

Banbridge Town Centre Public Realm Scheme

Section 75 Policy Screening Form

Part 1. Policy Scoping

The first stage of the screening process involves scoping the policy or policy area. The purpose of policy scoping is to help prepare the background and context and set out the aims and objectives for the policy being screened. At this stage, scoping the policy will help identify potential constraints as well as opportunities and will help the policy maker work through the screening process on a step by step basis.

You should remember that the Section 75 statutory duties apply to internal policies (relating to people who work for the authority), as well as external policies (relating to those who are, or could be, served by the authority).

Information about the policy

Name of the policy: Banbridge Town Centre Public Realm Scheme

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy? New Policy

As part of its ongoing commitment to urban regeneration, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council is midway through the consultation phase on a Public Realm Scheme for Banbridge Town Centre.

This is a scheme that is likely to involve an estimated investment of £5.5 million and include potential public realm improvements throughout Banbridge and including Newry Street, Bridge Street, Downshire Bridge (The Cut), Scarva Street, Linenhall Street, Victoria Street, Old Kenlis Street, Railway Street, Downshire Place Link, Church Square, Castlewellan Road, Bann Bridge and Dromore Road (see Appendix One).

At this time it is anticipated that the works will be undertaken in two phases:

Phase One	Phase Two
· Newry Street	· Church Square
· Downshire Bridge & The Cut	· Dromore Road
· Bridge Street	
· River Bann Bridge	
· Scarva Street / Downshire Place Junction	
· Scarva Street	
· Linenhall Street	
· Old Kenlis Street	
· Victoria Street	
· The Mall	
· Railway Street (Bridge Street to Downshire Place Car Park)	

· Downshire Place Pedestrian Link	
· Castlewellan Road	

It has been identified that Banbridge town centre currently falls short in a number of key respects and in particular:

- Lack of access to car parks from Newry Street / Bridge Street by car;
- Poor quality / unwelcoming pedestrian linkages to adjacent parking and secondary streets;
- Degrading footpath surfaces creates visual discord within project area;
- Lack of heritage appreciation in the town centre;
- Poor pedestrian / disability access;
- Cluttered streetscape – variety in placement of street lighting columns;
- On street parking bays not to current DFI Road Standards;
- Uncontrolled pedestrian crossings poor.

At the same time, the town itself is characterised by a number of positive features, including:

- A strong business community with a large number of independent retailers;
- Strategic location adjacent to the A1;
- Rich heritage base;
- Feature buildings / statues located at key nodes;
- Variety of built form;
- Off street parking provision adjacent to main retail core;
- Growing tourism appeal.

It is anticipated that enhancements will include;

- Resurfacing of the existing footways;
- Hard and soft landscaping;
- Aesthetic improvements to both the Downshire and Bann Bridge;
- Street lighting;
- Street furniture;
- New civic space;
- Improvements to pedestrian crossings;
- Improved street parking arrangements;
- Introduction of smart technology;
- Bespoke features.

Operating within a number of constraints (e.g. available space, parking requirements, access and deliveries, width of footpaths, listed buildings and facades), the scheme has considerable potential to enhance the town in a number of key respects and specifically:

- Create streetscape which focuses on safe pedestrian circulation and accessibility for all;
- Create high quality public realm space at key nodes, e.g. Scarva Street;
- Preserve and enhance existing character of the town centre;
- Improve pedestrian linkages to Prime Retail Core from town centre parking provision;

- Enhance legibility of public realm – localised identity / townscape character / sense of place;
- Improve parking bay dimensions;
- Build on successful events programme e.g. Twilight Market & BuskFest;
- Enhance River Bann as an asset to the town centre;
- Introduce Smart technology;
- Attract investment, visitors and increase dwell time;
- Create a vibrant evening economy;
- Promote 'LOTS' in the town centre.

Parking Provision

Current parking provision tends to comprise of parking bays which generally do not meet current DfI Roads Standards for on street parking bays, varying in length from 3.5m to 4.9m (DfI Roads recommends 6m x 2.4m and 5.8m x 2.4m), Further to ongoing consultation it is proposed to;

- Improve quality / standard of standard parking bays
- Improve access/ manoeuvrability into parking bay
- Maintain existing number of disabled bays .
- Improve linkages to town centre parking facilities from Bridge Street and Newry Street by opening up Linenhall Street and Victoria Street
- Enhance connectivity for all users between car parks and retail core

Next Steps

Following analysis of feedback from recent stakeholder consultation (see below and appendices), traffic management and public realm options will be considered alongside continued consultation with DfI Roads & Statutory Bodies.

Further public consultation events and online surveys will be made available prior to submission of full Economic Appraisal and a funding application

Subject to successful funding application the project will then proceed to detailed design phase.

What is the policy trying to achieve? (Intended aims/outcomes)

The Banbridge Public Realm Scheme aims to improve the quality and connectivity between streets and car parks in the town, improve accessibility in the town centre and create an attractive civic space. The scheme will focus on building a safe streetscape that focuses on safe pedestrian circulation and accessibility for all, while preserving and enhancing the character of the town centre. Specific aims attaching to each phase of the scheme include:

Phase 1

- Improving and updating of the public realm throughout the project area;
- Creating a new civic space in the town centre at Scarva Street/Downshire Place junction;

- Improving pedestrian linkages between Primary Retail Core and car parks / secondary streets;
- Enhancing the River Bann and Downshire Bridges;
- Installing an event infrastructure at The Cut;
- Improving accessibility and wayfinding in the town centre

Phase 2

- Enhancing heritage quarter and Area of Townscape Character;
- Improving and updating the public realm in Church Square;
- Improving connectivity.

Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy?

Yes: disability, race, dependency and age,

If so, explain how.

Through enhanced safety, accessibility and signage within the designated areas of the town.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

RPS, commissioned by Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council.

Who owns and who implements the policy?

The scheme is owned by the Council. However, at this stage the delivery of this element of the policy is the responsibility of RPS which is not a designated body under Section 75 but recognises the benefit of working within the spirit of this statute in bringing forward the scheme.

Implementation factors

Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy/decision? **YES**

If yes, are they

Financial: Yes, the scheme is funded jointly by Council and The Department for Communities.

The availability of funding from The Department for Communities is subject to approval of the Banbridge Public Realm Economic Appraisal.

Legislative: Yes. The scheme will be developed in line with all relevant planning statutes, and informed by relevant guidance including that made available by DfI.

Other, please specify: _____

Main stakeholders affected

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the policy will impact upon?

Staff: Those members of Council staff who will be involved in the design and management of the project

Service users: All those who use or visit Banbridge town centre, who conduct business in the area or have any interest in the long term well-being of the town and its hinterland.

Other public sector organisations: Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, government departments (including DfI) and other relevant agencies and bodies, both public and private sector.

Voluntary/community/trade unions: Staff trade unions and associations. Representative groups engaged during consultation and beyond.

Other, please specify: Private sector companies engaged during the design and delivery of the scheme include; RPS, NIE Networks, NI Water, British Telecommunications (BT), Phoenix Natural Gas, Openeir, and transport providers such as Translink.

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

- **What are they?**

Several key statutory and non statutory documents provide the backcloth for this project. The Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) is the strategic planning framework for Northern Ireland as a whole. The RDS provides a holistic approach to regional development based on social, economic, transportation and environmental issues. The scheme and associated schemes are linked to a raft of government policies and strategies and including the following:

- NI Programme for Government
- NI Regional Economic Strategy 2035
- Shared Future Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland 2005
- Urban Regeneration and Community Development Policy Framework 2013
- Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council Corporate Strategies, Annual Reports and Business Plans
- Banbridge Town Centre Masterplan 2015
- Banbridge , Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015
- Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Local Development Plan Preferred Options Paper 2018
- Connected: A Community Plan for Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough 2017-2030
- Regeneration & Development Strategy for Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough
- Council

- Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council- Corporate Plan 2018-2023
- **Who owns them?**

The Regional Development Strategy is overseen by DRD who act in partnership with local interests and including the Council. DfC provides joint funding for the scheme along with the Council, while DfI oversee planning functions.

