



Armagh Banbridge and Craigavon
Community Planning Partnership



Housing
Executive



Department for
Communities

An Roinn
Pobal

Department fur
Commonities

THE ARMAGH PLACE PLAN

Celebrating Our Stars & Stories



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How to navigate the plan

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The Case for Change delves into Armagh’s key challenges through in-depth desktop research and engagement.

The Place Plan Outcomes respond to the findings gathered and provide a guiding framework for delivering change.

Delivering Change provides the action plan for the delivery of the vision plan outcomes.

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1. OVERVIEW

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Armagh is a true original. A uniquely special place that has attracted people for more than 7,000 years. A place of such primacy for so many aspects of human endeavour that we call it the First Place – from Emain Macha, one of the great spiritual sites of pre-Christian Celtic Ireland, to the story of St. Patrick and our cathedrals, a library known as the Healing Place of the Soul and Armagh Observatory, symbol of the Age of Enlightenment and the oldest active institution of its type in these Isles. Armagh is a Georgian jewel with many facets. A place that stirs the senses, engages the mind and inspires the imagination.

Raised on seven hills, it has been preserving the ideas and ideals that span a multiplicity of human thinking and culture. But today's Georgian city jewel is not simply rooted in the past, far from it. Those drawn here today will meet a warm welcome and vibrant culture of can-do creativity.

A city and a people who understand that this place should not sit still, and that there may be challenges that lie ahead. Challenges of demographic change, of climate change and a new digital revolution mean that Armaghians and their city need to adapt and change. Armagh has experienced an underinvestment in its infrastructure, and this is a chance to pave the way ahead, through more future proofed, sustainable and inclusive ideas. Armagh's rich culture can help lead this change, and breathe new ideas, places and life into its city streets.

With a critical mass of thinkers, ideas and creativity, Armagh looks ahead as a forward-thinking and progressive city. Celebrating the significance of the past while creating a relevance for the future, this place plan can help shape the city's destiny, and for those that are willing, opportunities await.



This Place Plan helps put new twists on old tales; contemporary takes on established orders and fresh thinking to meet new challenges. Building on its provenance as a centre of learning, science, spirituality and Christianity, the city can create the conditions and use cultural regeneration to secure its future as a place of significance, sustaining its people and attracting new ones.

Building on the plentiful assets of the city, and attempting to stitch them together to create one place, this plan celebrates a continuation of Archbishop Robinson's vision for the city. With its compact walkable urbanism, its celebratory heritage and its stories and legends, the Armagh Place Plan aims to continue the city's story through the eyes of its visionaries. Recognising the unique opportunities of Armagh Observatory and Planetarium, the Mall, the Market Square, Navan Fort, the Cathedrals and the Gaol, Armagh can celebrate its stars and stories by continuing them into the future, for its people to enjoy and thrive.

Helping to ensure the Armagh of the 21st century values its unique heritage and builds new legacies for future generations.

The Armagh Place Plan process

This place plan has brought together a wide range of partners, the community and businesses to shape the future direction of the city together. Recognising the need to take a 'whole city' approach and work together, the plan has been made up of four key stages:

1. **Discovering** what Armagh is all about and how people feel about their city.
2. **Defining** the case for change in the city and what the key strengths and opportunities are for taking forward.
3. **Developing** a shared vision and four key outcomes for the city to focus on.
4. **Delivering** clear actions for that will help drive forward the cultural regeneration of the city across key defined city spaces.

1.2 WHY A PLACE PLAN FOR ARMAGH?

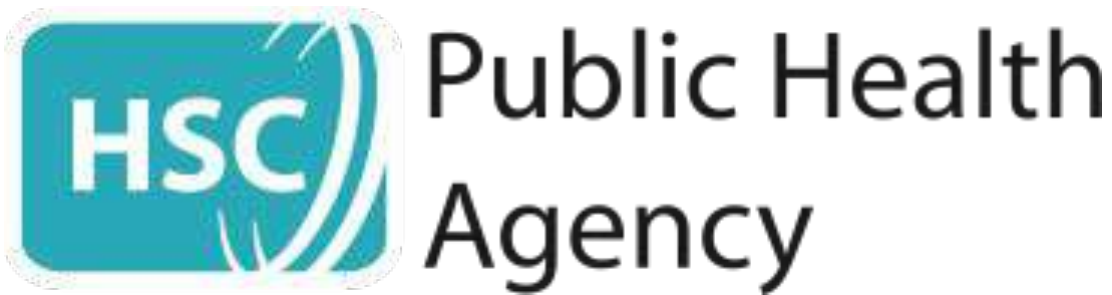
The creation of new community planning functions as part of the reform of local councils in 2014 brought together key partners to work together for the communities that they serve. In 2017, Connected, the Community Plan for the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough was developed and it identified opportunities 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 [see right].

The Council recognises its role as a coordinating force, but no one organisation can deliver this plan on its own. Success will rely on the commitment of a range of local, regional and international partners and funders. It should feel owned by the people of Armagh and its city partners. The plan is ambitious and will make the most of opportunities such as the Mid South West Growth Deal, PEACE Plus and the Levelling Up agenda to improve the quality of life for people in the city.

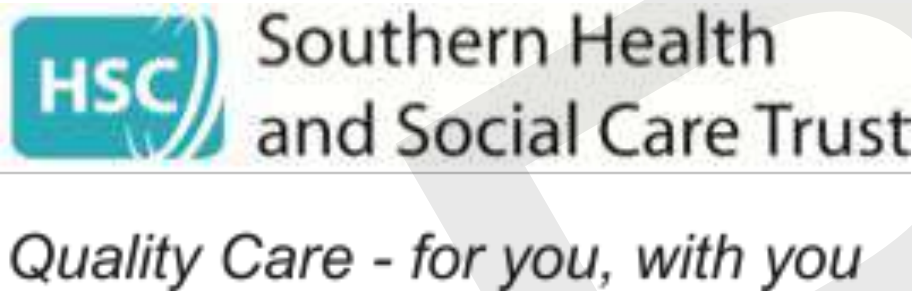
This draft plan is the result of many conversations with people in Armagh and significant desktop research. The draft plan will be further developed during this public consultation period from feedback received and will be subject to any statutory screening and impact assessments that are required, as well as planning permissions.



Community Planning Partnership



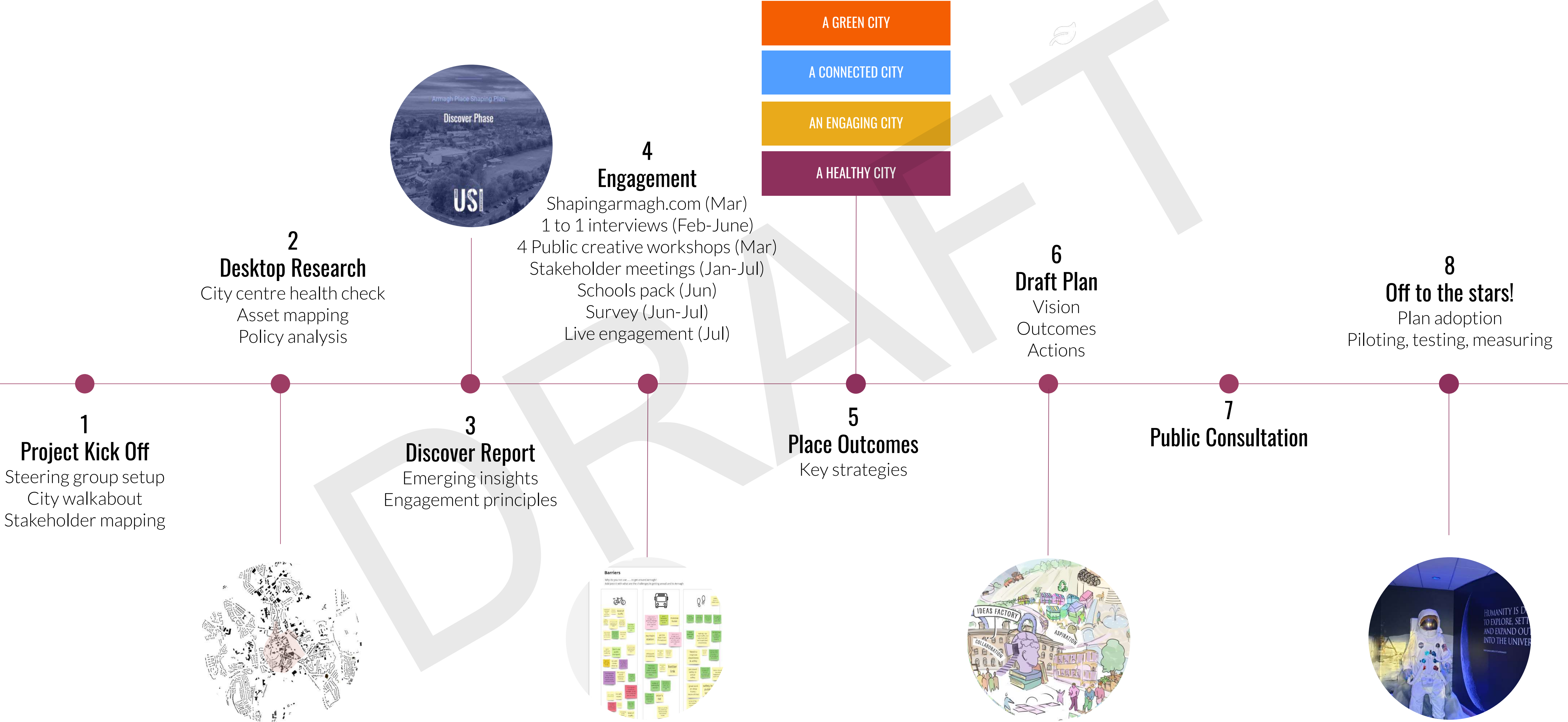
**COMMUNITY & VOLUNTARY
SECTOR PANEL**



**Northern Ireland
Fire & Rescue Service**



1.3 PLACE PLAN PROCESS



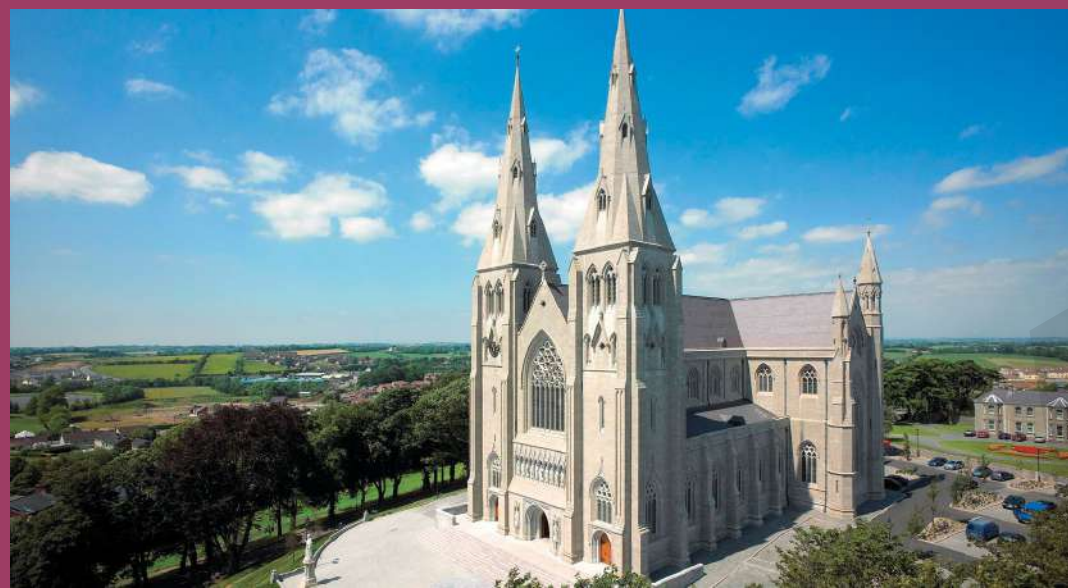
1.4 THE STORY OF ARMAGH

As part of this plan we delved into what makes Armagh unique and learned of its story through the ages. Here are some of the things people told us.



A history of creativity and innovation

Armagh is known as the **First Place** for good reason...from the time of the druids it has drawn people to it through its **creative spirit**, ancient traditions and rituals. It is a home to artists, libraries, poets and scientists. A **place of innovation**, its sparks thought, spirituality, mindfulness.



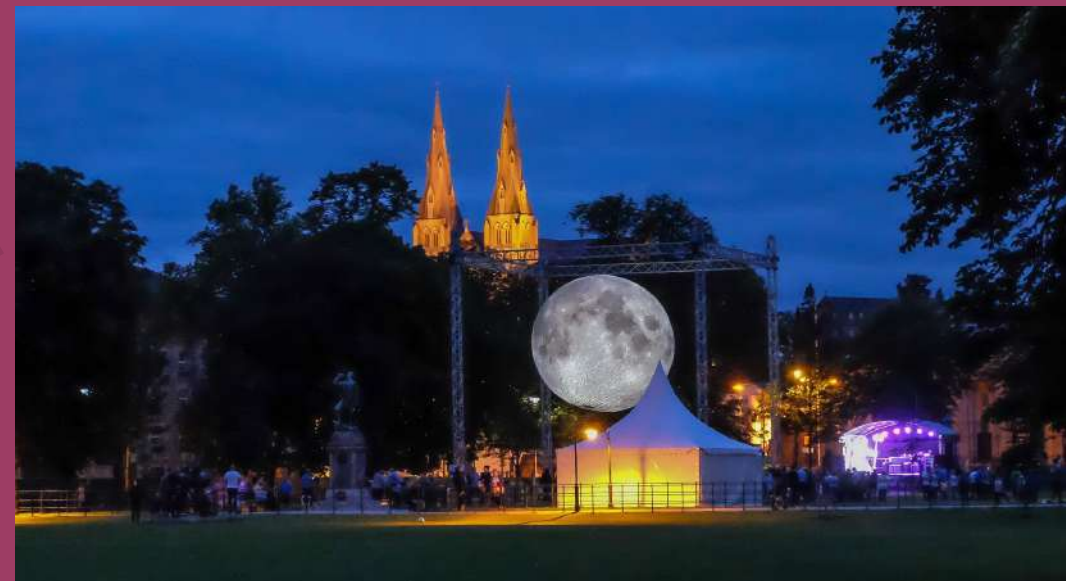
Home to some of Northern Ireland's most iconic places

The **Cathedrals**, the **Observatory and Planetarium**, the **Gaol** and **Navan Fort**. The **Armagh Robinson Library** holding Jonathan Swift's own copy of **Gulliver's Travels**. The **Palace Demesne**, a place for people to unwind; **The Mall**, a place to come together and celebrate the city.



The Borough has ambitions to be...

