	Tourist buses drop off /pick up	New bus stances to replace existing	0.0117		Common Goods Land	D&G Council Capital Programme	1	1
16	Pedestrian priority space (and temporary events space)	Shared surface access to Brewery Street	0.0528		Common Goods Land	D&G Council Capital Programme	1	1
23	Disabled parking		0.0143		Common Goods Land	D&G Council Capital Programme	1	1
Whitesands Flood Protection Scheme								
17	Extended landing at Devorgilla Bridge		0.0163	Alterations to a Scheduled Ancient Monument	Common Goods Land	D&G Council Capital Programme / Scot Govt funding	1	1
18	Special viewpoint area at the Caul		0.0133		Common Goods Land	D&G Council Capital Programme / Scot Govt funding	1	1
19	Existing river wall and walkway retained		0.0125		Common Goods Land	D&G Council Capital Programme / Scot Govt funding	1	1
20	Elevated walkway at top of bund		0.2995		Common Goods Land	D&G Council Capital Programme / Scot Govt funding	1	1
21	Bridge over 17m wide opening	Ground-recessed hydraulic flood gates	0.0511		Common Goods Land	D&G Council Capital Programme / Scot Govt funding	1	1
22	Natural treatment to Sandy Opening		0.0340	Potential impact on habitats	Common Goods Land	D&G Council Capital Programme / Scot Govt funding	1	1

Ref	Project	Description	Size of site (hectares) or quantum of built floorspace proposed	Physical and Infrastructure	Ownership / site assembly	Funding requirements / sources (Council capital and revenue, Lottery, HLF/CARS, private capital investment)	Deliver the Whitesands Proposition 1 - Strongest 2 - Medium 3 - Weaker	Priority for Implementation 1 – Highest 2 – Medium 3 - Lower
24	Transition treatment between bund and glazed screen wall		0.0785		Common Goods Land	D&G Council Capital Programme / Scot Govt funding	1	1
25	Opening in wall at Grade A listed building	Ground-recessed hydraulic flood gates	0.0031			D&G Council Capital Programme	1	1
26	Transition into Suspension Bridge landing area		0.0493			D&G Council Capital Programme / Scot Govt funding	1	1
27	Tree planting and footpath connects to St Michael St Bridge wall		0.0484		Common Goods Land	D&G Council Capital Programme	1	1
28	Wall treatment within Dock Park		0.0106		Common Goods Land	D&G Council Capital Programme / Scot Govt funding	1	1
Millbrae Area Environmental Improvements								
29	Community Garden / Viewing Platform		0.0364		DGHP	D&G Council Capital Programme / Scot Govt funding	3	3
30	Screen planting above Mill Road		0.0534		DGHP	D&G Council Capital Programme / Scot Govt funding	3	3

	Integral element of the 'Whitesands' flood protection scheme
	Independent project critical to achieving the overall vision

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

Most critical projects in delivering the Whitesands Proposition

		Deliver the Whitesands Proposition 1 - Strongest 2 - Medium 3 - Weaker	Priority for Implementation 1 – Highest 2 – Medium 3 - Lower	'Whitesands' OR Independent Project	Immediate (0-2 years)	Near Term (2-5 years)	Longer Term (5-10 years)
Whitesands Flood Protection Scheme							
17	Extended landing at Devorgilla Bridge	1	1	Whitesands			
18	Special viewpoint area at the Caul	1	1	Whitesands			
19	Existing river wall and walkway retained	1	1	Whitesands			
20	Elevated walkway at top of bund	1	1	Whitesands			
21	Bridge over 17m wide opening	1	1	Whitesands			
22	Natural treatment to Sandy Opening	1	1	Whitesands			
24	Transition treatment between bund and glazed screen wall	1	1	Whitesands			
25	Opening in wall at Grade A listed building	1	1	Whitesands			
26	Transition into Suspension Bridge landing area	1	1	Whitesands			
27	Tree planting and footpath connects to St Michael St Bridge wall	1	1	Whitesands			
28	Wall treatment within Dock Park	1	1	Whitesands			
Whitesands Public Realm Scheme							
14	Whitesands service buses stances	1	1	Whitesands			
15	Tourist buses drop off /pick up	1	1	Whitesands			
16	Pedestrian priority space (and temporary events space)	1	1	Whitesands			
23	Disabled parking	1	1	Whitesands			
Whitesands Opportunity Sites							
11	Whitesands Opportunity Site A (left to right on plan)	1	2	Whitesands			
11	Whitesands Opportunity Site B	1	2	Whitesands			
11	Whitesands Opportunity Site C	1	2	Whitesands			
11	Whitesands Opportunity Site D	1	2	Whitesands			

Critical Projects in delivering the Whitesands Proposition

		Deliver the Whitesands Proposition	Priority for Implementation		Immediate (0-2 years)	Near Term (2-5 years)	Longer Term (5-10 years)
		1 - Strongest 2 - Medium 3 - Weaker	1 – Highest 2 – Medium 3 - Lower				
Bank Street Environmental Improvements							
13	Bank Street environmental improvements	2	2	Independent			
Crafts Quarter							
5	Surface car park	2	2	Independent			
6	Historic warehouse conversion	2	2	Independent			
7	Concealed multi storey car park	2	2	Independent			
8	Crafts Quarter	2	2	Independent			
9	Crafts Quarter vennels	2	2	Independent			
10	Market vennel	2	2	Independent			
Irish Street Conservation Led Regeneration							
1	Irish Street Streetscape Improvements	2	3	Independent			
2	Historic Vennels upgrade (x4)	2	3	Independent			
3	Social Work Council Office	2	3	Independent			
12	Irish Street infill site	2	3	Independent			

Important Projects in delivering the Whitesands Proposition

		Deliver the Whitesands Proposition	Priority for Implementation		Immediate (0-2 years)	Near Term (2-5 years)	Longer Term (5-10 years)
		1 - Strongest 2 - Medium 3 - Weaker	1 – Highest 2 – Medium 3 - Lower				
29	Community Garden / Viewing Platform	3	3	Independent			
30	Screen planting above Mill Road	3	3	Independent			





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