Available evidence

Evidence to help inform the screening process may take many forms. Public authorities should ensure that their screening decision is informed by relevant data.

What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Specify details for relevant Section 75 categories.

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information
ALL	<p>On Census Day 2011, in Banbridge District Electoral Area there were 33,206 people living in 12,846 households, giving an average household size of 2.58. In summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22% were aged under 16 years • 14.1% were aged 65 and over; • 37 years was the average (median) age of the population; • 49.3% of the usually resident population were male and 50.7% were female; • 99.2% were from the white (including Irish Traveller) ethnic group; • 36.4% belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion and 58% belong to or were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; • 58.7% indicated that they had a British national identity, 18.3% had an Irish national identity and 31.7% had a Northern Irish national identity*. • 7.6% had some knowledge of Irish; • 7.5% had some knowledge of Ulster-Scots; and • 1.6% did not have English as their first language; • 20.2% of people had a long-term health problem or disability that limited their day-to-day activities; • 80.2% of people stated their general health was either good or very good; • 12.2% of people stated that they provided unpaid care to family, friends, neighbours or others; • 70.8% of households were owner occupied and 25.71% were rented; • 32.8% of households were owned outright; • 10.8% of households were comprised of a single person aged 65+ years; • 8.1% were lone parent households with dependent children;

- 16.0% of households did not have access to a car or van;
- 22.7% had a degree or higher qualification;
- 41.5% had no or low (Level 1*) qualifications;
- 68.9% were economically active,
- 31.1% were economically inactive;
- 61.8% were in paid employment;
- 4.2% were unemployed.

Between January 2020 and March 2020, through online questionnaires and face-to-face meetings, the Council sought views from statutory consultees, councillors, key stakeholders and members of the public on the concept design proposals and options attached to the two phases of the scheme.

This included an information session (28th January 2020) for Elected Members, Banbridge Regeneration Company, Banbridge Chamber of Commerce and traders/ businesses (see Appendix Two) and a public consultation event on the 20th February 2020 (see Appendix Three) together with an initial meeting with Section 75 User Groups (see Appendix Four).

In total, 42 responses were received during the information session held on the 28th January 2020 with a further 72 questionnaires returned during the public consultation event (16 written & 56 on-line), with comments received from both of these sessions summarised in Appendix Three.

Two written submissions were also received from RNIB Northern Ireland /Guide Dogs NI (Appendix Five) and the Mae Murray Foundation (Appendix Six).

A separate meeting with Age Friendly representatives was held on the 27 February 2019

A targeted meeting with Linen Hall Street Traders was held on the 18th February 2019

Consultation with DfI Roads, Utility providers, Translink and Historic Environment Department (HED) has been undertaken throughout the initial design process, with comments and recommendations identified during the consultation process helping or influencing the design in relation to meeting design standards required (Appendix Seven)

Overall feedback has been very positive, broadly welcoming the design proposals and also welcoming opportunities to provide further feedback through successive rounds of consultation.

Needs, experiences and priorities

Taking into account the information referred to above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories, in relation to the particular policy/decision? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories

Section 75 category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities
Disability	It is important that any future developments must be planned and designed to accommodate those with a wide range of disabilities, including those with mobility needs.
Religious Belief / Political Opinion	The proposed scheme must help promote safe and welcoming environments for those from both communities.
Race / Ethnic Origin	New signage within the scheme, such as wayfinding signage and interpretative signage, should aspire to accommodate those for whom English may not be a first language if possible.
Sexual Orientation	The proposed redevelopments must help promote a safe and environment for those from LGBT communities.
Dependency	The scheme must be accommodating of those with dependency needs, including those with younger, older and disabled dependants

Part 2: Screening Questions

Introduction

1. If the public authority's conclusion is **none** in respect of all of the Section 75 categories, then you may decide to screen the policy **out**. If a policy is 'screened out', you should give details of the reasons for the decision taken.
2. If the public authority's conclusion is **major** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 categories, then consideration should be given to subjecting the policy to an EQIA.
3. If the public authority's conclusion is **minor** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 categories, then consideration should still be given to proceeding with an EQIA, or to measures to mitigate the adverse impact; or an alternative policy.

In favour of a 'major' impact

- a) The policy is significant in terms of its strategic importance;
- b) Potential equality impacts are unknown, because, for example, there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment or because they are complex, and hence it would be appropriate to conduct an EQIA;
- c) Potential equality and/or good relations impacts are likely to be adverse or are likely to be experienced disproportionately by groups of people including those who are marginalised or disadvantaged;
- d) Further assessment offers a valuable way to examine the evidence and develop recommendations in respect of a policy about which there are concerns among affected individuals and representative groups, for example in respect of multiple identities;
- e) The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;
- f) The policy is significant in terms of expenditure.

In favour of 'minor' impact

- a) The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;
- b) The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures;
- c) Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people;
- d) By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

In favour of none

- a) The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations.
- b) The policy is purely technical in nature and will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.

Taking into account the earlier evidence, consider and comment on the likely impact on equality of opportunity / good relations for those affected by this policy, by applying the following screening questions and the impact on the group i.e. minor, major or none.

Screening questions

1 What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 grounds? Minor/Major/None		
Section 75 category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact? Minor/Major/None
Religious belief	Proposals to date are likely to have a positive impact on access to and within the town centre, which will be for the benefit of all communities. Future consultation will ensure that the needs of all Section 75 categories continue to be afforded due regard.	None
Political opinion	Proposals to date are likely to have a positive impact on access to and within the town centre, which will be for the benefit of all communities. Future consultation will ensure that the needs of all Section 75 categories continue to be afforded due regard.	None
Racial group	Proposals to date are likely to have a positive impact on access to and within the town centre, which will be for the benefit of all communities. Future consultation will ensure that the needs of all Section 75 categories continue to be afforded due regard.	None
Age	Proposals to date are likely to have a positive impact on access to and within the town centre, which will be for the benefit of all communities. Future consultation will ensure that the needs of all Section 75 categories continue to be afforded due regard.	Minor (+ve)
Marital status	Proposals to date are likely to have a positive impact on access to and within the town centre, which will be for the benefit of	None

	all communities. Future consultation will ensure that the needs of all Section 75 categories continue to be afforded due regard.	
Sexual orientation	Proposals to date are likely to have a positive impact on access to and within the town centre, which will be for the benefit of all communities. Future consultation will ensure that the needs of all Section 75 categories continue to be afforded due regard.	None
Men and women generally	Proposals to date are likely to have a positive impact on access to and within the town centre, which will be for the benefit of all communities. Future consultation will ensure that the needs of all Section 75 categories continue to be afforded due regard.	None
Disability	Proposals to date are likely to have a positive impact on access to and within the town centre, which will be for the benefit of all communities. Future consultation will ensure that the needs of all Section 75 categories continue to be afforded due regard. The proposed developments will be more accessible to those with special mobility needs.	Minor (+ve)
Dependants	Proposals to date are likely to have a positive impact on access to and within the town centre, which will be for the benefit of all communities. Future consultation will ensure that the needs of all Section 75 categories continue to be afforded due regard.	Minor (+ve)
2 Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within any of the Section 75 categories?		

Section 75 category	If Yes , provide details	If No , provide reasons
Religious Belief / Political Opinion Disability Race / Ethnic origin	<p>The proposed public realm scheme will aspire to create a town centre that would be regarded as safe, accessible and neutral by all communities.</p> <p>Access for those with a disability will be enhanced and all future designs will be audited to ensure that they are fully compliant with relevant legislation and including the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).</p> <p>New signage within the scheme, such as wayfinding signage and interpretative signage, should aspire to accommodate those for whom English may not be a first language if possible.</p>	

3 To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? Minor/Major/None		
Good relations category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact Minor/Major/None
Religious belief	None	None
Political opinion	None	None
Racial group	None	None

4 Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?		
Good relations category	If Yes , provide details	If No , provide reasons
ALL	The improved town centre as envisaged in the Public Realm Scheme is likely to be more welcoming to all communities.	