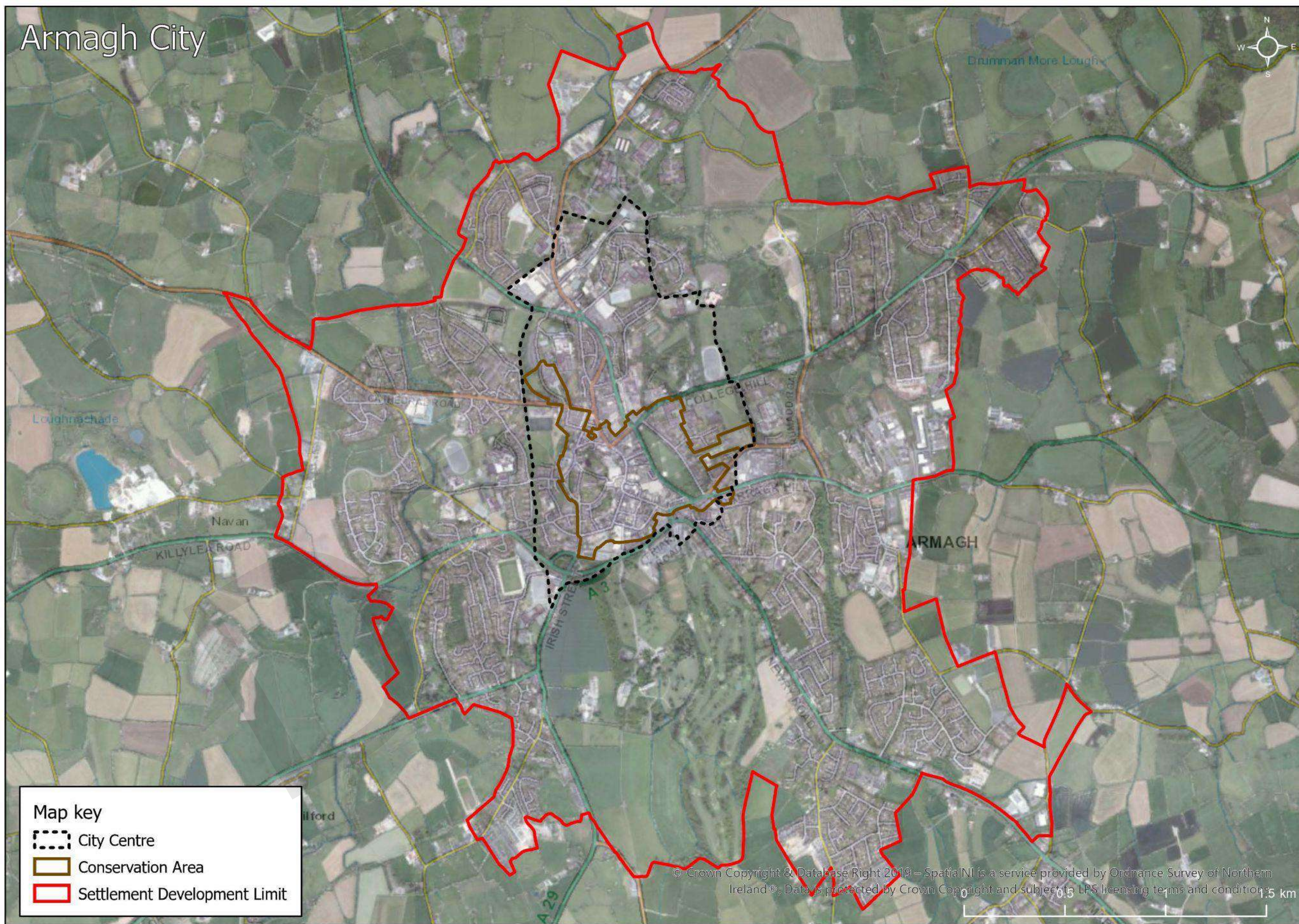
...a city with a rich sporting heritage, Armagh has ambitions to be **the most active** Borough in NI with a new **sporting centre of excellence**. It is the **home of the penalty kick** and welcomes thousands every year as the **seat of Ulster GAA**. When you head out of the city, you see a unique tradition of **road bowling**.



Brimming with potential and opportunity

A city that has always **looked to the stars**, bringing people together through art, science, literature and a sense that this is a place apart, somewhere to be **proud to call home**. Aiming to **reconnect with its region** and retain its significance for future generations to enjoy.

Armagh City



Map key

- City Centre
- Conservation Area
- Settlement Development Limit

1.5 VISION FOR ARMAGH

This vision for the city is based on all of the conversations, engagement and desktop research carried out to date.

It is a vision that recognises the culture that weaves through the city's people and buildings, the ways in which spaces can be animated and celebrated, and it creates a vision for a vibrant, creative and environmentally responsible Armagh.



2. THE CASE FOR CHANGE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

During the plan process, a phase of discovery about the city took place. This initially was informed through city walkabouts, speaking with people that know the city, and a desktop analysis of available data on the city was gathered. This allowed for an understanding of the current conditions, and what opportunities and challenges there are for the Place Plan.

A health check was carried out focusing specifically on the city centre, drawing from the High Streets Task Force key themes to assist in this analysis. A multi level strategic and policy analysis took place, from the UN Sustainable development goals down to local masterplans. These were analysed to understand how they could be strategically aligned and brought together for the holistic planning of the city.

Engagement weaved throughout all stages of the plan development, from discovering plans and projects, to understanding feelings and aspirations. This chapter contains a summary of this work and builds a case for change in Armagh city.

Evidence base used to identify the case for change:

- Armagh Statistical Profile
- Discover Report
- City Centre Health Check
- Public Online Sessions
- Engagement Report

2.2 INSIGHTS FROM DESKTOP RESEARCH

[Click here to access detailed information:](#)

[Armagh Statistical Profile](#)

[Discover Report](#)

Analysis of available data revealed key insights about Armagh.

SOCIAL

Young people aged 16-39 are leaving the city (NISRA, 2011).

The number of people aged 65+ is growing more than twice as fast as other age groups (NISRA, 2011).

In the more deprived parts of the city almost 40% of residents have no access to a car or van (NISRA, 2011).

ENVIRONMENTAL

The annual mean nitrogen oxide levels in Armagh were recorded as 24 µg/m³ in 2019 (ABC Council).

'The congestion in this city is making us sick and causing less people to be active and walk and cycle'

ECONOMIC

Regional Development Strategy 2035 and LDP POP identify growth for the city.

Only 54% of people see city and town centres as safe and welcoming for people from all walks of life (NI Life and Times Survey, 2018 - 2020).

1 in 4 commercial properties are vacant (DFC, 2021).

High street walking, cycling and public realm improvements can increase retail sales by up to 30% (Lawlor, 2013).



The area around the Courthouse leading up to College Street and Lonsdale Road was identified by many as being unsafe and difficult to walk.

2.3 CITY CENTRE HEALTH CHECK

[Click here to access detailed information:](#)

City Centre Health Check

Liveability

Restrictions on use of the Mall.

Lack of neighbourhood centres providing daily needs within walkable catchment.

High levels of housing stress

Traffic dominated streets with large number of car parking sites and on street.

High air pollution levels.

Walkable compact city centre.

There are 431 applicants on the waiting list in the Armagh City area. Of these, 58% were in housing stress.
(NIHE, March 2020)

City Centre Activity

Service centre for rural hinterland.

Lack of diversity of land uses leaving it vulnerable to a changing picture on the high street.

Individual cultural destinations are not joined up.

Vacancy levels are high with ongoing work through the Armagh Townscape Heritage Initiative to support new uses for old buildings.

High number of public sector workers with disposable income.

“A lot of farmers and rural businesses come into the city to use the banks and professional services”
(City Centre Manager December 2020)

Connectivity

Compact, walkable city centre.

Acts as a through route for traffic.

Bus services too infrequent for most, so the only logical way to get around is by car.

High proportion of commercial activity, but low residential population.

Loss of the train station in 1957 has cut off regional connections.

Lack of investment in new infrastructure to connect the city across the region.

“The routes are good, but there are not many buses”
(Local resident at the live engagement, July 2021)

Demographic Change

The population is rising modestly but not equally across age groups.

Decline in young people aged 16-39 living in the city as well as a growing older population in Armagh.

Lack of change in deprivation measures which vary across city.

‘There’s not a lot to do at our age in Armagh’
(Teenager at workshop, July 2021)

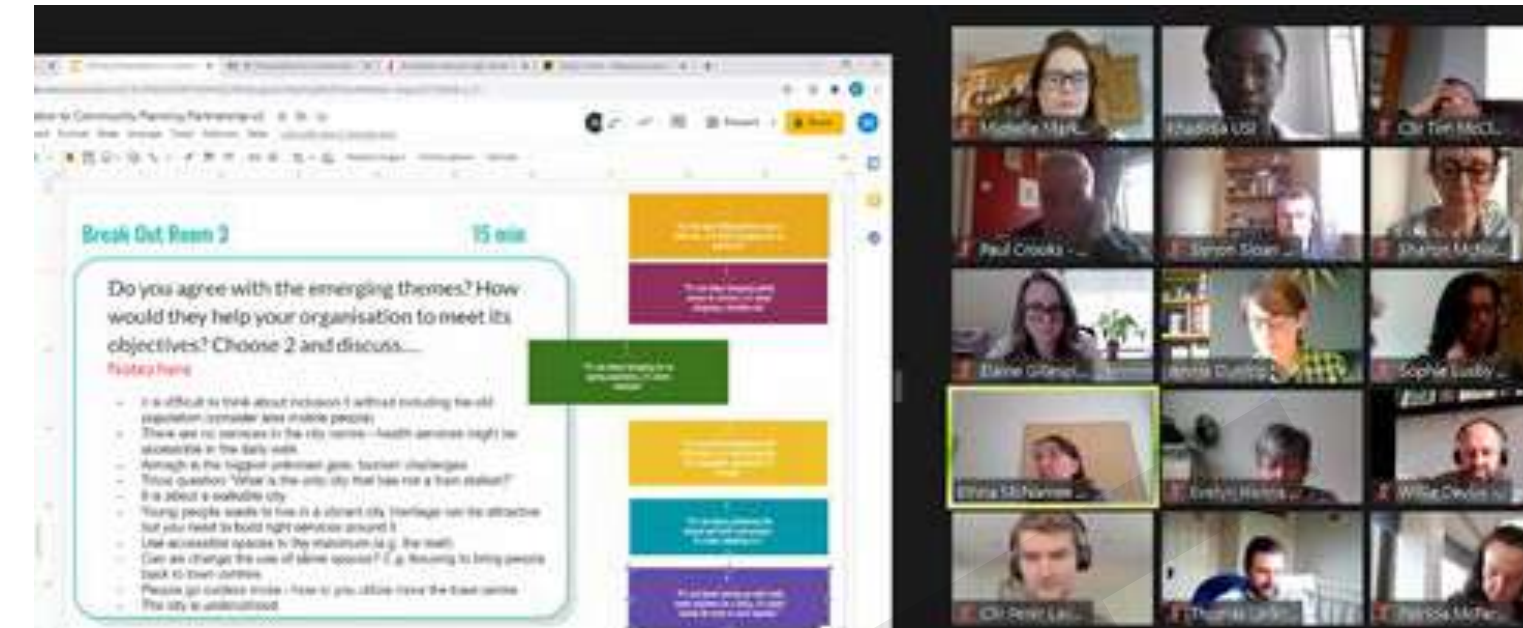


Empty business unit in the city centre

2.4 ENGAGEMENT FEEDBACK

An essential aspect of the place plan was the active engagement of the stakeholders during the entire process. The people that know the city best are the people that live there, visit there, and work to improve the city for its residents. Therefore it was important that this plan engaged with all of these stakeholders to understand the assets, opportunities and constraints for developing a future vision for the city. Delivering change is difficult, but when it is led by the community and for the community then it aids more successful and sustainable places. The concerns, ambitions and ideas of everyone have shaped this collaborative plan for the city.

During our engagement sessions, we explored what Armagh is about and how to build on that unique identity, character, heritage, and connectivity across the region as part of a renewed vision linked to the community plan's key outcomes. A diversity of different methods of engagement were used.



Online engagement session



Online public open sessions



Live engagement at the Epicentre



Live engagement Palace Demesne Public Park



Live engagement at the Mall



Online public open sessions



School pack

Engagement overview

Click here to access detailed information:

Engagement Report

Public Online Sessions

Website

Throughout 2021

The shapingarmagh.com website has been a place to share information, key engagement dates and facilitate wider feedback.

Public Online Workshops

22 - 26 March 2021

Four public online workshops took place. 33 people attended the workshops with one of the workshops focused on older people's issues.

Community Wide Survey

1st - 26th July 2021

The survey ran online throughout July and was made available on the Council's own engagement platform, citizen space. 135 online responses and 1 offline response were received.

Schools Creative Challenge

June 2021

159 school children in the Armagh area completed activity packs to identify what they love about their city and what they would improve.

Live Engagement Days

29th & 30th July

For two days USI setup at the Shambles Market and the Mall to talk to people out and about what they think are the priorities for the city. The team also dropped in at the Parkrun at the Palace Demesne.