Additional considerations

Multiple identity

Generally speaking, people can fall into more than one Section 75 category. Taking this into consideration, are there any potential impacts of the policy/decision on people with multiple identities?

(For example; disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; and young lesbians, gay and bisexual people).

Those with a disability coming from all sections of the community are likely to find the new town centre more straightforward to access and manoeuvre through.

Provide details of data on the impact of the policy on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

Part 3: Screening Decision

In light of your answers to the previous questions, do you feel that the policy should (please underline one):

1. **Not be subject to an EQIA (with no mitigating measures required)**
2. Not be subject to an EQIA (with mitigating measures /alternative policies)
3. Not be subject to an EQIA at this time

4. Be subject to an EQIA

If 1. or 2. (i.e. not be subject to an EQIA), please provide details of the reasons why:

At this stage of implementation there is no indication that the proposed Public Realm Scheme will have an adverse impact on any Section 75 ground; indeed it is likely that the proposals will increase accessibility, mobility and safety for a wide range of service users, and including those with a disability.

If 2. (i.e. not be subject to an EQIA), in what ways can identified adverse impacts attaching to the policy be mitigated or an alternative policy be introduced?

N/A

In light of these revisions, is there a need to re-screen the revised/alternative policy? Yes / No. If No, please explain why

N/A

If 3. or 4. (i.e. to conduct an EQIA), please provide details of the reasons:

N/A

Timetabling and prioritising EQIA

If 3. or 4., is the policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities? YES / NO

If YES, please provide details:

Please answer the following questions to determine priority for timetabling the EQIA. On a scale of 1-3, with 1 being the lowest priority and 3 being the highest, assess the policy in terms of its priority for EQIA.

Priority criterion	Rating (1-3)
Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations	
Social need	
Effect on people’s daily lives	
Relevance to a public authority’s functions	

Note: The Total Rating Score should be used to prioritise the policy in rank order with other policies screened in for EQIA. This list of priorities will assist you in timetabling the EQIA. Details of your EQIA timetable should be included in the quarterly Section 75 report.

Proposed date for commencing EQIA: _____

Part 4: Monitoring

Effective monitoring will help identify any future adverse impacts arising from the policy which may lead you to conduct an EQIA, as well as help with future planning and policy development. You should consider the guidance contained in the Commission's Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities (July 2007). The Commission recommends that where the policy has been amended or an alternative policy introduced, then you should monitor more broadly than for adverse impact (See Benefits, P.9-10, paras 2.13 – 2.20 of the Monitoring Guidance).

Please detail proposed monitoring arrangements below:

Responses to the ongoing consultation will continue to be monitored during subsequent phases of implementation of the Public Realm Scheme. Furthermore, there will be a commitment to continue to monitor those who use the town centre through each stage of implementation and to keep a register of any complaints that may attach to Section 75 considerations should they emerge in future.

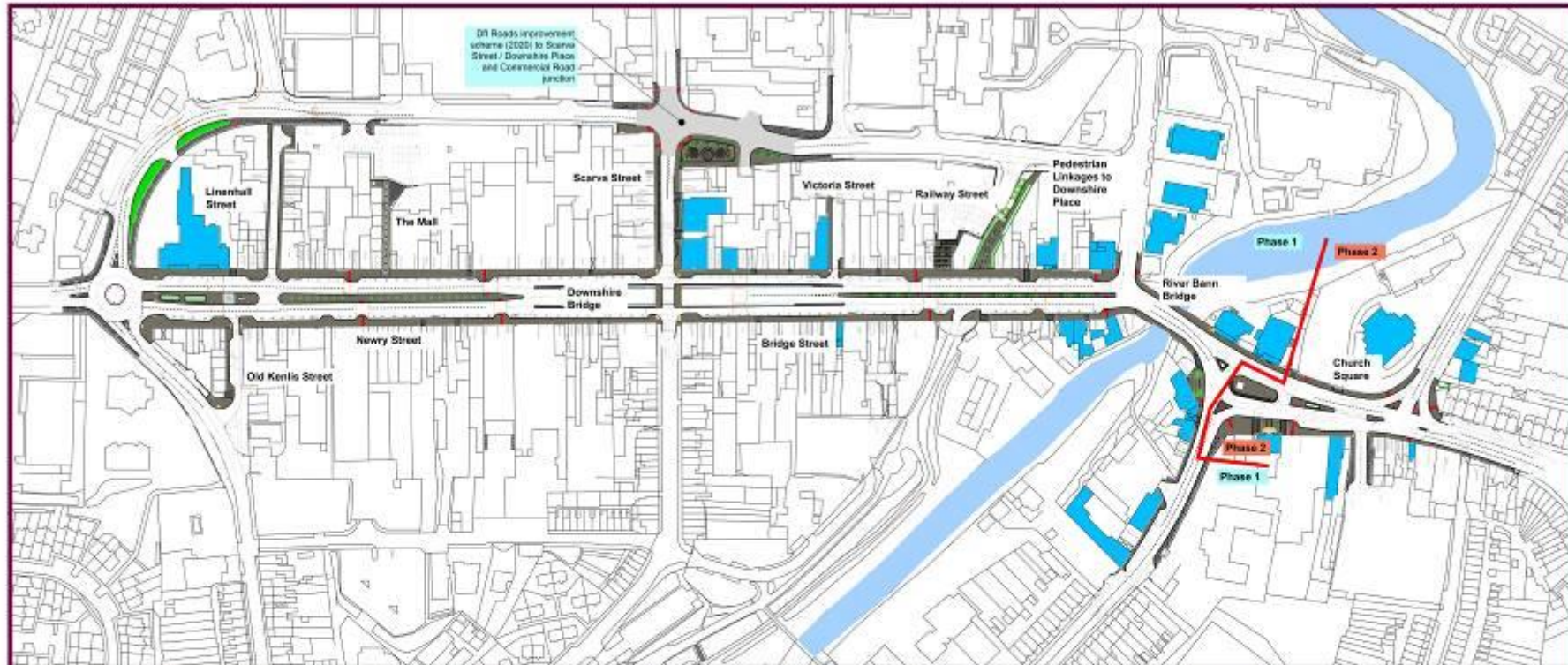
Part 5: Approval and Authorisation

Screened by:	Position/Job Title	Date
Approved by:		

Note: A copy of the Screening Template, for each policy screened should be 'signed off' and approved by a senior manager responsible for the policy, made easily accessible on your website as soon as possible following completion and made available on request.

APPENDIX ONE

Banbridge Public Realm Scheme



Current Parking Provision

Current parking provision on Newry Street, Bridge Street, Scarva Street and Old Kentis Street is comprised of parking bays which generally do not meet current DfI Roads Standards for on street parking bays.