Youth Focused Workshops

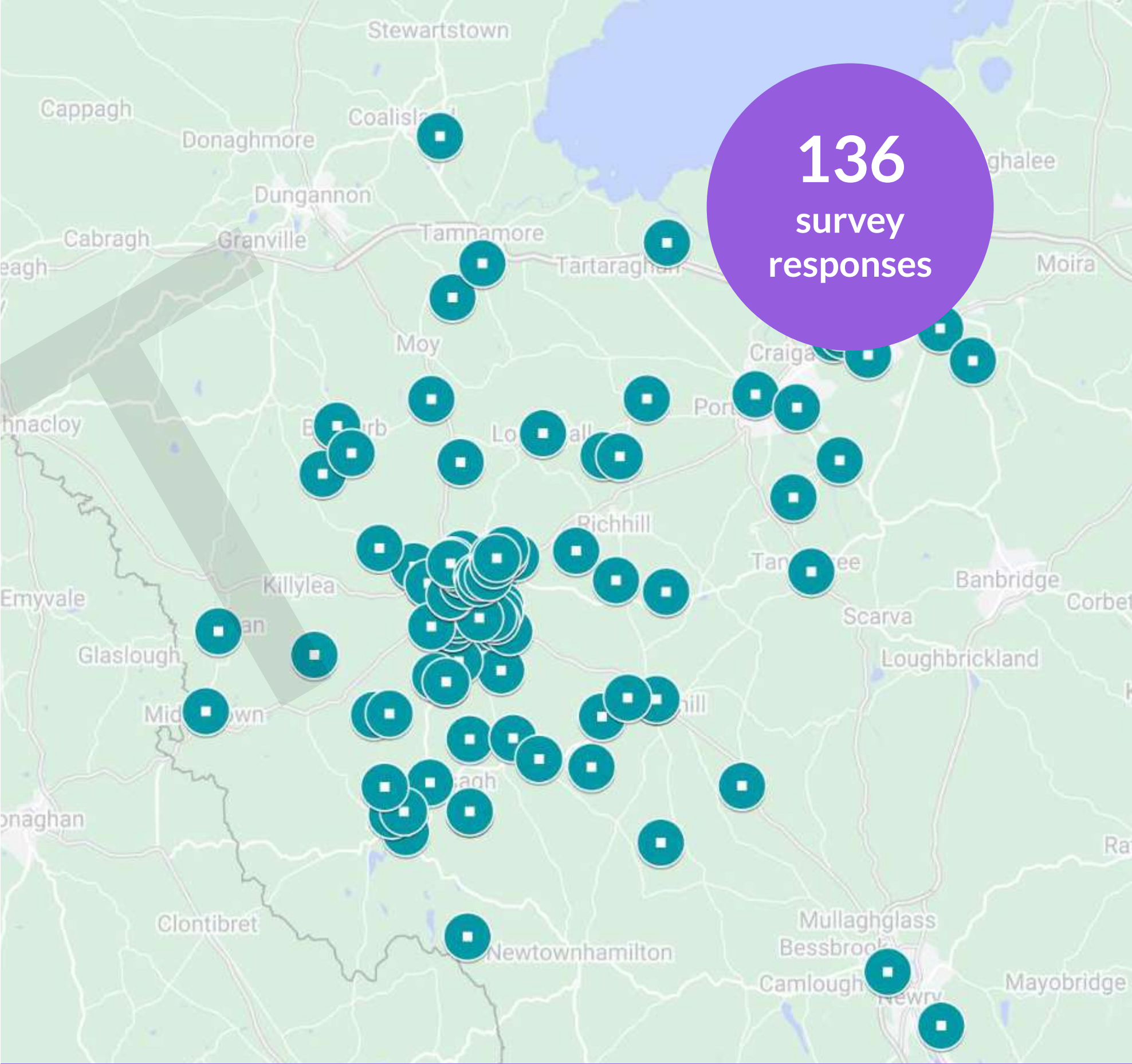
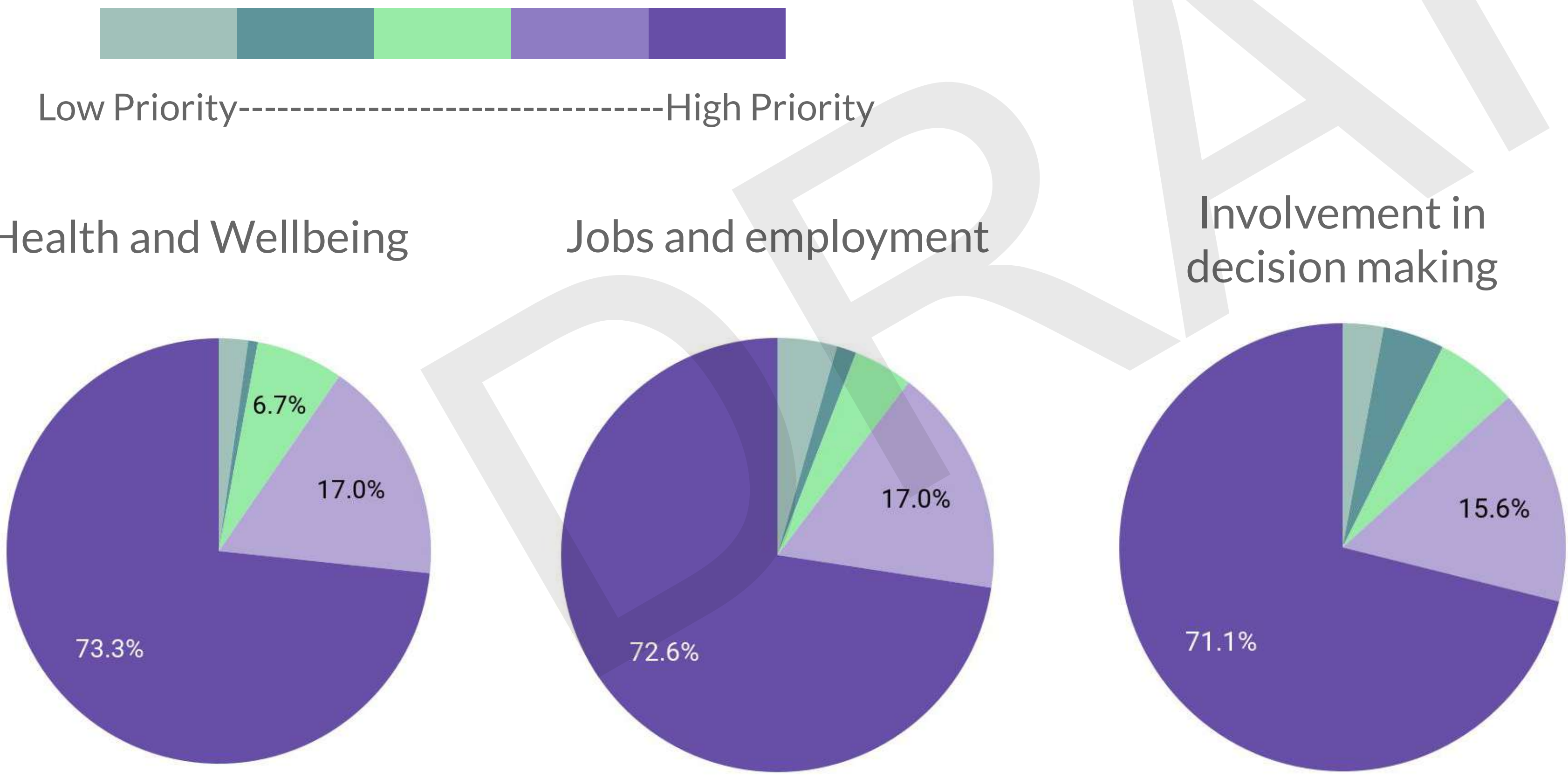
27th & 28th July

Two workshops were held in the epicentre via the EA youth programme, one with 8-11 year olds and the other with 12-17 year olds. 11 participants carried out an assessment of Armagh using an adapted version of the Place Standard Tool.



Priorities from the survey

A survey was carried out in Summer 2021 to find out what people placed a high priority on for this plan. The top three priorities as identified by respondents are shown below, in order of how many people placed them as being of the highest priority.



The survey heard from a wide range of residents from Armagh and the surrounding area.

Other priorities asked about in the survey were:

- Physical connectivity
- Creating a walkable city
- Safer streets
- Tackling climate change
- Connecting the city digitally
- Bringing nature into the city
- Reducing inequality
- Connecting the city socially

Children and young people's priorities

The following points are a summary of what young people have identified as priorities for Armagh's future, as gathered through the school packs, focus groups and the live engagement:

- Resolving geographical divisions in the city and enhancing shared space;
- Safer streets and safer pedestrian crossing, especially around the Mall;
- Outdoor spaces are highly valued but lie empty because of the lack of animation;
- The bus routes are good, but they need to be more frequent;
- A new train station could connect the city to the whole of NI and RoI;
- Young people want to contribute to the city decisions and contribute to its development;
- Young people value the city's heritage. The Gaol is a cherished city asset that many young people would like to see having a prominent place in the future story of Armagh.

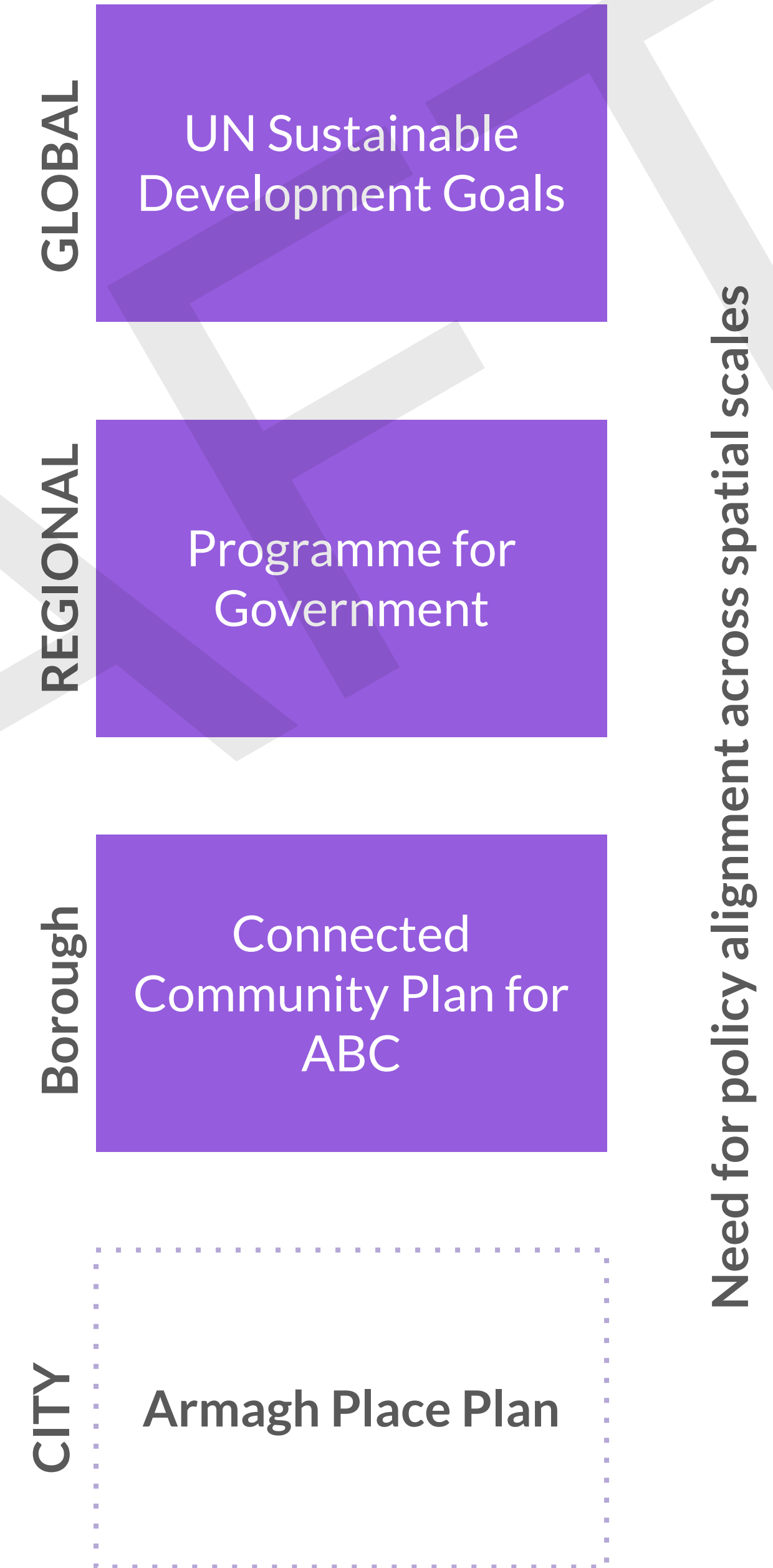


The Armagh Planetarium © Patrick Hughes Photos

2.5 STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

In the early stages of the plan development a strategic analysis of policies, strategies and programmes was carried out in order to identify common themes and where opportunities to align across government and wider stakeholders exist. A total of 53 documents have made up part of this analysis and they revealed 5 key areas of alignment for the Armagh Plan which were climate change, connectivity, green infrastructure, sustainable growth, connectivity, and health & wellbeing.

Four different spatial levels of alignment however are key to the success of this plan, embracing a sustainable development agenda and maximising opportunities to align with programmes of investment and strategic opportunities presented through the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Programme for Government, and the Community Plan for the Borough.



2.6 KEY FINDINGS IN A NUTSHELL

- 1 Armagh needs more people planning collectively for the good of the city as a whole.
- 2 The city needs a strategy for growth that integrates movement and destinations to provide walkable communities.
- 3 There is a need to focus on how the public space could be serving people better.
- 4 The cultural heritage of the city goes beyond historic buildings to include stories, experiences and people.
- 5 There has been an historic underinvestment in infrastructure in the city.
- 6 The city has many assets that, if developed, could help shape an active, healthy place to help a growing older population.
- 7 There is potential to build strong links to food to strengthen business and bring people together.
- 8 Young people want to strengthen their relationship across the religious divide. They need reasons to be enticed to stay and/or come back to live in Armagh.
- 9 There is a need for a better city region experience that serves residents as well as visitors.
- 10 Engagement for the plan shows a strong desire to be involved in decisions about the city.

3. PLAN OUTCOMES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The four plan outcomes have evolved from the initial discussions, desktop research and engagement with the community and key stakeholders. These form the aspirations for the city to be taken forward as a shared agenda for responding to the challenges of Armagh, whilst building on the opportunities ahead for the city.

They align to key local strategies and seeks to deliver upon key aims of the community plan in the context of Armagh.

These carefully considered outcomes provide a guiding framework for organisations and individuals in Armagh to improve the spaces and places in the city.

3.2 PLAN OUTCOMES

In the survey conducted, 69% of residents that responded agreed that these are the right outcomes for the plan.



3.3 POPULATION INDICATORS

In order to track progress of the delivery of the outcomes of the plan there should be a city dashboard developed that documents progress against the baselines identified in this plan.

The dashboard would help track progress of delivery of the plan. It would include population indicators and could also include crowd sourced data such as cycling and footfall. This information can keep residents informed on the progress towards realising the outcomes in the plan and support positive behaviour change by the community.

It is suggested the dashboard starts to build a picture of the following information for the city:

- Air quality
- City centre vacancy rates
- Level of social housing need
- Overnight visitors/footfall
- Employment rates
- Walking and cycling counters on specific routes



3.4 A CONNECTED CITY

Armagh is a connected city; physically, digitally and socially.

What's it all about?

Armagh has historically been a city connected, however recent growth and development, coupled with a lack of investment in infrastructure has cut its population off from the wider region. This has had an effect socially on physical separation of communities, and economically on the ability to access opportunities.

Walkable routes still weave through the city's compact core, and historic routes of wider regional connections are still visible in the landscape. More recent growth and increased car usage in the city has caused this natural connectivity to be interrupted.

The closure of the railway and lack of investment in alternative sustainable transport provision has left the city vulnerable to intensive car oriented travel. Development patterns in the past 50 years have seen a decline in physical and social connectivity as more car oriented, disconnected housing estates with few services now sprawl on the outskirts of the city.

The Community Plan for the Borough recognises the growing importance of physical, digital and social connectivity as key to developing a sustainable and resilient place.

A sustainable Armagh would be well connected through a greater diversity of transportation options so that the city is able to knit into the wider south west region, offer ways and means for people to access services, jobs and opportunities, and to come together as a community. The quality of the public space would facilitate a greater focus on people, active travel, and reduce the dominance of the car.

The resilience of the city could be improved through a greater diversity of routes, paths and choices of movement so that it is able to adapt to reducing its energy needs and reduce pollution. The pandemic has taught us of the importance of local neighbourhood connectivity, where people are less isolated, and we know that people friendly streets build greater cohesion and social connection.

Armagh is well placed to move into a digital space, celebrating the cultural importance of this ancient city, and connecting its diaspora back to this special place. Digital connectivity offers economic opportunity, and both reaching out to give Armagh a global presence, as well as connect people from Armagh to a wider diaspora could offer greater opportunities for investment around culture, the arts, and regenerating the city.



© Patrick Hughes Photography, 2018





A CONNECTED CITY

Armagh is a connected city; physically, digitally and socially.

How can Armagh improve its connectivity?

Improved urban mobility

Exploring the potential to bring back the railway and improve the city's connectivity to Portadown, Craigavon and Belfast would improve regional connectivity and reduce the dependence on cars coming into the city.

Unlocking the potential of Armagh's rivers to connect people and place

People in the city have already been recognising the importance of its rivers and have been embracing them during the pandemic. Armagh would benefit from a community driven approach, opening the rivers up as connection routes and places to come together. This outcome is about celebrating the natural heritage of the Callan and Folly rivers, whilst encouraging greater community cohesion.

New blue and green infrastructure for climate resilience and health

Nature corridors and the connection and activation of green space should take place. This would make it easier for everyone living in the city to access functional green space, help improve air quality and improve wellbeing.

People first, then bikes, then cars

Whilst many places have evolved to accommodate the car, the historic core of the city is struggling to cope, with concerns of air pollution, congestion and streets that don't feel safe to walk or cycle. This is an issue of equity across the city, as more people in deprived areas do not have access to a car. Supporting their ability to access jobs, services and amenities is a priority for building a sustainable city.



A CONNECTED CITY

Armagh is a connected city; physically, digitally and socially.

How can Armagh improve its connectivity?

Enlivening dead or vacant spaces to improve liveability and social cohesion

Armagh needs more city centre residents and visitors, and in order to do this it needs to address the problem of streets feeling unsafe. Vibrant streets and spaces offer a unique range of activities and experiences that can support city centre shops. They also offer reasons to stay, linger and meet into the evenings. Development of the backlands and alleyways should continue and be extended. As confidence in the safety of the city streets is developed, further investment and development will be attracted in.

Connecting globally

Armagh should continue to develop its unique tourism product and brand through new ways of connecting digitally. There is a love of Armagh from anyone connected to it, and helping the diaspora connect back to the city, wherever they are now, will encourage people to come back to live here and offer opportunities for investment. It would also offer new opportunities for investment to help deliver on the ambition for a sustainable and liveable Armagh.

Connected transport and land use planning

Better coordination across transport and land-use planning in Armagh would lead to a reduction of travel and transport needs and make a better quality place to live and visit. The emerging LDP should ensure land use and transport are planned together for the city.

Connected to opportunities

Counteracting the trends of young people leaving Armagh requires more connections to opportunities for young people to be created such as education, skills, social and cultural activities. Community planning partners in the city working collectively could create opportunities to address the poverty and inequality that exists across the city such as focusing sustainable transportation where car ownership is weakest in the west of the city.

Shared spaces and services

Participants at the workshops and live engagement identified the city as being feeling divided from east to west, but that the city centre is a shared space, including the main shopping streets, the Mall and the Gaol. These are three important spaces for bringing people together and they should be enhanced as places for shared services and for everyone in the community to come and enjoy.



A CONNECTED CITY

Armagh is a connected city; physically, digitally and socially.

Strategic alignment for a Connected City

ABC Community Plan 2017- 2030

As its name 'Connected' suggests the community plan has placed connectivity at its heart. The cross cutting theme highlights connectivity as integral to improving quality of life. Furthermore many of the plan's nine outcomes work to transform and connect people and places physically, digitally, socially and through shared collaborative approaches.

ABC Council's corporate plan and the NI Housing Executive's Housing Investment Plan are both aligned to the community plan.

UN Sustainable Development Goals 2015

Connectivity cuts across a number of the SDGs. Most importantly, Goal 11 focuses on sustainable cities and communities. Here the UN Habitat's New Urban Agenda sets out commitments to urban development. It commits to encouraging urban and rural connections through sustainable transport and mobility, technology and communications networks and infrastructure.

It also focuses on the use of renewable and affordable energy, and on sustainable and efficient transport infrastructure and services. This can reduce the financial, environmental and public health costs of inefficient mobility, congestion, air pollution and noise.



A CONNECTED CITY

Armagh is a connected city; physically, digitally and socially.

Strategic alignment for a Connected City

Programme for Government 2021

One of the current Programme for Government's long term goals is to connect people and opportunities through infrastructure.

The new PfG which is currently being developed proposes a range of outcomes that increased connectivity in Armagh. These include living and working sustainably, having an equal and inclusive society, allowing everyone to reach their potential and creating a balanced and sustainable economy. This can only be achieved if the city is able to increase its opportunities through greater connectivity with the region, and also across the city itself.

Rural Policy Framework NI 2021

The Rural Policy Framework proposes five key pillars for rural development including sustainable tourism, health and wellbeing, employment and connectivity. It acknowledges the unique challenges and opportunities for urban and rural connectivity through transport, connectivity, broadband and access to services.

Good Relations Strategy 2018-2021

The Good Relations Strategy will support the Council to deliver against its overarching community and corporate plan objectives. However, it stresses that successful delivery requires connectivity between each of the council functions. The strategy also highlights the importance of community connectivity through an improved environment.



3.5 A GREEN CITY

Armagh is leading the way in sustainable and green thinking; including reducing its air pollution and building climate resilience.

What's it all about?

Cities have have been under significant strain since the pandemic in March 2020. The past year has urged many cities to invest in public space for people and cycling, and think more sustainably as supply chains have been disrupted. It has also urged us to reassess traditional economic models of development and shift thinking towards different ways of doing things, as well as developing emerging technologies and skills. The evidence is growing of the economic advantages of embracing a green agenda, particularly early opportunities for new growth sectors as part of the transition to net-zero and a green economy.

During this time there has also been a refocusing of efforts on climate change and wider sustainability, and evidence points towards the need to reduce emissions and tackle air pollution, but also to adapt to more sustainable ways of living. This includes being cognisant of where we source our food, how we heat and power our homes, and how we get around. The past year has seen increased commitments to reduce emissions and building of resilience through the European Green Deal, and through the UK Government's ambitions to transition to a net zero economy.

Thinking more sustainably will include tackling air pollution, and waste, but also enhancing biodiversity and green and blue infrastructure in the city.





A GREEN CITY

Armagh is leading the way in sustainable and green thinking; including reducing its air pollution and building climate resilience.

How can Armagh lead the way in sustainable and green thinking?

Learning from Covid - Food security

During 2020, Armagh came together to support their most vulnerable at a time when they needed it most. With its strong agri-food industry and connections, and vibrant community support, the city centre could become a place where food is celebrated. This could take place through demonstrations, exhibitions, and engaging in immersive experiences that bring people closer to food for better sustainability.

Bringing more nature into the city

Armagh already has some brilliant natural assets in the city, but lacking in other parts. Small pockets of nature, wildflowers, sustainable drainage schemes and letting natural space grow would create spaces that put people and nature first, help pollinators thrive and protect the carefully balanced natural ecosystem that so many businesses in the agri-food industry depend on in the surrounding area.

Leading the way in the circular economy

Becoming self sufficient and resilient as a community means being able to reduce waste and bring it back into new uses in the city, and working toward a more circular economy. Armagh could lead the way in becoming a circular city, by finding new uses for waste products from its industries and closing the loop to reuse as much of its resources as possible. Schools, farmers, chefs, entrepreneurs and key institutions could lead the way in this by taking big steps in how they deal with their waste. By bringing it back into the economy, growers could develop innovative new production techniques and business ideas, creating new economic opportunities and growth areas for the city.



A GREEN CITY

Armagh is leading the way in sustainable and green thinking; including reducing its air pollution and building climate resilience.

Strategic alignment for a Green City

ABC Community Plan 2017 - 2030

The community plan's strategic theme of PLACE includes three outcomes for the Borough. They highlight the Borough as a place of discovery, where unique cultural and natural assets are cherished and people are inspired to be creative, to grow and to flourish. In addition to this, the plan's cross cutting theme of sustainability aspires to improving everyone's quality of life economically, environmentally and socially without compromising future generation's ability to develop grow and flourish.

Programme for Government 2021

The draft outcomes focus on living and working sustainably, protecting the environment, as well as working towards a carbon neutral society.

Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2035

The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035 provides the regional policy context and aims to protect and enhance the environment for current and future generations.

Regional Guidance 11 (RG11) sets out to conserve, protect and where possible, enhance NI's built heritage and natural environment. It also aims to maintain and establish ecological networks, and suggests that such networks could be of amenity value if linked to the green infrastructure provided by walking and cycle routes to heritage and other recreational interest.

Green and blue infrastructure is highlighted as a means to improving health and wellbeing of communities, which was identified as one of the highest priorities of residents in the the city wide survey.

The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland 2015

The SPPS sets the strategic direction for planning and development in NI. It places a high emphasis on the creation of networks of green spaces, commonly referred to as green infrastructure. These provide a wide range of environmental benefits in both rural and urban areas, to include



A GREEN CITY

Armagh is leading the way in sustainable and green thinking; including reducing its air pollution and building climate resilience.

cooling, improved air quality and habitats for wildlife. Additionally, it can provide opportunities for social interaction by serving as a focal point for recreation and community activities. This green infrastructure should be designed and managed as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering on a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for communities.

A review of the renewable energy policy within the SPPS is underway in order to facilitate renewable energy and low carbon energy developments. This offers an additional policy incentive for Armagh to take the lead in becoming an exemplar in low carbon developments, whether that be through renewable energy sector, or through a sustainable urban form that prioritises walking and cycling.

Sustainability for the Future - DAERA's plan to 2050

NI's first environment strategy will form the basis for a set of interventions to deliver real improvements in environmental quality. It aims to improve the health and wellbeing of citizens, create opportunities and develop the economy, as well as protecting the global environment.

Green Growth aims to transform our society towards net zero by 2050, protect and enhance our environment and deliver sustainable economic growth.

Living Places Urban Design and Stewardship Guide 2014

Living Places is guidance on the design of urban spaces, and it advocates for the use of assets such as rivers and former railway lines to form a valuable network of green infrastructure. The former Masterplan for Armagh advocates for a connected green and blue infrastructure across Armagh which is still relevant and an opportunity to develop today.

10X Economy, Department for the Economy 2021

The Department for the Economy has set out an economic vision for a decade of innovation in the region. A guiding principle of this is to support a greener sustainable economy. It highlights the community as a place that brings exciting ideas and experiences together and provides the space to build these into new opportunities.



3.6 AN ENGAGING CITY

Armagh engages those who live, work and visit it

What's it all about?

Armagh is the First Place, and culturally set apart from its neighbours as the heart of ancient Ireland. By focusing on an engaging city it can celebrate this culture. Armagh people and those that visit it can actively be designed in to the everyday life of the city, its events, festivals and practices, and be involved in key decision making. For Armagh to be engaging, it must address problems with public space, where the priority until now has been favoured towards the car and to moving traffic and goods through and around the city. Cultural led regeneration should be a priority for the city. This can be achieved by celebrating its unique heritage, and creative and engaging placemaking can have a role to play in creating places and spaces that embody the culture, heritage and stories of the city. Weaving the rich stories and unique heritage of Armagh through the public space can help strengthen the connections and journeys around the city, so that a whole city experience is achieved for those who visit. An engaging city looks at the experience of the city through the eyes of the local, the culturally curious and the mature cosmopolitans, to create an experience that is steeped in wonder and awe, and leaves a strong memory and identity of Armagh for everyone.

Part of this would be the coming together of all cultural actors in the city towards a City of Culture bid, and stemming from this international networking, twinning and interaction through the UNESCO Creative Cities would give city actors the support, inspiration and building of confidence in Armagh as a world class cultural destination. This cannot be achieved without the engagement of people in the decisions made for their city. New city spaces and buildings should inspire, intrigue, and engage young people to learn about their place, to be involved in shaping it, and build pride in the city as ambassadors of Armagh.





AN ENGAGING CITY

Armagh engages those who live, work and visit it

How can Armagh engage those who live, work and visit it?

Creating meaningful tourism experiences

By having greater coordination across city attractions, and also offering experience through the public space Armagh could develop creative and playful spaces that engage both residents and visitors. Telling the Armagh Story through the public space and local guides who tell their own stories of the place is a way that the public space could be activated and more people brought into the city.

Celebrating big moments in the city

Many people we spoke to cherish the events that take place in Armagh. Georgian Day was regularly cited as the most impressive cultural experience that takes place in Armagh. Further developing a creative city through more and coordinated events throughout the year would be a way to celebrate culture and make the 'big moments' of Armagh more everyday occurrences. An incentive to bringing all of the different organisations together through a cultural bid is one way to focus minds and build a whole city approach to culture and the arts.

Need to rethink city and town centres

There is a need to think about adapting city and town centres to new global trends such as online shopping and the shift towards cultural and social experiences. The city centre of Armagh has a heavy reliance on retail and office space, and a vacancy rate that will remain high until the city centre is diversified to other uses. City centres can offer more enriching and more meaningful experiences by focusing on key spaces such as Market Square. Safe and walkable streets, programmable public spaces and a variety of uses at different times of the day should be encouraged. Key to this success is more city centre living accommodation.

Heritage and custodianship

Armagh has a conservation area and a high proportion of listed and protected buildings and structures. Creative design approaches are required to bring them back into productive use. Meanwhile uses and temporary residencies in these spaces by artists and creatives could help unlock their potential and create engaging spaces that could evolve into something more permanent. Incentivising innovation and new uses for old buildings should be a priority for the city, otherwise structures lying empty will deteriorate and be lost in the future.



AN ENGAGING CITY

Armagh engages those who live, work and visit it

How can Armagh engage those who live, work and visit it?

City tools

Armagh could be making use of the many tools out there to reinvigorate spaces and create opportunities for engagement by residents and visitors. Tactical urbanism allows for lighter, quicker, and cheaper approaches to reimagining public space, and is one way that globally cities are engaging residents with their city in fun and collaborative ways. Other tools include masterplans, the Ministerial Advisory Group for Architecture and the Built Environment's high street craft kit and streetscape design guides. These tools are important for Armagh to help drive more joined up thinking, and provide guidance and direction to all city stakeholders who are actively shaping the city in the work they do.

Presenting a good first impression of the 'First Place'

In the workshops, many people highlighted the poor arrival points to the city, and that they do not provide a first impression of a city that is steeped in heritage. This 'front face' of the city does not currently align with the cultural heritage that lies beyond and within the city centre. Creative reimagining of the city gateways through codesign processes with young people would help create civic pride and create interesting spaces.

Public participation in wider decision making

Young people in particular felt that they should be more active in decision making in the city, and come with a wealth of creative ideas for how their city could be made better. Retaining young people in the city is a priority for the future, and engaging them in decisions will build pride, wellbeing and social connections to Armagh. One way they have been engaging recently is through participatory budgeting which could be explored as a mechanism for building ownership and pride through the delivery of the Armagh Place Plan.

Playful City

It is becoming increasingly recognised that playful space is a great way of engaging citizens in their place, and encouraging healthy active lifestyles for all ages. Armagh should consider how activating some of its public space could achieve a more engaging city. Public realm activations would help support the delivery of the ABC night time and evening economy strategy.