Current parking bay dimensions vary throughout the town centre:

- Newry Street – varying bay lengths of 2.9m, 4.7m, 5.2m not uncommon
- Bridge Street – varying bay lengths of 4.3m, 4.9m, 5.9m, 5.8m not uncommon
- Scarva Street – bay lengths vary between 4.9m and 7m

Proposed Parking Arrangements

On street parking bay measurements comprising 6m x 2.4m and 5.8m x 2.4m are considered acceptable at specific locations by DfI Roads, following initial consultation on the proposed public realm scheme, yet to be finalised. These combinations will:

- Improve quality / standard of standard parking bays
- Improve access / manoeuvrability into parking bay
- Existing number of disabled bays maintained
- Potential to improve linkages to town centre parking facilities from Bridge Street and Newry Street by opening up Linerhall Street and Victoria Street
- Better connectivity for all users between car parks and retail core



High quality natural stone paving to footways – enhancement of streetscape and opportunity to re-integrate local culture



bespoke paving inserts



APPENDIX TWO
Elected Member & Business Consultation Analysis
(42 completed responses received during event)

Q1 The Principal

Yes	41 of 42 responses	97.62%
No	0 of 42 responses	0%
Not completed	1 of 42 responses	2.38%

Q2 Issues with town centre public realm

Yes	32 of 42 responses	76.19%
No	8 of 42 responses	19.05%
Not completed / answered	1 of 42 responses	2.38%

Q2 Responses

Surfacing	23 of 42 responses	54.76%
Street Clutter	7 of 42 responses	16.66%
Lighting	15 of 42 responses	35.71%
Seating Provision	12 of 42 responses	28.57%
Lack of Civic Space	12 of 24 responses	28.57%
Visual look of Bann Bridge	21 of 42 responses	50.00%
Visual look of Downshire Bridge	17 of 42 responses	40.48%
Poor navigation / connectivity	19 of 42 responses	45.24%

Other/ Comments;

- Dangers to pedestrians especially around the Downshire Bridge
- Parking and signage for parking
- Improve surface parking
- Having seen proposals all concerns will be addressed
- Currently lack of signage for WC's
- Would love to see railings/ light features
- Promote tourist attractions in the area
- Parking – Banbridge people do not like to pay for parking
- Car park sign for the car park at Church Square (Free Car Park. People out of town do not know it is there
- Any info on rates discounts and signage grants
- Lack of car parking
- Trees and seating
- Water coming of buildings on to street should be taken away to drains – this should be built into this scheme
- Entry's fit out with old fashioned metal work to fix and match same as rail type as shown Bridge Railing
- Banbridge is a pleasant town and well laid out
- No cycle stands
- Signage / direction of places around the town is poor or broken
- No walking trails

- There is an opportunity for improvement. The town could be more inviting
- More art.
- Recognition of Banbridge History
- Walking tours
- Apps for tourists for walks
- Having seen the plan I am fairly content that all my issues are included
- I hate the present traffic lights. I know they are modern but looking down instead of up means its impossible to do that and see the traffic
- Need to show more detail
- Accessibility on Bridge Street, safe access for cyclists
- Historic features / heritage
- Importance of heritage in Banbridge – Bridge / river / crosier/ Market House/ FE McWilliam / Reintroduce lost features
- However would need to include the whole town centre boundary – upto Edenderry Terrace
- Inclusion of all of Scarva Street / Scarva Road to traffic lights as far as Eurospar Retail Park
- Include Scarva Street / Scarva Road to T/C Boundary in Phase 2 up to Eurospar

Q3 The Design

Yes	29 of 42 responses	69.05%
No	9 of 42 responses	21.43%
Not completed / answered	4 of 42 responses	9.52%

Q3 Responses

Better / Even Surfacing	17 of 42 responses	40.48%
Improved Lighting	18 of 42 responses	42.86%
Better/ more seating	13 of 42 responses	30.95%
Improved Parking	19 of 42 responses	45.24%
Improved pedestrian access / connectivity	19 of 42 responses	45.24%
Downshire Bridge Improvements	19 of 42 responses	45.24%
Bann Bridge Improvements	15 of 42 responses	35.71%
Heritage theme / trail	17 of 42 responses	40.71%

Other / Comments;

- Making more of a feature of the walls around the Downshire Bridge
- As above
- Improve wayfinding signage
- Electric charge points
- Bring in Game of Thrones theme to town to create 'Selfie' photo areas
- A lot of talk about Game of thrones ????? the Bridge but a big Linen history in Banbridge. Fergusons factory used to be out by the Academy
- Enhancement to river walk
- Signage for ALL car parks in Banbridge free or paid this is VERY IMPORTANT for any one out of town and not knowing the area
- Introduction of Game of thrones related artwork

- I think more thought should be given for the integration of this plan with any plan in future by ABC Borough Council
- Suggest improved play facilities for town centre
- Banbridge is very difficult to get parked in in a Saturday and more parking would be very useful for residents and visitors alike plus better signage and some sort of heritage trail would bring more interest to the town centre
- Rainwater under kerbs/ entry's
- Can you please look at removing kerbing outside Superfry chip shop to provide more parking spaces so customers can park outside!! Access is needed for deliveries
- Site beside library should be for a new modern library, the town library is out of date and no use to students etc
- Need to keep parking available in town centre for small businesses
- Cleaning the Crozier monument
- A couple of public art installations would add character to the town centre
- I like Option 2A for the railing system
- I like Option 1 for Victoria Street
- I like Option 2 for Linenhall Street
- Walking trail, locations for cycle stands
- Grand feature at the roundabout
- Car park location signs
- Yes open Victoria Street into car park
- Yes open car park from Linenhall street
- Like No 2A for Bann Bridge
- Heritage to be reflected
- Love the heritage lights and the column lights
- Love the seating around the tree. Water features
- Traffic lights at Scarva street and on the Bridge
- Illumination good for night walking and evening events
- Biodiversity and art via swift boxes
- Pop up power excellent ideas
- Victoria Street Option 1
- 2A railings (Bann Bridge?)
- Linenhall – open to car park No.2 (Option?)
- One / two way street in Linenhall street and Victoria street & across the Bridge
- Pay more attention to the famine garden – it's lost
- A hand held app which would direct visitors to the main focal historical points in the town centre e.g. beginning @ Church Square / Captain Crozier/ Joseph Scriven Memorial / FE McWilliam (Bridge Street) / Jinglers Bridge/ OTH (Former Market House) / The Cut / Downshire Hotel
- Provision for more areas of pedestrian area for communal? Of events, more provision for sustainable transport like cycling, walking and quality of life
- Reintroduce / relocate market to Scarva Street, Bespoke features, Railings, Bus Shelters, Street furniture, feature lighting
- Review of T/C Boundary IF Scarva Street retail park is not included
- Seats along Scarva Street / Scarva Road for pedestrians
- Include Scarva Street retail Park

Q4 Events

Yes	40 of 42 responses	95.24%
No	1 of 42 responses	2.38%
Not completed / answered	1 of 42 responses	2.38%

Q4 Responses

Family Events	32 of 42 responses	76.19%
Seasonal Events	29 of 42 responses	69.05%
Arts & Entertainment Events	27 of 42 responses	64.28%
Food & Drink Events	25 of 42 responses	59.52%
Historical / Cultural Events	24 of 42 responses	57.14%

Other / Comments;

- The proposed spaces are not large enough to cope with major events
- Local market
- Council to fund a vacant shop unit for indoor ear round craft stalls
- All of the above are great because ? if it is bringing footfall into the town
- Health fairs
- Environmental improvement events
- A food and drink trail around the town would work
- Bring visitors into town who are visiting game of thrones attraction
- Needs to be finalised – need more detail
- Linenhall Street I would like to speak to ABC rep – currently posts in place to safeguard listed wall in Linenhall Street were most turning would take place
- The areas available that would require road closures should push for small initiatives to attract more footfall in the town centre
- Twilight is fantastic – could there be a summer one
- Arts event / displays,
- Music in the plaza – family entertainment outdoor
- Outdoor cinema – yoga outdoor – chalk games – face paint – learn to draw outside
- Outdoor cinema, Plays, Bands
- Invites from other countries – eg markets
- Walk path along the river and cycle path to connect to Scarva.
- Themes and areas available for events.
- Plaza to be suitable for bandstand
- Public Realm work lasts for a certain length of time & Banbridge changes are possibly overdue.
- Maybe should have been completed for the arrival of Game of Thrones
- Point ?? literature heritage and industrial heritage e.g. building aeroplanes as well as linen. Also Ernest Walton went to school in Banbridge and was the first person to see an atom being split
- Bearing in mind the GOT experience to be located just outside of town, I think some type of 'GOT Experience' needs to extend to the town centre i.e. temporary / evolving exhibition to entice visitors into the town centre (this could be an arts / entertainment/ food event)
- Art Markets, farm type market small stalls
- Buskfest should have licence to sell alcohol