AN ENGAGING CITY

Armagh engages those who live, work and visit it

Strategic alignment for an Engaging City

ABC Community Plan 2017-2030

The strategic theme of COMMUNITY includes three outcomes, which together aspire to create a caring and safe Borough, where people lead healthy, fulfilling lives and take pride in shaping, nurturing and enriching community life. Outcomes within the PLACE strategic theme also highlight the role of quality inclusive arts and cultural experiences as well as the importance of our city, towns, villages and rural areas.

Programme for Government 2021

The draft outcomes framework highlights the importance of people wanting to live, work and visit here, and key to that is feeling part of the day to day decision making in the city. The PfG also highlights the importance of inclusivity, ensuring everyone feels supported throughout their lives. Better public space in Armagh would allow communities to come together, to meet and to share spaces across the city that feel owned and welcoming to everyone.

ABC Tourism Strategy 2017-2022

The vision for the Borough is to be a market leading cultural tourism destination in Ireland by 2022. The strategy adopts a value versus volume proposition, focusing on the mature cosmopolitans and the culturally curious of the tourism market. This aligns with the cultural offering in Armagh, where the strategy also prioritises authenticity, differentiation and innovation in developing tourism products. Armagh Place Plan is also able to align with the adoption of a sustainable development and responsible tourism approach.

Living Places Urban Stewardship and Design Guide for Northern Ireland 2014

The Guide highlights ten qualities of successful places. These include places that are Collaborative, Hospitable, Vibrant & Diverse and Accessible. The guide also highlights the importance of good urban stewardship and care for public spaces which involves good management and activating of public spaces through communicating heritage, and other ways of engaging in the public space. The guide is used to inform good place making through the planning process and should be used in Armagh to guide good development of the public space.



AN ENGAGING CITY

Armagh engages those who live, work and visit it

Draft ABC Arts, Heritage and Cultural Strategy

The Borough is rich in arts, heritage and culture, which play an important role in making it a great place to live and visit. The vision for the draft strategy is for the Borough to be a place of discovery, where its unique cultural and natural assets are cherished and people are inspired to be creative, to grow and to flourish. It is an ambitious document and includes aspirations to gain national and international recognition for the Borough's cultural assets through UNESCO world heritage status and becoming the UK City of Culture. The strategy highlights the importance of public spaces and streets as places to live, meet and share stories. This place-making approach is embedded throughout the Armagh Place Plan. The strategy's ambitions are also to increase cultural tourism, to build a public art trail and to invest in the cultural leadership for the next generation, as well as in the physical arts and cultural infrastructure in the Borough.



3.7 A HEALTHY CITY

Armagh is an inclusive city and healthy city

What's it all about?

A healthy Armagh is one that promotes active lifestyles and overall mental wellbeing. The city already boasts a rich sporting history and many people draw enriching cultural experiences from being involved. Ensuring people live healthy lives, and providing opportunities for a growing older population to do so should be extended across the city.

Current policies set out an ambition to increase physical activity in the city, and plans to develop long term quality leisure provision remains a priority for Armagh. An active city should also support a general increase in active lifestyles for all residents through increased cycling and walking infrastructure, new green and blue routes and greater engagement with nature across Armagh. Everyone should be able to access quality spaces and routes to remain healthy and active right through their lives.

A healthy and inclusive Armagh also places a high priority on good quality, sustainable and accessible homes city-wide and support a town centre living approach. Vacant spaces can be brought into new use through town centre mixed use developments that can help tackle housing waiting lists. and sustainable growth should be planned through an engaging and holistic masterplanning approach. Finally, covid has shown us the importance of health and wellbeing and tackling inequalities that exist, and so this outcome seeks to rebalance and support residents to lead happy, healthy and fulfilling lives.





A HEALTHY CITY

Armagh is an inclusive city and healthy city

How can Armagh be an inclusive and healthy city?

Celebrating the city's rich sporting history

The city should harness the profile and heritage it has for sport to bring interest and visitors into the city for experiences and celebrations of its culture around sport. Facilities for playing and experiencing this heritage would create civic pride and help support the city centre economy.

Creating more opportunities for active travel

Decluttering streets, moving unnecessary traffic out of the city centre and focusing on the 'place' function of streets through the city will help encourage more people to walk and cycle. Safe and clean streets was highlighted as a priority for many in the engagement. Clean and safe pedestrian and cycle routes should be prioritised, along with improved cycle facilities and infrastructure.

Becoming a sporting centre of excellence

The plan recognises and integrates its thinking with the plans to develop a new leisure village in the city. The need for good quality sports facilities was highlighted by many through the community survey.

Providing quality accessible housing

A growing older population indicates wider changing demographics and actions are required to make sure that we are able to age well. This involves ensuring there are a mixture of diverse and accessible homes with daily services within short and safe walking distance.

Promoting mental wellbeing

Covid has exposed the risks of social isolation and many people highlighted the importance of having quality outdoor spaces to meet and socialise in Armagh. An example of this is are green gyms which are already being piloted in the Borough. Having services to support good mental wellbeing is one way of bringing city centre vacant properties back into productive use. Incorporating wellbeing into daily life in the city is a way to ensure good mental wellbeing for residents.



A HEALTHY CITY

Armagh is an inclusive city and healthy city

How can Armagh be an inclusive and healthy city?

Reducing housing waiting lists

Desktop research revealed that as of March 2020, 431 applicants were on the housing waiting list in Armagh City area. Of these, 58% were in housing stress. A call for evidence to increase housing supply is currently underway. Derelict and vacant land should be released to create mixed use and mixed tenure schemes to support the economic development of the city. Development of a new housing supply strategy for Northern Ireland is underway.

Tackling inequalities

Deprivation levels in Armagh vary substantially in different parts of the city. Covid has exposed some of these, but part of a healthy city approach must recognise and address equity issues. Access to good nutritional food, developing active travel programmes such as walking and cycling and engagement with young people to access skills and training in the green economy are some ways this can be progressed.

Recovering from Covid

Some people haven't had the same opportunities to healthy and inclusive activities during the pandemic e.g. many people travel to Gosford Park to enjoy nature and green space with children but not everyone has a car. A priority should be that everyone has access to nature and recreational activities without having to travel out of the city. Armagh should make space for people over cars in the city centre.

Creating inclusive spaces and places

Many people engaged in the development of this Place Plan highlighted concern about the lack of facilities in the city centre for people with disabilities and specific needs. Businesses and facilities should be encouraged to increase the standard for accessible public toilets. Fun and creative ways to overcome the steep terrain could be a great way to create an accessible and enjoyable city centre so that people do not travel out of town to shop.



A HEALTHY CITY

Armagh is an inclusive city and healthy city

Strategic alignment for a Healthy City

ABC Community Plan 2017-2030

The Covid pandemic has put additional pressures on mental health and wellbeing. Before the pandemic the community plan had an outcome dedicated to supporting people to make healthy life choices and become more resilient. It also aspired to encourage people to be more comfortable talking about and improving their mental health.

Programme for Government 2021

The emerging PfG places a high priority on inclusive, safe, healthy and active lifestyles. Designing a city that supports people to live healthy and active lifestyles requires a major rethink of how public space is used in the city. Redesigning space to prioritise people should be a key strategy of an inclusive and healthy city strategy for Armagh.

Designing Places for Children and Young People 2021

This guidance identifies a number of design principles for child friendly places. These include safety, security, shelter, space, sociability and stimulation. We should

consider how places provide inclusive space for young people of different ages beyond managed facilities such as play parks and sports pitches.

ABC Play Strategy

The strategy highlights that the impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological, psychological and social necessity and is fundamental to the healthy development and wellbeing of individuals and communities. By creating a playful and creative Armagh, everyone is encouraged to use public space more, encouraging more healthy lifestyles and an inclusive city.

Get Moving ABC Framework

This is a collective ten year plan to positively impact the health and wellbeing of the people living in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon. Key strategic themes and priorities include getting communities, places, people and systems moving to ensure people make positive lifestyle choices in the Borough.

Age Friendly Strategy

The Council is currently developing an Age Friendly Strategy for the Borough, which can help inform and age friendly approach to place shaping in Armagh.



4. DELIVERING CHANGE TOGETHER

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aspiration for the Place Plan for Armagh was that it would help bridge spatial and community planning for the city. Therefore instead of focusing on the physical sites and changes first, the outcomes and ideas from the community come first, and are then followed by a suggestion of spaces and places in the city where change could happen. Seven ‘types’ of spaces and places in the city are identified here, and actions are presented that suggest ideas for transformed spaces in the city that cut across the outcomes for the Armagh Place Plan. By putting the changes that need to happen before the spaces, it is hoped that this plan is able to provide both the structure of a clear direction for the city, whilst also giving the flexibility to imagine where these changes could, should and might occur best.

The 7 Spatial Typologies of the Armagh Place Plan are:

City Wide

Icons and Anchors

Journeys

High Street

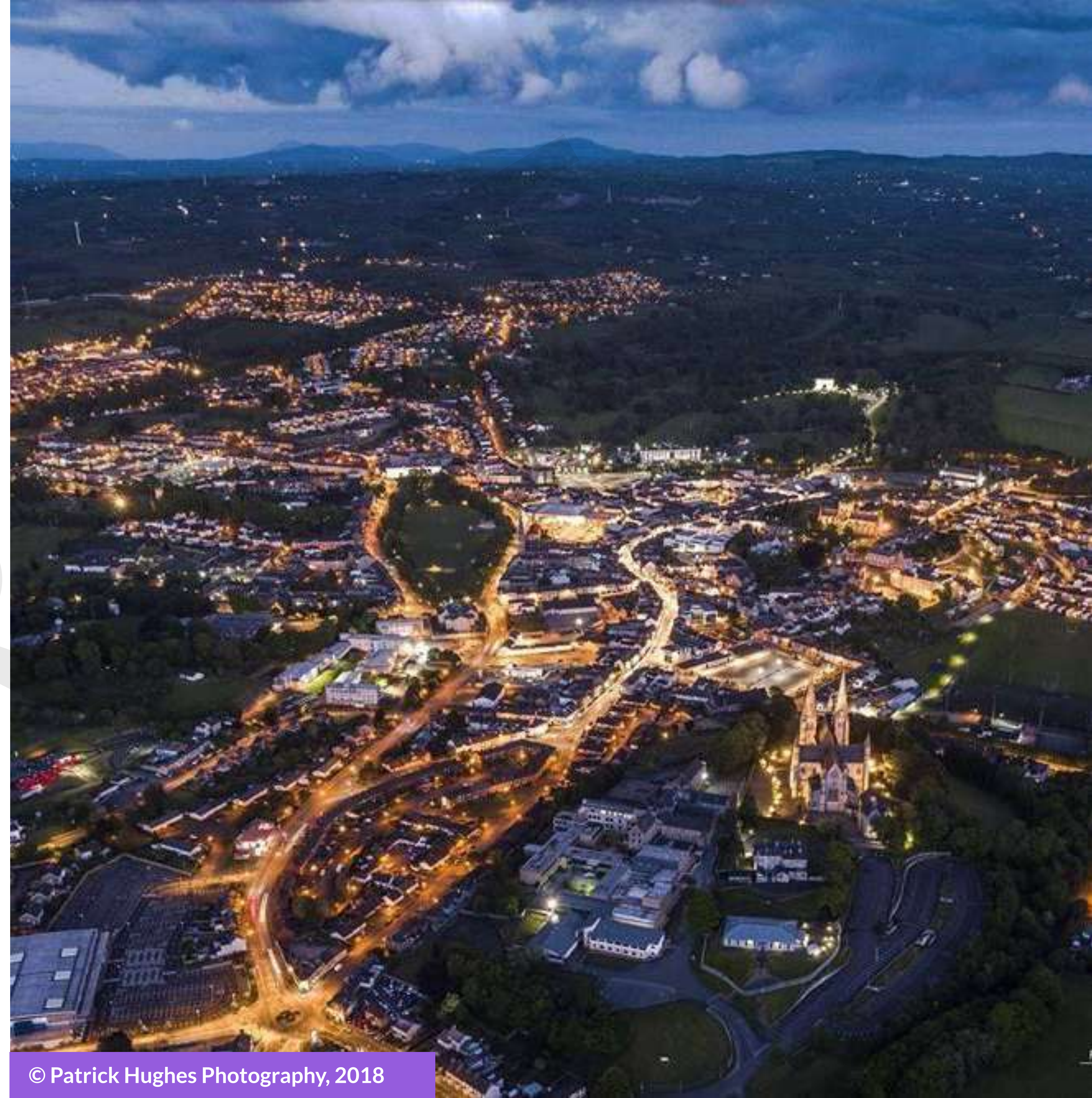
Gateways

Open Spaces

Grey Spaces

4.2 CITY WIDE

There are city wide actions that are both physical and non-physical in the form that they take, but they are applicable across the city. They include practices that would improve issues such as broadband, liveability and social cohesion when brought forward collectively and through partnership working.



City Wide Key Actions

	Action	What's the idea?	Lead & Suggested Partners	Next steps	Resources Needed	Timescale (S=0-2 yrs M=2-4 yrs L=5+years)	Outcomes
CW1	Public bodies as change champions.	Public bodies showing shared leadership in adopting sustainable behaviours.	Community Planning Strategic Partnership.	Research ideas and inspiration on initiatives such as zero waste, rewilding, tree planting, carbon neutral, sustainable travel, employment support and social value procurement.	Time and commitment of partners.	S	C G E H
CW2	Armagh City of Culture.	Armagh is steeped in culture, we want to put the city and the Borough onto the world stage as a vibrant, exciting place through a bid to be UK City of Culture.	ABC Council with local arts and cultural sectors, Tourism NI, Arts Council NI & Central Government.	Develop and submit a UK City of Culture bid and establish a delivery mechanism.	Financial package from council, central government and private sponsorship.	S-M	C G E H

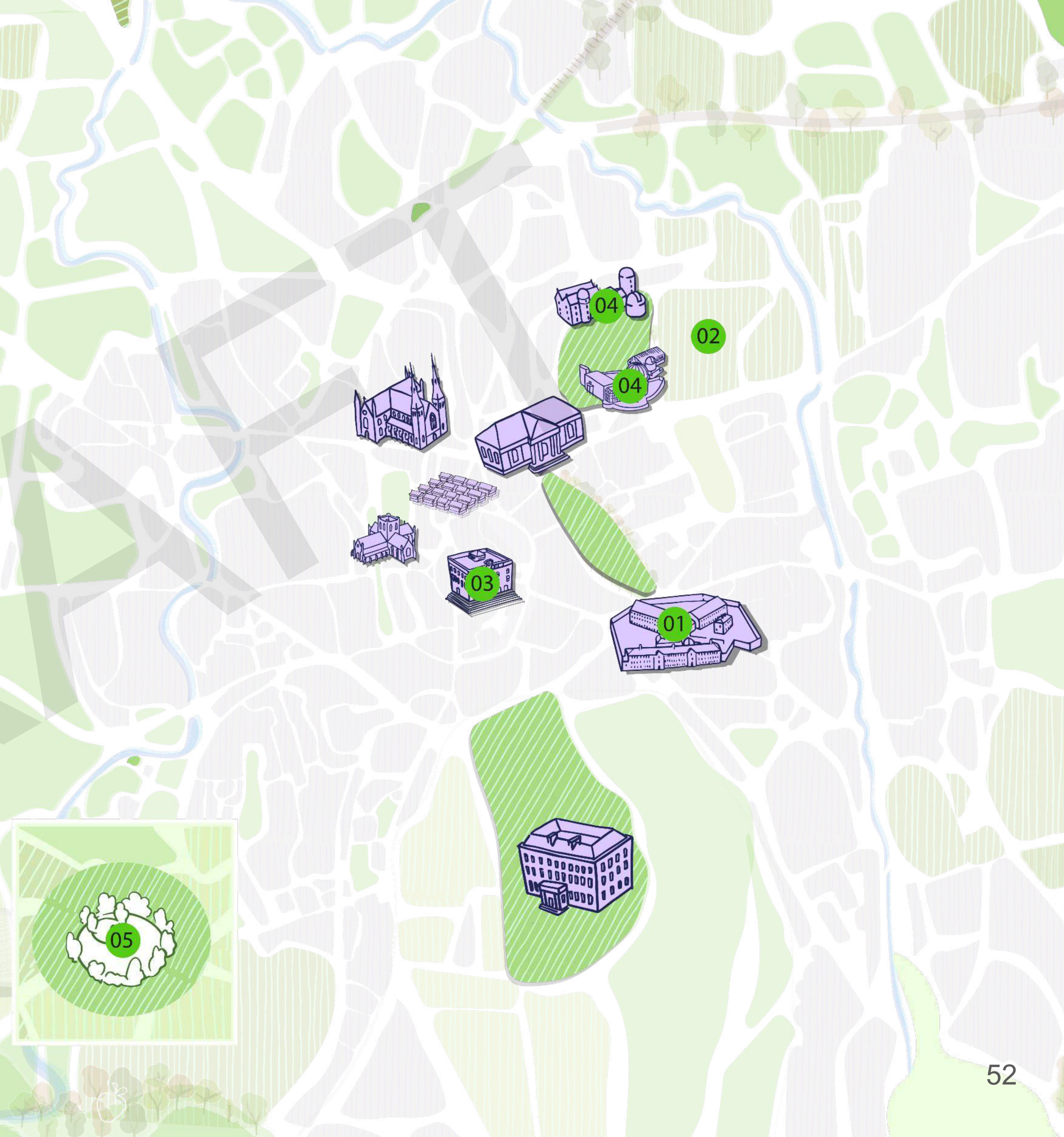
City Wide Key Actions

	Action	What's the idea?	Lead & Suggested Partners	Next steps	Resources Needed	Timescale (S=0-2 yrs M=2-4 yrs L=5+years)	Outcomes
CW3	Housing for Armagh.	To enhance mixed tenure and increase the number of accessible and affordable housing in the city centre. To establish a NIHE city centre waiting list that is shared housing.	NIHE, ABC Council, NIFHA, CIH, Housing Associations.	Develop a sustainable growth strategy for the city prioritising reuse, and infill, identify developer partners, best practice, feasibility and learning by doing.	Resources for collaboration and sustainable development approaches.	S-M	C G E H
CW4	Deliver Local Full Fibre Network project in public buildings.	Stimulate the economy by bringing local businesses and homes closer to the fastest possible broadband.	DfE, ABC Council.	Delivery of local full fibre network and prepare for Project Stratum which will deliver superfast broadband to local homes.	Funding secured to connect buildings.	S	C E
CW5	Connect Armagh's diaspora back to the city.	Provide opportunities for the Armagh's diaspora to connect and contribute to the city.	City of Culture delivery body once established, local people, SRC, AOP, Mall Trustees.	Incorporate diaspora into City of Culture plan.	See above City of Culture, networks of local people.	S-M	C E

4.3 ICONS & ANCHORS

These are the buildings that are distinctively Armagh: the iconic heritage such as the Gaol, the Observatory and Planetarium and Navan Fort. Many of these could enhance their potential to act as anchors within the city, through diversified uses, and could be the string of pearls across Armagh that help create a unique and memorable place.

- 01. Armagh Gaol
- 02. Armagh Leisure Village
- 03. Armagh City Library
- 04. Armagh Observatory & Planetarium
- 05. Navan Fort



Icons & Anchors Key Actions

	Action	What's the idea?	Lead & Suggested Partners	Next steps	Resources Needed	Timescale (S=0-2 yrs M=2-4 yrs L=5+years)	Outcomes
IA1	Bring the Gaol building back with a new use.	Support development plans for the site to see this icon of Armagh brought back into use.	ABC Council, Private investors, Heritage Lottery Fund, local heritage groups.	Consider opportunities for short-term. Continue to work with developers and seek funding needed to redevelop the Gaol.	External funding required to proceed.	M-L	C G E H
IA2	Build a leisure village at Mullinure.	Provide first class indoor and outdoor leisure facilities with health and economic benefits for the area.	ABC Council, Mullinure delivery partners.	Continue to engage with key stakeholders to secure funding and permissions.	Funding and relevant approvals.	M-L	C G E H
IA3	Invest in sectors that create green jobs, equip people with the specialist skills required and connect them to opportunities.	Retrofitting buildings for energy efficiency, bringing heritage buildings back to life for social, economic and environmental benefits, and creating jobs.	ABC Labour Market Partnership, SRC, NIHE, Invest NI, EA, CCMS.	Set up education and business forum around green jobs and growth.	Investment in domestic, commercial and public sector buildings will come from different sources. Local coordination of training and apprenticeship offer.	S-M	C G H

	Action	What's the idea?	Lead & Suggested Partners	Next steps	Resources Needed	Timescale (S=0-2 yrs M=2-4 yrs L=5+years)	Outcomes
IA4	Explore establishing a social supermarket in Armagh.	Armagh and the rest of the Borough is the Food Heartland. Through increased coordination, make food more affordable for those experiencing poverty.	ABC Council, Food banks, Community & Voluntary Sector Panel, social enterprises, DfC, local businesses.	Continue to research models and to work with food banks to establish a model.	Seed funding, volunteers, venue.	S	C G E H
IA5	Find one city centre venue for Armagh City Library and the Irish Local Studies Library.	The city library provides an important cultural service and bringing people into the city centre.	Libraries NI, DfC, ABC Council.	Carry out a site scoping exercise, options appraisal and feasibility study. Develop partnerships.	Funding for planning work, resources through community planning partnership for collaborative input.	S-M	C E H
IA6	To further AOP's vision for a science park which is recognised as a centre of scientific excellence.	To develop the science park and leisure village plans on the Mullinure site. Exploring ways to bring benefits to the wider city including work around the potential of dark skies and a museum of light.	AOP, ABC Council, Mullinure lands partners, DfC, Other potential funders.	Develop work of Mullinure lands group. AOP seeking funding for ambition of strategic plan Progress open fellowship application.	External funding required to proceed.	M-L	CGEH

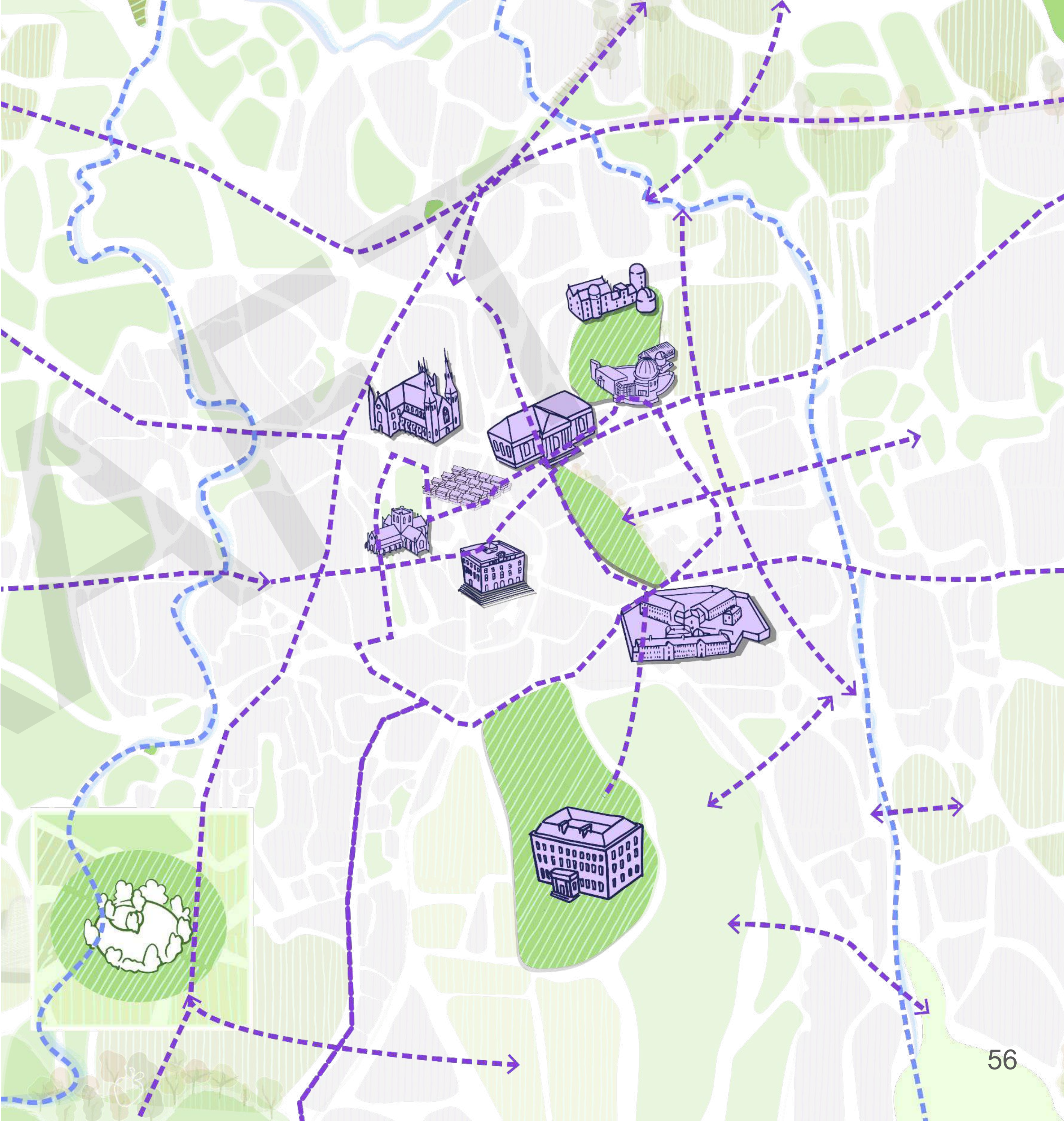
	Action	What's the idea?	Lead & Suggested Partners	Next steps	Resources Needed	Timescale (S=0-2 yrs M=2-4 yrs L=5+years)	Outcomes
IA7	Armagh Townscape Heritage Initiative. Funding scheme to bring a number of derelict heritage buildings back into use.	Armagh has a rich built heritage and the funding will help restore and enhance these cultural assets for future generations.	ABC Council; Armagh City Townscape Heritage Partnership; National Lottery Heritage Fund; private sector and building owners.	Delivery of a number of heritage building schemes in the city.	Funding package is in place, match funding required through private investment.	S-M	C G E
IA8	Navan Fort bid for UNESCO World Heritage Status in conjunction with the royal sites of Ireland bid.	The royal sites are some of the most archaeologically significant sites in Ireland and date back to either the Bronze Age or the Iron Age. If successful the bid would provide international recognition and protection for the sites and promote tourism.	ABC Council; DfC; other councils.	Submission to tentative list, Council input working with DfC as site owners.	Joint working with DfC and DCMS.	M-L	C G E

4.4 JOURNEYS

These are the linear routes where people report the most conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists, and motor vehicles. Armagh has a significant opportunity to reclaim streets for pedestrians, encouraging healthy habits and at the same time fostering environmental benefits for the city.

↔ Greenways
- - - Rivers

- Lonsdale Rd
- The Mall
- The Mall W
- Dobbin st Ln
- Friary Rd
- Upper English Street
- College hill
- Barack Hill
- Cathedral Rd
- Killylea Rd
- Vicars Hill