- Themed days e.g. pain town pink – town should pick a specific charity close to home

Q5 The Information Presented

Q5 Responses

Strongly Agree	18 of 42 responses	42.86%
Agree	19 of 42 responses	45.24%
Neither Agree or Disagree	2 of 42 responses	4.76%
Disagree	0 of 42 responses	0.00%
Strongly Disagree	1 of 42 responses	2.38%
No Answer	2 of 42 responses	4.76%

Q5 Comments

- Great presentation and exciting for the town centre
- Maybe one point is that the improved town centre is a long term working option i.e. still looks good and works in 10 years
- Excellent looking forward to seeing the improvements over the coming years
- The parking bays outside Tan City on the corner of Commercial Road / Scarva Street – could we have them to time limited bays
- Start of a very long road
- Overall fairly impressed with the proposals. Would fully support investment of this nature
- Phase 2 more info please, follow up in regards to car park signage, shop signage grant if any ad rates discount if any, more info on these please
- An excellent project that will give Banbridge a face lift and modernise it as well
- We are located on Downshire Place; concerned about the proposed plan for directly in front of our premises
- Handnotes would have been useful please forward me a copy of these by email please
- The site should be kept for the library to build a new modern state art library for the people of Banbridge – old library is out dated
- High concern for the parking at side of Superfry. People want convenient
- Traffic lights will have traffic stationary, at a standstill. How will people access our shop? They will be sitting in traffic at all traffic lights
- Concerned that traffic lights will affect access to our business as the corner will be busier and they will be stricter about parking. People need quick and easy access to our type of business. Current business climate is difficult for small businesses and they need to give us consideration
- Need to maintain/ create a parking space outside our shop (Superfry) for customers and deliveries, especially as the side of our shop will be for planters and decoration
- Would like to see heritage – this is covered mostly
- Happy to see smart technology
- Like new plaza
- This is an exciting time for Banbridge and should be for everyone and not influenced by those in minority who are 'anti-social' in behaviour
- Very Interesting Looks exciting
- Is there an option to pedestrianize the Cut Bridge to ease the flow of traffic
- Focus on key points in town centre to enhance the Banbridge 'Brand'

- Public Art
- Must be more than improved pavement
- Consideration has to be taken to complete town centre boundary

APPENDIX THREE

Public Consultation Analysis

(Combined questionnaire responses (16 completed forms & 56 on line responses (Total N = 72))

Responding as a:

Resident	47 of 72 responses	65.28%
Commercial / Property Owner	3 of 72 responses	4.16%
Local Business owner / representative	6 of 72 responses	8.33%
Member of Community Group	7 of 72 responses	9.72%
Visitor	4 of 72 responses	5.55%
Other Interest	5 of 72 responses	6.94%
Not Answered	1 of 72 responses	1.39%

Note – One responder ticked ‘Commercial / Property Owner’ & ‘Local Business Owner / Representative’

What is your Organisation / Business;

- Pub Off Licence
- Banbridge Twinning Association
- Virgin Media
- Discount Decorating
- Lalapanzi – Beauty and Hair
- Councillor
- Weir car parts

Q1 The Principal

Yes	62 of 72 responses	86.11%
No	8 of 72 responses	11.11%
Not completed	2 of 72 responses	2.78%

Q2 Issues with town centre public realm

Yes	57 of 72 responses	79.17%
No	14 of 72 responses	19.44%
Not completed / answered	1 of 72 responses	1.39%

Note: 2Nr. responders ticked No but then completed next section & 1 responder not answered but then completed next section and have been included as ‘Yes’

Q2 Responses

Surfacing	33 of 72	45.83%
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	responses	
Street Clutter	17 of 72 responses	23.61%
Lighting	20 of 72 responses	27.78%
Seating Provision	23 of 72 responses	31.94%
Lack of Civic Space	22 of 72 responses	30.55%
Visual look of Bann Bridge	22 of 2 responses	30.55%
Visual look of Downshire Bridge	16 of 72 responses	22.22%
Poor navigation / connectivity	26 of 72 responses	36.11%
Other	19 of 72 responses	26.39%
Not Answered	11 of 72 responses	15.28%

Other/ Comments;

- Lack of pedestrianisation
- Old Police Station is blighting Church Square
- Traffic lights in Scarva Street
- General cleanliness and maintenance of unoccupied buildings i.e. Old Police Station
- The ability to provision, the availability of fibre to meet key government objectives at a later date
- Public car parking sign at Gospel Lane needs to be correctly positioned as it currently suggests free parking at 35 Bridge Street

Q3 The Design

Yes	54 of 72 responses	75.00%
No	17 of 72 responses	23.61%
Not Answered	1 of 72 responses	1.39%

Note: 1 Nr. responder indicated no and then completed next section & 3 responders not answered but then completed next section and have been indicated as 'Yes' in above

Q3 Responses

Better / even surfacing	25 of 72 responses	34.72%
Improved Lighting	20 of 72 responses	27.78%
Better/ more seating	21 of 72 responses	29.17%
Improved parking	35 of 72 responses	34.72%

Improved pedestrian access / connectivity	26 of 72 responses	36.11%
Downshire Bridge improvements	16 of 72 responses	22.22%
Bann Bridge improvements	17 of 72 responses	23.61%
Heritage theme / trail	26 of 72 responses	36.11%
Other	16 of 72 responses	22.22%
Not Answered	10 of 72 responses	13.89%

Other / Comments;

- Convert car parks to multi stories and introduce pedestrian zones
- Scarva Street
- Include a marker to reflect Banbridge's twinning link (over 25 years) with Ruelle-sur-Touvre, France.
- Include link on Banbridge name signs
- Parking spaces at the entrance of Linenhall Street, the first three cause traffic (issues?)

Q4 Linenhall Street Options

Option 1 (retain as existing)	25 of 72 responses	34.72%
Option 2 (One-way into Commercial Rd car Park)	33 of 72 responses	45.83%
Option 3 (One-way from Commercial Rd car Park)	5 of 72 responses	6.94%
Not Answered	6 of 72 responses	8.33%

Other / Comments;

- One responder indicated preference for either Option 1 or Option 2
- One responder indicated either Option 2 or Option 3 "as long as the current businesses are happy"

Q5 Downshire Bridge Options

Option 1 (Pedestrian Controlled)	16 of 72 responses	22.22%
Option 2 (Narrow carriageway)	19 of 72 responses	26.39%
Option 3 (Widen footpath to one side only)	13 of 72 responses	18.05%
Option 4 (Fully signalised junction)	16 of 72 responses	22.22%
Other	3 of 72 responses	4.17%
Not Answered	7 of 72 responses	9.72%

Note: One responder indicated Option 1 and Option 3 as preference

Other / Comments;

- Pedestrianise
- Pedestrian only

Q6 Events

Yes	59 of 72 responses	81.94%
No	13 of 72 responses	18.05%
Not completed / answered	3 of 72 responses	4.17%

Note: multiple responders not answered but then completed next section and have been indicated as 'Yes' in above

Q6 Responses

Family Events	44 of 72 responses	61.11%
Seasonal Events	44 of 72 responses	61.11%
Arts & Entertainment Events	37 of 72 responses	51.39%
Food & Drink Events	44 of 72 responses	61.11%
Historical / Cultural Events	38 of 72 responses	52.78%
Other	2 of 72 responses	2.78%
Not Answered	14 of 72 responses	19.44%

Other / Comments;

- Capital investment of any kind is always valuable and adds benefit

Q7 The Information Presented**Q7 Responses**

Strongly Agree	15 of 72 responses	20.83%
Agree	39 of 72 responses	54.17%
Neither Agree or Disagree	13 of 72 responses	18.05%
Disagree	2 of 72 responses	2.78%
Strongly Disagree	2 of 72 responses	2.78%
No Answer	1 of 72 responses	1.39%

Q7 Comments

Q8 Further comment on design and/or in relation to accessibility and equality screening evidence

Comments received via questionnaires during consultation event

- Spoke with DfI Roads;
 - Requested layby outside premises
 - Requested single yellow lines extending across the road from him as people park and go shopping & this leads to congestion
- Try & bring (incorporate) the old heritage of the town history back into it
- Just a further conversation around the provision of routing fibre to facilitate LFFN, FFNI and other private investment in connectivity
- Entrance to 35 Bridge Street needs to be addressed as it is a safety issue for both entrance and exit. The entrance has also compromised my business as commercial vehicles can't access it.
- Great plans! Essential local traders on board with changes and proposals – but I personally feel that this will enhance and improve the town centre greatly!