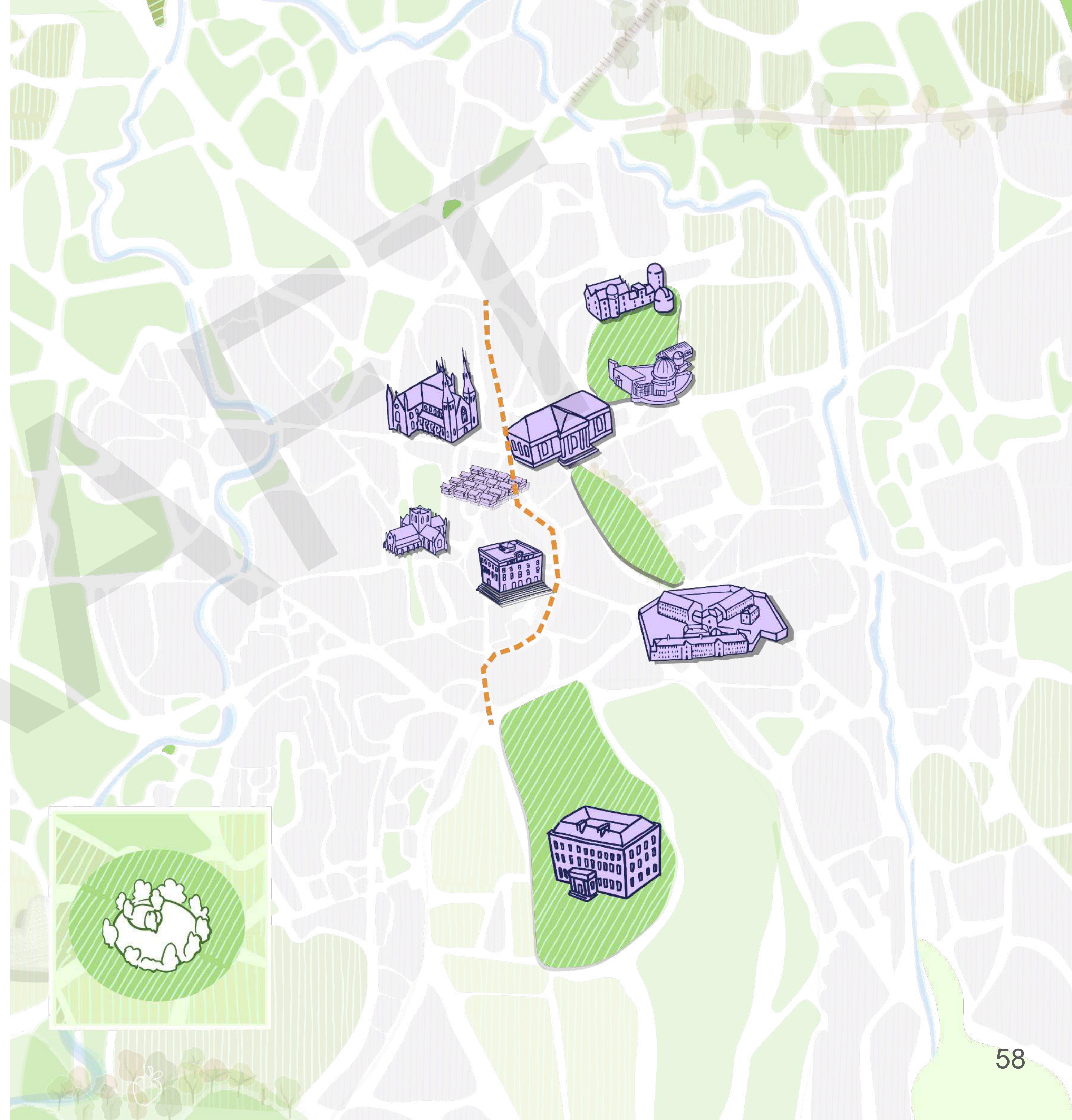
Journeys Key Actions

	Action	What's the idea?	Lead & Suggested Partners	Next steps	Resources Needed	Timescale (S=0-2 yrs M=2-4 yrs L=5+years)	Outcomes
J1	Explore potential benefits of reinstating a rail link to Armagh.	Growing the city will require sustainable transportation.	Dfl with Translink, ABC Council, Portadown Armagh Railway Society.	Conduct a technical study and inclusion of project in the Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan (RSTNTP).	Funding for resources to develop business case.	M-L	C G E H
J2	Integrate case for ring road into a sustainable transport strategy for the city.	Ensuring that a ring road to remove HGVs from the city is strategically planned.	ABC Council & Dfl, landowners.	Establish Armagh transportation working group and appoint expert advisor to conduct study to inform strategy.	Investment in initial study, resources for partnership working.	S-M	C G E H
J3	Increase green blue infrastructure in the city.	Connect green and blue spaces to each other and promote active travel.	ABC Council, Dfl, local communities, Sustrans, land owners.	Feasibility study and options, phasing plan.	Funding for studies to be conducted followed by detailed design.	M	C G E H
J4	Implement the signage and wayfinding strategy.	Create coherent, fun and engaging ways of getting around the city.	ABC Council, DfC, Dfl, local artists.	Secure funding, identify opportunity sites.	Funding for signage and wayfinding and art installations.	S-M	C E H

4.5 HIGH STREET

The main shopping street in Armagh runs right through the heart of the city centre and acts as a connector between the Cathedrals, the Mall and other key anchor points in the city. All high streets are in a period of change, and need to adapt to meet growing stresses of declining retail, changing work patterns and opportunities for a walkable city.

A number of key actions have been identified that will help deliver this adaptation that is required, enlivening vacant spaces for new, creative and innovative uses. They will create unique cultural experiences for visitors, residents and support for new ventures on the high street by businesses and people with ideas.



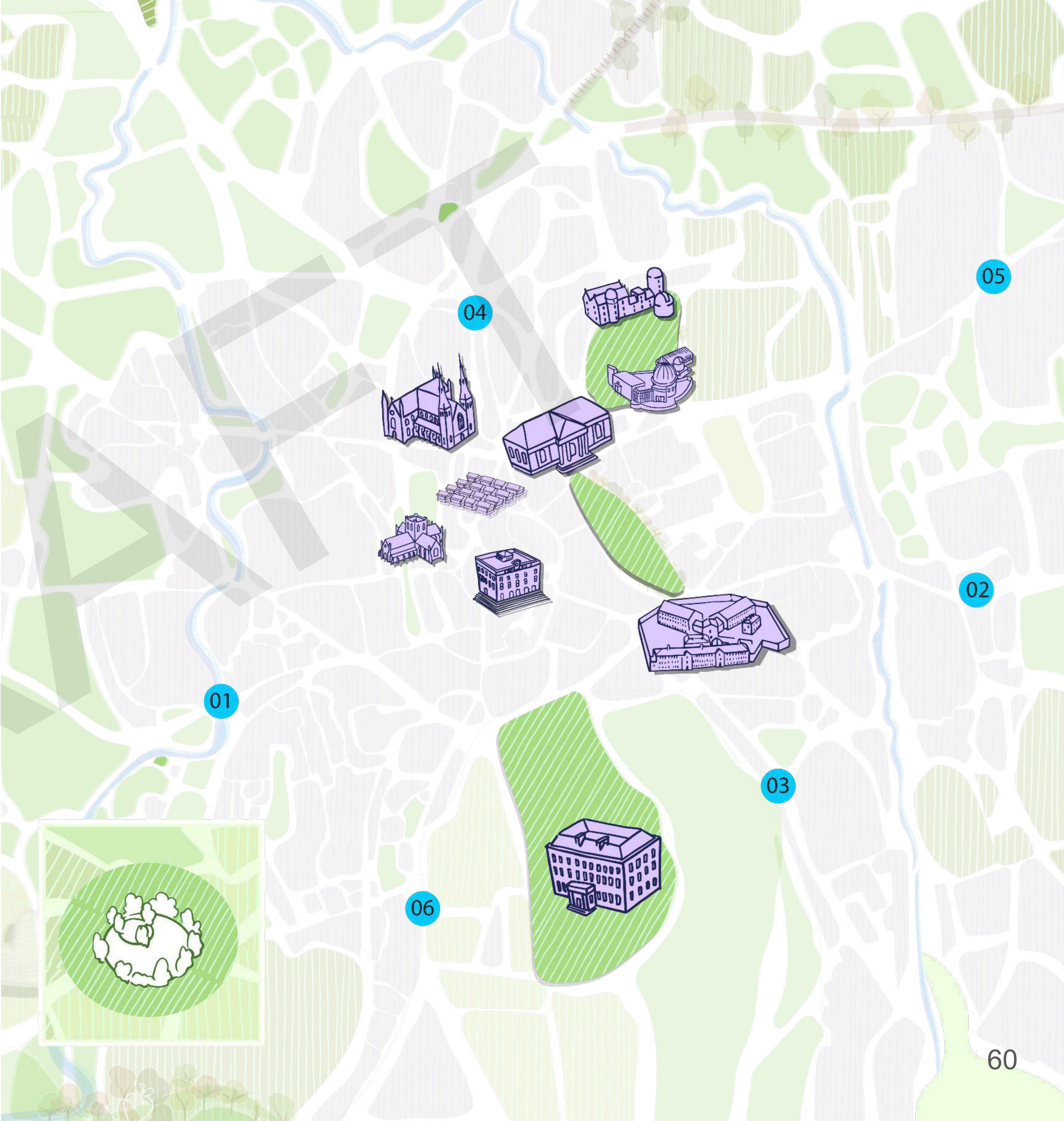
High Street Key Actions

	Action	What's the idea?	Lead & Suggested Partners	Next steps	Resources Needed	Timescale (S=0-2 yrs M=2-4 yrs L=5+years)	Outcomes
H1	A High Street Craft Kit.	Pilot the MAG's innovative High Street Craft Kit in the city.	ABC Council; DfC's Ministerial Advisory Group for Architecture & the Built Environment; DfC, BPA, City Centre Management, local businesses and communities.	Discussions with MAG, alignment of timescales, bring together partners, pilot.	Investment of resources by city partners and MAG.	S-M	C G E H
H2	Make Market Square and the high street people-centred.	Put people at the heart of designing city streets with less emphasis on them being transport corridors for cars.	ABC Council with DfC, DfI, BPA, City Centre Management, local businesses and communities.	Develop small scale public realm activations, such as parklets and continue consultation on people-centred streets.	Funding for a communications plan and active pilot projects.	S	C G E H
H3	City stewardship through a streetscape design guide.	Ensure good city stewardship through streetscape guidance and collaboration on cleansing and maintenance.	ABC Council, DfI, DfC, City Centre Management.	Develop Armagh streetscape design guide, identify local champions, city stewards scheme.	Resources for guide, engagement locally and establishment of a network.	S-M	CGEH

4.6 GATEWAYS

These are critical spots for announcing the entrance to Armagh, and they are essential to showcase what the city stands for and what to expect from its visit. The gateways are today identifiable by the presence of road junctions, roundabouts or road signs. These spaces allow creating designs that leave a long-lasting impression, disclose the creative city, and provide inclusive social meeting places.

- 01. Killylea Road
- 02. Hamiltonsbawn Road
- 03. Newry Road
- 04. Moy Road
- 05. Portadown Road
- 06. Keady Road



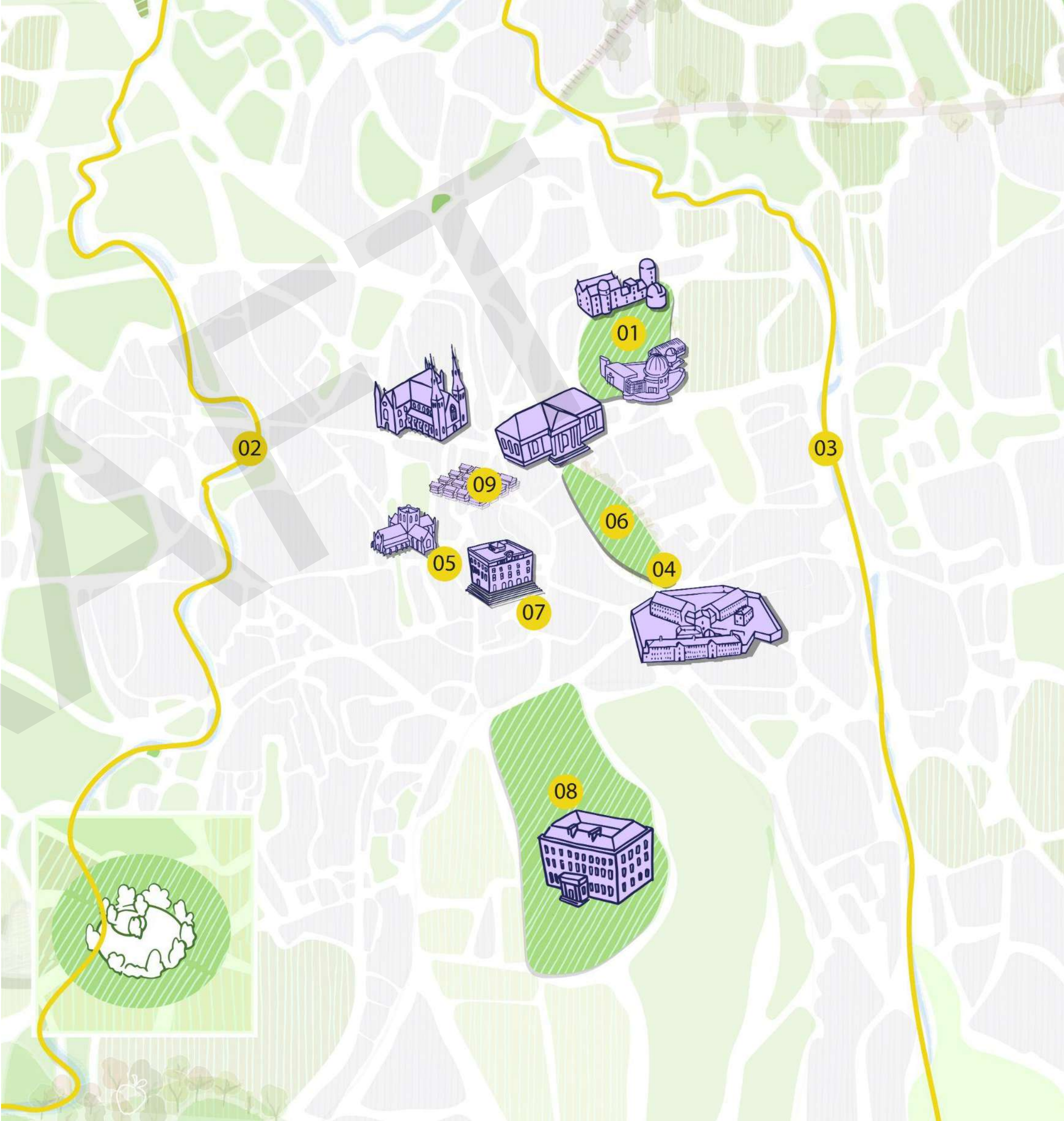
Gateways Key Actions

	Action	What's the idea?	Lead & Suggested Partners	Next steps	Resources Needed	Timescale (S=0-2 yrs M=2-4 yrs L=5+years)	Outcomes
G1	Young people design gateways to the city.	Providing better entrances to the city (the arrival points) to showcase the culture, creativity and ambition of the young people of Armagh.	ABC Council, DfC, DfI, Youth Clubs, Schools, SRC.	Site scoping study, design competition, funding programme.	Funding to deliver gateway projects.	S-M	C E

4.7 OPEN SPACES

These are outdoor spaces of public value that can take many forms, from squares to parks, from gardens to sports pitches. People in Armagh recognise these as spaces with health and recreation benefits. Encouraging mixed uses, bringing Armagh cultural activities beyond the institutional buildings, and fostering new ways of learning could enhance these spaces.

- 01. Astropark walk
- 02. Callan river
- 03. Folly river
- 04. Gaol Square
- 05. Gardens of the Cathedral
- 06. Mall
- 07. Market Place
- 08. Palace Demesne Public Park
- 09. The Shambles Market



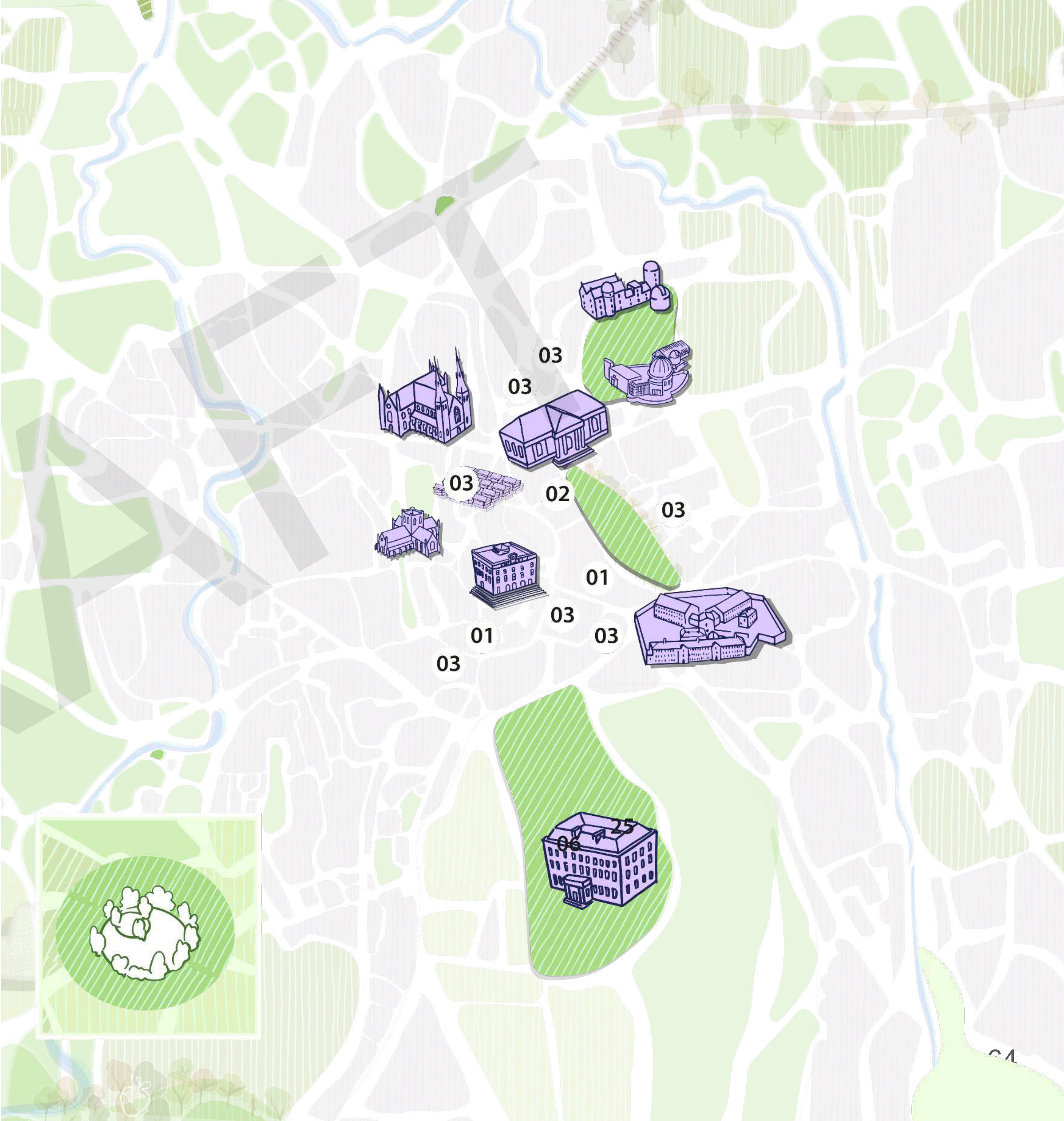
Open Spaces Key Actions

	Action	What's the idea?	Lead & Suggested Partners	Next steps	Resources Needed	Timescale (S=0-2 yrs M=2-4 yrs L=5+years)	Outcomes
01	Bring more colour to the streets.	Celebrate the city's open spaces by creating vibrant and colourful and playful open spaces.	ABC Council, Dfl, local artists, local businesses & community groups.	Engage with young people to develop ideas and concepts, run a design competition, partner with local and international artists.	Development of ideas and engagement with young people, artists etc.	S-M	C G E H
02	Armagh Streets Alive.	Bringing the story of Armagh alive through an immersive cultural heritage strategy and trail for the city	DfC, ABC Council, Dfl, local communities and businesses.	Arts and cultural strategy for the city, develop concepts and ideas, identify sites, run design competition(s).	Funding to develop strategy and trail.	S-M	C G E H
03	Get Places Moving.	Encourage and support people to make creative use of Armagh's open spaces to Get Moving.	ABC Council, local sport & community groups, Park Run, Sustrans.	Through the Get Moving ABC Partnership encourage the delivery of physical activity opportunities in Armagh's open spaces.	Resources for marketing and delivery.	S-M	C G E H

4.8 GREY SPACES

These are leftover spaces, overlooked and underused in the city. Some of them are functional and used as transition spaces, storage or parking, and others are undiscovered like the underground river below the Mall, brownfield and derelict sites. They lie unused most of the time, and they have a considerable potential to become spaces for people to linger and meet.

- 01. Alleyways
- 02. Backlands
- 03. Parking spaces



Grey Spaces Key Actions

	Action	What's the idea?	Lead & Suggested Partners	Next steps	Resources Needed	Timescale (S=0-2 yrs M=2-4 yrs L=5+years)	Outcomes
G1	Enliven Armagh's grey spaces.	Deliver placemaking projects to enliven dead spaces like Armagh's alleyways and back lands.	DfC, ABC Council, DfI, local businesses and communities, local artists.	Develop concepts for individual sites, bring partners on board, secure funding and deliver.	Funding for projects.	S-M	C E G H
G2	Living rooftops.	Create amenity for city centre residents, spaces where they can go and use that enhances liveability.	ABC Council, An Culturlann, European Rooftop Network, Property owners, local residents	Mapping of rooftops, identify sites, networking with EU Rooftop network, develop sites and deliver.	Initial grant funding to inspire ideas.	M	C G E H
G3	Empty to occupied.	Occupy empty buildings to stimulate the economy and activate the street frontages.	ABC Council, Businesses and entrepreneurs, DfC.	Roll out scheme.	Funding for regeneration of vacant shops.	M	E H
G4	Engage the space.	Use vacant of derelict spaces to start public conversations and ideas for the city.	DfC, ABC Council, local schools, landowners.	Pilot, test, measure, learn, roll out.	Funding to support and deliver.	S	C E H

4.9 THE BIG IDEAS FOR ARMAGH

The big ideas are the key strategic projects and initiatives that have been prioritised for delivery in the city as they have the potential to act as a catalyst for cultural led regeneration for Armagh. There are eight big ideas for Armagh. These will involve significant partnership working, investment and community buy in in order to be successfully delivered.

- CW2

ARMAGH CITY OF CULTURE

What if...the city was a UK capital of culture?
- CW3

CITY CENTRE HOUSING

What if...the city centre was for everyone to live in?
- IA1

BRING THE GAOL BUILDING BACK INTO USE

What if...Armagh Gaol was a place for everybody?
- IA2

BUILD A LEISURE VILLAGE AT MULLINURE

What if...people came into the city to get exercise?

- J3

INCREASE GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE CITY

What if...there were connected greenways and blueways across Armagh?
- H6

PILOT A HIGH STREET CRAFT KIT IN ARMAGH

What if...Armagh's main streets were full of people?
- 02

ARMAGH STREETS ALIVE

What if...every street in Armagh told a story?
- G1

ARMAGH BACKLANDS PROJECT

What if...Armagh changed dead spaces into living spaces?

What if...the city was a UK capital of culture?

What's the idea?

Armagh is steeped in culture and we want to put the city and the Borough onto the world stage as a vibrant, exciting place. The best place to start is through a bid to be UK City of Culture.

There are many big moments in the city that take place throughout the year, and better connections through a capital of culture bid would help focus minds and create a structure of collaboration and partnership working that could propel Armagh on to the world stage as a vibrant destination. Economic opportunities for investment could be unlocked through such an approach.

Why is it important for Armagh?

Armagh already boasts unique cultural experiences, however the research here found that this has potential to be much more city wide and inclusive.

There is a need to coordinate and bring key events and celebrations of the city to life through a distinct brand and identity, and focusing on celebrating Armagh as city of culture would help unlock investment, focus minds and help move the narrative of the cultural heritage of the city forward to embrace the people, the spaces and the 'whole city' experience for visitors.

Suggested Partners

ABC Council with local arts and cultural sectors, Tourism NI, Arts Council NI & Central Government.

Next Steps

Develop and submit a UK City of Culture bid and establish a delivery mechanism.

Outcomes



A CONNECTED CITY



A GREEN CITY



AN ENGAGING CITY



A HEALTHY CITY

What if...the city centre was for everyone to live in?

What's the idea?

To enhance mixed tenure and increase accessible and affordable housing in the city centre. To establish a NIHE city centre waiting list that is shared housing (E.g. Ogle Street development).

Why is this important for Armagh?

Create the activity and vibrancy in city centre needed to support businesses and adopt a town centre first approach. Keeping streets safe and welcoming and at the same time encouraging city centre housing would increase vibrancy, and address young people's desire to build relationships across the city.

What has been already done?

The development at Ogle Street should be developed as a 'living exemplar' of how diversity and inclusion can be facilitated through mixed use and mixed tenure regeneration. Support to implement both the physical and social regeneration of the site and work with new tenants and owners to integrate the community into the area should be a priority. Having an exemplar of where this has been achieved in the city will pave the way for more mixed tenure sites to come forward under a sustainable growth strategy for the city.

Suggested Partners

NIHE, ABC Council, NIFHA, CIH, Housing Associations

Next Steps

Work in partnership with key partners, identify developer partner opportunities, best practice, feasibility, learning.

Outcomes



A CONNECTED CITY



A GREEN CITY



AN ENGAGING CITY



A HEALTHY CITY

What if...Armagh Gaol was a place for everybody?

What's the idea?

Support development plans for the site to see this icon of Armagh brought back into use. To explore how the ground floor and public space around the Gaol could be used as a shared space for community ideas, activities and coming together.

Why is this important for Armagh?

The Gaol came up in many of the conversations during the development of the plan. It is strategically located next to the Mall but has lost prominence due to the heavy traffic that surrounds it and its current vacant state. Securing the long term sustainability of the Gaol remains a priority, and diversifying its uses and making it a multi-functional space is how that should be achieved. Part of this space should remain open and accessible for the

community and visitors, and should incorporate the stories (and ghost stories!) that many people told during the engagement.

What has been already done?

The Council has been exploring external funding services for the redevelopment of the building and has secured a private sector delivery partner. The project could create a significant economic boost for the city and act as a catalyst for further investment.

Suggested Partners

ABC Council, Private investors, Heritage Lottery Fund, local heritage groups.

Next Steps

Consider opportunities for short-term. Continue to work with developers and seek funding needed to redevelop the Gaol.

Outcomes



A CONNECTED CITY



A GREEN CITY



AN ENGAGING CITY



A HEALTHY CITY

What if...people came into the city to get exercise?

What's the idea?

Provide first class indoor and outdoor leisure facilities with health and economic benefits for the area.

Why is this important for Armagh?

The proposals are a significant investment by the Council and comprise a new building hosting indoor leisure facilities and outdoor pitches, helping respond to the needs of the community, clubs and schools.

What has already been already done?

A concept landscape strategy had been produced via an integrated approach for the site and surrounding areas, limiting or compromising future developments.

The vision for the area is to become a centre of sporting excellence, a significant tourism destination, a place of education and learning and an integrated part of the regional greenway network. In this inclusive and shared place, the community can meet and be active.

The objective is to establish a sustainable green infrastructure that is careful to employ natural solutions (like SUDS), become a place of community, restore the historic landscape, provide a high-quality destination and experience, and finally design a leisure village as well as a leisure city.

Suggested Partners

ABC Council, Mullinure delivery partners.

Next Steps

Secure funding & build advocacy across government & create public & private sector partnerships.

Outcomes



A CONNECTED CITY



A GREEN CITY



AN ENGAGING CITY



A HEALTHY CITY

J3

INCREASE GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE CITY

What if...there were connected greenways and blueways across Armagh?

What's the idea?

Connect green and blue spaces to each other and promote active travel.

Green and blue spaces are anything that allows our rivers, waterways, flora and fauna to thrive across the city.

Why is this important for Armagh?

Increasing the blue and green infrastructure, and thus linking Armagh internally and to the regional greenway network has a host of benefits including those for climate change adaptation, mitigation, health and wellbeing, and biodiversity.

What has been done already?

The blue and green infrastructure in Armagh can contribute to delivering sustainable development in the city. Improving biodiversity and enhancing the environment will contribute towards more sustainable communities and healthy place making.

Suggested Partners

ABC Council, DfI, local communities, Sustrans, land owners.

Next Steps

Feasibility study and options, phasing plan.

Outcomes

 A CONNECTED CITY

 A GREEN CITY

 AN ENGAGING CITY

 A HEALTHY CITY

H1

PILOT A HIGH STREET CRAFT KIT IN ARMAGH

What if...Armagh's main streets were full of people?

What's the idea?

Pilot the MAG's innovative High Street Craft Kit in the city. Armagh city would run a pilot project to collaborate around adapting the high street and bring new uses and vibrancy to the city centre.

Why is this important for Armagh?

Armagh city centre suffers from high levels of vacancy. In the public engagement sessions people didn't feel that there was enough activity and diversity of uses to keep the city feeling safe and welcoming, particularly at night. The craft kit is a process by which people collaborate to help buildings and spaces to adapt, building resilience and economic opportunities where they may not have been before.

What has been already done?

The craft kit is due to be launched later this year, and conversations are underway to bring the craft kit to the city in late 2021.



Suggested Partners

ABC Council, MAG, DfC, BPA, City Centre Management, local businesses and communities.

Next Steps

Discussions with MAG, alignment of timescales, bring together partners, pilot.

Outcomes

 A CONNECTED CITY

 A GREEN CITY

 AN ENGAGING CITY

 A HEALTHY CITY

What if...every street in Armagh told a story?

What's the idea?

Bringing the story of Armagh alive through an immersive cultural heritage trail for the city.

Why is this important for Armagh?

In the workout sessions, attendees prioritised the creation of places for the community to come together. There are also a lot of people who come to live there to work in the public institutions, the agri-food industry and to carry out research through the libraries and planetarium.

What has already been done?

Armagh is already more ethnically diverse than the Borough average, and there are community and voluntary sector groups that support and represent people coming

to live in the area. However the dominant narrative of good relations is 'shared space' that focuses on places of sectarian tension, rather than a wider conceptualisation of diversity that is inclusive of everyone living there.

The open spaces near our homes give us a valuable place to socialise with our neighbours. The better the design of the space in question is, the better the quality of the social experience.

Suggested Partners

DfC, ABC Council, DfI, local communities and businesses.

Next Steps

Arts and cultural strategy for the city, develop concepts and ideas, identify sites, run design competition(s).

Outcomes



A CONNECTED CITY



A GREEN CITY



AN ENGAGING CITY



A HEALTHY CITY

G1

ARMAGH BACKLANDS PROJECT

What if...Armagh transformed dead spaces into living spaces?

What's the idea?

Deliver placemaking projects to enliven dead spaces like Armagh's alleyways and backlands.

Why is this important for Armagh?

The public space in Armagh is not being celebrated enough, there is too much emphasis on individual 'attractions' or buildings. One priority identified during the engagement was the need for visitors to leave the city having had a 'whole city' experience. There is a need to build pride in the city and bring all the space in the city into productive use.

What has been already done? [Find out more](#)

The Alleyways project was a six-month process of creative collaboration with the local community and the artist Kevin Killen in 2018. As a result, the Market Place Theatre & Arts Centre will host a collaborative lighting art piece, and this could be the foundation on which new living spaces are developed.

Suggested Partners

DfC, ABC Council, DfI, local businesses and communities, local artists.

Next Steps

Develop concepts for individual sites, bring partners on board, secure funding and deliver.

Outcomes



A GREEN CITY



A HEALTHY CITY



URBAN
SCALE
INTERVENTIONS

DRAFT