Comments received via Website

- Traffic congestion
- Thank you for your commitment to making Banbridge better
- I think better carriageway/lane markings on Bann Bridge, and at Downshire Place would help traffic flow/safety.
- The scheme will enhance and improve on what is already a busy, urban shopping hub, whilst retaining the heritage, character and feel of this historic town.
- My business is located on Linenhall Street, the pavements and roads here are in terrible condition. It's hazardous, it looks rundown and grotty, it's poorly lit with no CCTV and it's far too small and too busy to be a two way street in my opinion.
- The pavement on one side of Linenhall Street definitely needs to be made wider for pedestrian safety, the parking bays are very short in front of Weir's Car Parts, more lighting is definitely needed and I liked the idea included for Scarva Street for the string lighting above the street- I think with Linenhall Street being so small, this could be really nice here.
- Banbridge as a town seems to have a particularly bad problem with dog fouling, it's just a thought but using the flatter Caithstone paving rather than the Sandstone may be easier to keep looking cleaner.
- It would be appropriate to have a permanent marker erected in a visible and public area of the town to represent the long and successful relationship Banbridge has had with our French twinned town Ruelle sur Touvre.
- This is probably the longest and most active twinning association in the UK & Ireland, celebrating 25 years just last year, and the links that have been formed in these years will last for many more to come. Your consideration in this would be welcomed.
- Acknowledgement of the longstanding Twinning relationship between Banbridge and Ruelle sur Touvre in France.
- Whilst these exciting improvements to the public realm are in the planning stage, I would like to suggest some form of marking/signpost/stone or other means of highlighting the town's French twinning link with Ruelle. This is one of the longest-running active twinning relationships, now at 26 years. Many towns here and

elsewhere in the UK and abroad proudly display their twinning connections, and this might be the opportunity to incorporate this into the overall scheme.

- The Lack of disability access in the town
- I feel there is a lack of disability access on the hill up to the Downshire Bridge on both sides of the hill, if the town was more wheelchair and disability accessible it could be more attractive to people coming to town.
- Lack of accessibility for disabled people
- More accessible for disabled people wider footpaths, easier access into shops and around the town
- Parking - a large non pay parking area to provide easy access to the towns shops without a time limit so to actually be able to enjoy your time and be able to visit multiple shops without the worry of a fine
- Disability access- due to the place in which the town is situated it provides very little disability access for the town centre and makes it very difficult for people with disabilities
- Parking, disability access
- Disability access is limited.
- Lots of entrances to businesses are narrow, some have steps.
- More disabled parking spaces would support disabled customers to access premises easier, particularly on the hill.
- Health-related signs eg. the Take 5 messages could be incorporated - 'Be Active' with logo on sign for Solitude park/outdoor gym or Leisure Centre, 'Keep learning' for the Library etc
- Sensory space for families with children, especially those with autism
- Businesses are continually closing down, something needs to be done to encourage and support a wide range of businesses into the town and support in terms of promotion and attracting visitors would help sustain them. A wide range of unique shops and cafes could give Banbridge Town something to draw people into, only then will an attractive looking and accessible town centre build a reputation to compete with other towns in Northern Ireland. We need a welcoming attractive forward-looking town that also means business, you can't have one without the other.
- I understand there must be a realistic balance of parking spaces on Newry and Bridge Streets but there just aren't enough disabled parking spaces on those streets. Needs addressed.
- Pedestrian safety is obviously important however right now there are far too many pedestrian crossings in church square or maybe they just need relocated better. Also turning from church square into coach car park is a disaster and should be stopped. Its so dangerous.
- Just the lack of disabled on street parking, slip turn off from church square into coach car park which is dangerous
- Flower beds/planters directly linked with individual schools so pupils can sow/plant their own displays which will benefit the kids plus brighten the town through increased greenery to soften the building materials.
- Reflect the towns past, present & future in the design - linen, art & GOT
- Would love to see space available for civic activities, roads easily closed with perhaps a canopy for those rare wet days to allow events to take place.
- Incorporate a celebration of the towns 26 year twinning link with Ruelle-sur-Touvre which is now one of the longest and lasting town twinning links in the UK and Ireland.

- The proposals made are 95% cosmetic and a massive waste of public money. If the town is to undergo development it should pertain to becoming more environmentally friendly and signalling an intent to be ready for the future. Cycling needs to be promoted and pedestrian areas need to be created. Driving through the town should be discouraged although I recognise this could harm businesses initially it will encourage walking and activity which will benefit our health. More thought needs to be put into this. Cosmetics don't cut it
- All these questions are loaded
- All these questions are loaded you made Lurgan & Portadown a mess now you're going to do the same with Banbridge (comment made twice by same responder)
- There is lots of car parking already
- There's lots of car parking already. Remove some to make more use of spaces outside
- I would like the town centre to be free flowing and less parking with more public street space instead
- Extortionate rates (comment made twice by same responder)
- Extortionate rates as yourselves why the town centre is withering away. There you will find the answer if you are honest.
- No taxi ranks in the main street
- The poles that hold the xmas signs should have a welcome to Banbridge during the rest of the year
- The underside of the cut walls all need to be washed repainted and illuminated signage for low bridge
- In my opinion as a resident of the Banbridge area all my life, and from my professional experience as an Architectural Technician (including works as lead consultant for the refurbishment of the Banbridge Civic Building), I feel that although the proposal for the Banbridge Public Realm is generally very good and I would welcome it, I feel that the Downshire Bridge should be closed to traffic and create a pedestrianised area with seating, bandstand etc. This would be to protect this historic structure from traffic, but also will remove the potential accident blackspot from the centre of the town.
- I also believe that Church Square requires adjustment to remove the number of traffic lights and crossing points as this can become very congested at peak times. A roundabout around the Crozier Monument could assist with traffic flow with the removal of the traffic lights and awkward crossing point for traffic coming from the Castlewellan Road and turning right towards the Dromore Road. Also removal of the traffic crossing point into the car park to the rear of the Coach would also reduce congestion and potential accidents.
- As suggested the railings and visual impact of the Downshire and Bann Bridges certainly requires careful detailing and I would welcome such a proposal.
- Lack of good shops, having to travel to shopping centres, to many coffee, hairdressers and charity shops. Get the rates down give people a chance to keep their head above waters it's common sense. What's the point of doing the place up and no shops to visit.
- Safety first, but no need for great expense.
- Big plant barrels they had years ago filled with beautiful plants are greatly missed. Also the rates are so high so it's all well and good doing the town up but no point if the town is too expensive for businesses to come too
- Remove the paving in Newry Street as it's uneven normally very unsightly and dirty and pavers are loose and cause trips and falls. Use resin and gravel to make a pleasant looking surface

- Downshire bridge junction is a free for all.
- Trees should be incorporated where possible in the design.
- Mentions throughout of railway theme may seem ironic given the lack of one and zero chance of ever regaining it.
- I would like to see an effort made to connect the Riverside walk at the leisure centre and Solitude Park. Both are short but combined would be a proper walking, cycling, running route for the town.
- The town to be pedestrianised and car parking to be free with an onus to be put on reducing shop rates and make charity shops pay full rates and extra finances to be put into place to attract large companies to open up in Banbridge and surrounding areas
- Main street needs pedestrianised more
- Old police station needs used in some way
- Too much traffic and lanes through middle of town
- 1 way system (no indication of where in response)

APPENDIX FOUR
Section 75 Users Group Meeting

QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM		RECORD OF DISCUSSION	
PROJECT TITLE:	Banbridge Public Realm Scheme		RPS PROJECT REF: NI 2110
MEETING:	Consultation Meeting & Site Walkover	ABCBC Offices	DATE: 7 th August 2019
ATTENDEES:	Stuart Anderson (SA)– RPS Lissa O'Malley (LM) – ABC Dianne Kelly (DK)– ABC Shane Kelland (SK)– ABC Mary Hannah (MH) – ABC Joan Noade (JD) – ABC	Section 75 Attendees Michael Lorimer (ML) - IMTAC June Best (JB) – IMTAC (Guide dog user) Jean Dunlop (JD) - IMTAC	TIME: 10:00p m
APOLOGIES			
SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION:	Initial Section 75 User Groups Meeting		
ACTION POINTS NOTED			ACTION
1.0	Introduction		
	<p>SA gave a brief over view of the proposed scheme extents being looked at by RPS as part of the overall project.</p> <p>SA commented that whilst all areas within the red line were being brought forward together for planning purposes, that the area around Church Square would form a later development (Phase 2)</p> <p>SA Commented that the purpose of the meeting was to establish what, if any, where the current issues within the scheme area, whether there was any scope for improvement to existing public realm and to initiate early discussions.</p>		
2.0	Points Noted		
2.1	JB voiced her thanks for inclusion within this very early stage of the project development and thanked all for		

	opportunity for chance to raise concerns regarding existing PR.	
2.2	<p>JD Queried location of existing bus stop locations within the town centre and whether there was the opportunity to introduce additional stop(s) on Bridge Street or on Newry Street.</p> <p>LM – confirmed that there was a stop at Church Square and Translink Hub on Kenlis Street served the town centre.</p> <p>SA commented that there may be little if any scope for additional stops, given the constraints of the site (existing parking requirements and traffic flows), however Translink may be consulted with as proposals will affect them (Church Square). Whilst not being discounted at this early stage there were other design considerations which may preclude additional stops being implemented.</p>	
2.3	<p>Query raised by JB regarding the location and number of disabled parking spaces in the town centre, particularly in Newry Street and Bridge Street. Could an increase in provision be looked at as part of the proposals.</p> <p>SA commented that this could be looked at, though would be subject to Dfl R requirements and also legislative changes – however it would be raised within the meeting with Dfl R arranged for later in the day.</p>	
2.4	<p>Query also raised by JB regarding the crossing at Downshire Hotel – could this be improved / altered to controlled crossing?</p> <p>SA commented that this could be looked at during the site walk over, however was unaware of an uncontrolled crossing at this location. SA aware that there was a raised table arrangement at the front of the Hotel, which could perhaps be mistaken for crossing location. SA aware of an uncontrolled crossing immediately north of the Newry Street roundabout.</p>	
2.5	<p>JN (play development officer) requested that play be introduced into the public realm scheme – this did not have to be formal play equipment, but rather an element of ‘fun’ for younger users e.g. man hole covers / elements on lamp columns etc.</p> <p>SA commented that whilst still at an early stage in design development, the plans by Council to re-introduce the Heritage Trail may create an opportunity to provide something for younger users in tandem.</p>	
2.6	<p>Disabled bays to be appropriate to location – particular re location of drop kerbs and access from existing car parks for disabled users noted during discussions.</p>	

	SA commented that the project area also included the tie-ins to (now) Council owned parking facilities to enable implementation of dropped kerbs (if not already provided) – location of dropped kerb sections for disabled bays would be agreed in tandem with DfI R	
3.0	Notes from Site Walkover	
3.1	ML commented that IMTAC would return to the site, when weather improved, carry out a further walk over study and provide report to ABC Council of their findings	ML
4.0	Any Other Business	
	None	
5.0	Date of Next Meeting TBC	
DISTRIBUTION		PROJECT FILE
To those present		

APPENDIX FIVE

Joint response from Guide Dogs NI and RNIB Northern Ireland

11 March 2020

Guide Dogs NI wants to change the way that sight loss affects people's lives and work in partnership to provide support for people with sight loss throughout their lives, for as long as they need it. We seek to improve the life opportunities, social inclusion and quality of life of people living with sight loss by offering a range of services, such as those for our children and young people, our sighted guiding service, My Guide, and our guide dog service, which support them in reaching their full potential.

RNIB Northern Ireland (RNIB) support blind and partially sighted people to live independently and to campaign for their full inclusion in society. The Royal National Institute of Blind People is a registered charity and we have three clear priority areas:

1. Everyone in the UK looks after their eyes and their sight
2. Everyone with an eye condition receives timely treatment and, if permanent sight loss occurs, early and appropriate services and support are available and accessible to all
3. A society in which people with sight loss can fully participate

RNIB provides expert eye health and sight loss information and advice and acts as a gateway to services and support provided by ourselves and others. We campaign, help people advocate for their own rights, and enable people with sight loss, their friends and families, to support each other and change lives for the better. We have 63 staff working for blind and partially sighted people across Northern Ireland and 298 volunteers currently engaged in supporting our work.

Guide Dogs and RNIB welcome the opportunity to submit this joint response to Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Council regarding the proposed public realm scheme for Banbridge.

Introduction

The importance of public realm on the quality of life, independence and freedom of movement of individuals cannot be underestimated. However, for many people living with sight loss the experience of being able to walk down their local high street is one of unnecessary inconvenience and obstruction in the form of parked cars on the pavement, A-boards, unscreened pavement cafes, shallow kerb heights, inappropriate tactile paving, and narrow pavement widths. Being able to leave the house independently without having to rely on others can have a positive impact on reducing isolation and loneliness, as well as the associated physical and mental health benefits. Everyone should be able to navigate and negotiate their town centre in safety and with confidence. Having an accessible and inclusive public realm which meets the needs of people with a disability or impairment (such as those living with sight loss) benefits everyone.

General Comments

Pavements Width

To ensure a safe and comfortable movement throughout a town centre it is important that wherever possible a clear unobstructed pavement width of 2m be maintained at all times. We acknowledge that in some locations this may not be physically possible as the pavement is not 2m wide. However, it is important to retain an unobstructed pavement width of 2m wherever possible and therefore consideration needs to be given to the potential location of A-boards and pavement cafes etc.

Colour/sets

The use of dark/black paving, particularly where contrasted against significantly lighter paving such as sandstone, should be avoided as this can cause visual confusion and disorientation. Dark paving can be interpreted by many people living with sight loss as stepping into the unknown. Is it a change in surface level, is it a hole in the ground etc?

Crossings and Tactile Paving

Guide Dogs and RNIB always welcome a commitment to ensure that only appropriate tactile paving be used at all controlled crossings, uncontrolled crossings and other locations across a town centre, such as at the top or bottom of steps.

Kerb Heights

Research has proven that a minimum kerb height of 60mm is required for a guide dog or long cane to consistently and safely identify a kerb edge. We welcome the commitment that all kerb heights except those at designated locations such as crossing points or raised table junctions, be no less than 60mm.¹

Raised Tables at Junctions

Both Guide Dogs and RNIB have concerns over the use of raised tables unless they are implemented properly with the appropriate use of tactile paving. A raised table along a straight stretch of pavement should have blister paving along the flat surface where the raised road and kerb edge coincide (the breadth of the plateau). The use of raised tables should be avoided at rounded junctions. Conventional kerb heights (as noted above) should be used at all junctions except where the dropped kerb and tactile paving indicate a crossing point.

Transport

Bus stops

Having multiple bus stops along a main street of a town centre is preferable in that by reducing walking distances, ease of accessibility for older people and those with a disability or impairment is ensured. Both Guide Dogs and RNIB accept that previous consultations have resulted in the removal of all bus stops along the main street in Banbridge to optimise the flow of traffic. A bus/transport hub has been established on Kenlis Street where passengers can board and alight buses serving the town.

Taxi ranks

There are no designated taxi ranks in Banbridge but there would appear to be an undesignated area at Old Kenlis Street where taxis pick up, drop off and loiter waiting for

¹ For reference please see DEM 154/15 'Memorandum on Kerb Heights in Public Realm Schemes' which Guide Dogs, RNIB, Disability Action and IMTAC worked on with the Department for Infrastructure to create - <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/kerb-heights-public-realm-schemes-dem-15415>

passengers. Both Guide Dogs and RNIB believe that a designated taxi rank would be preferable near the bus/transport hub, particularly if there are accessible taxis within the current provision of the town. This will ensure they have adequate space to safely pick up and drop off passengers with a disability.

Accessible Parking Bays

Banbridge has seven accessible parking bays located throughout the town centre and there is no proposal to change this provision. Although neither Guide Dogs nor RNIB are contesting this, we are conscious of an aging population with the likelihood that more blue badges will be issued over the coming years. To ensure adequate provision both now and for the future, we would ask that the current number of proposed accessible parking bays be considered against the number of current blue badge holders in Banbridge. Whilst this does not allow for those visiting blue badge holders, a consideration of the current number with the projected future number of badge holders has potential to ensure an adequate provision of accessible parking.

Lighting

General lighting

For many people living with sight loss consistency and levels of lighting can have a significant impact on their ability to optimise any remaining functional vision they may have. It is generally recommended to avoid 'pools of lighting' where the individual must navigate between different levels of lighting, but to keep lighting consistent throughout an area. Bright levels may also produce 'glare' for many people living with sight loss, therefore lighting needs to be of a comfortable unobtrusive level.

Uplighting

The use of uplighting needs to be carefully considered. In other locations we have seen the level of uplighting being too bright, causing glare and disorientation for the individual as their eyes try to adapt to different lighting levels. If uplighting is to be implemented in the scheme, efforts should be taken to ensure it is of a level that does not cause glare or visual disorientation.

Seating

Several options for seating were proposed from conventional designs to more modern flowing rounded shapes. Guide Dogs and RNIB would suggest that seating with a more defined straight edge is preferable, even if a modern design such as the 'branch' is used. Many older people prefer backs to seating and people with sight loss prefer arm rests to provide a defined length and start/end indication to the seating itself. Consideration should be given to seating plans being adequately spaced to ensure a suitable walking distance for everyone.

Assistance Dog spending area

Guide Dogs and RNIB would particularly welcome and expect the provision of an assistance dog spending area (toileting area) within Banbridge town centre. We would suggest that an area or areas be identified at key locations such as;

- at the transport hub where people may be waiting for a period of time or have just finished a journey
- at a location where council or public events are being undertaken

- at the town hall where other public toilets are often located.

The dog spending area needs to be situated in a more secluded spot, preferably out of public view and if metal spending pens are to be used, then these should be located in a secure area where they cannot be stolen.

A specific guide to the provision of guide dog spending facilities can be provided for reference upon request.

Specific Comments

Downshire Bridge

- Guide Dogs and RNIB support the positioning of accessible parking bays, with additional space, either at the beginning or end of the allocated on-street parking bays.
- Guide Dogs and RNIB welcome the upgrading of railings on Downshire Bridge and The Cut to enhance heritage assets.
- With regard to the crossings at the Downshire Bridge junction, Guide Dogs and RNIB would welcome all of the measures listed to improve pedestrian circulation. Looking at the various junction options for the Downshire Bridge we need to better understand the traffic flow at this junction before endorsing Option 4, a fully signalised junction.
- Guide Dogs and RNIB support the introduction of pop-up power units, however detailed discussion will be required regarding their exact location.
- Guide Dogs and RNIB have reservations over the use of uplighting infrastructure depending on where it is located and the strength of the uplight. Further detailed discussion will be required on their use on walls and features, but particularly when used as part of integrated lighting to illuminate building frontages.

Newry Street

There are a number of areas/features within Newry street worthy of comment;

- Linenhall Street
 - Guide Dogs and RNIB welcome proposed changes to the existing vehicular access on Linenhall Street. Our preference would be for Option 2 as we believe this provides greater ease of traffic flow through the town. We would suggest the introduction of traffic calming measures to moderate traffic speed through this area.
 - Guide Dogs and RNIB support the identification of vehicular access by contrasting coloured paving.
 - Guide Dogs and RNIB welcome the potential improvements to pedestrian circulation by widening footpaths to one side of the street only.
- The Mall
 - Guide Dogs and RNIB believe further detailed discussion is required in relation to the proposals for the Mall.
- Old Kenlis Street
 - If this area is to continue to be an unofficial pick up and drop off point for taxis Guide Dogs and RNIB believe consideration should be given to establishing a designated accessible taxi parking bay to ensure accessible taxis are able to pick up and drop passengers off.
- Central Reservation

- Guide Dogs and RNIB support all of the proposed measures for the central reservation.
- Newry Street
 - Guide Dogs and RNIB support proposals for Poplar Row, vehicle access defined by contrasting coloured paving, appropriate parking bay dimensions including those for disabled parking, and that existing crossings are retained.
 - Guide Dogs and RNIB believe that further detailed discussion is required in relation to the choice and contrast of natural stone including the use of paving inserts and historical/heritage markers.

River Bann Bridge

- Guide Dogs and RNIB believe that further detailed discussion is required in relation to the choice and contrast of natural stone to be used throughout the scheme.
- Guide Dogs and RNIB support the introduction of 'gateway' feature lighting but believe further detailed discussion is required to ensure avoidance of glare and/or visual disorientation.
- Guide Dogs and RNIB believe further detailed discussion is required regarding the choice of any feature/bespoke paving units.
- Guide Dogs and RNIB welcome the opportunity to make aesthetic improvements to railings on the Bann Bridge and although supportive of option 2a would welcome the opportunity for further discussion to explore all options before a final decision is made.

Church Square (Phase 2)

- Guide Dogs and RNIB believe that further detailed discussion is required in relation to the choice and contrast of natural stone and any bespoke paving elements to be incorporated at the front of Crozier House.
- Guide Dogs and RNIB support the following proposals in Church Square, however we would welcome further detailed discussion at later design stages to agree on specifics;
 - to retain and enhance the existing bus shelter,
 - upgrades to existing bus shelters,
 - realignment of the existing bus bay to suit larger buses,
 - potential improvements to existing kerb alignment to increase public realm frontage,
 - vehicle access defined by contrasted coloured paving,
 - improved entrance to car park and pedestrian circulation within.
- A specific area of concern is the series of controlled crossings opposite Crozier House. Further discussion will be required regarding traffic flow, signal phasing and the appropriate design and use of tactile paving on the two crossing islands.

Streetscape Elements

Guide Dogs and RNIB recognise the need to include or upgrade features such as seating, trees, SMART/Sustainable Elements and both street and feature lighting. However, we believe that each of these will require further detailed discussion as to the preferred options and potential locations. Particular consideration should be given to the choice of seating i.e. Is it rounded or has it straight edges / does it have a back or arm rests / location and frequency of placement / the choice and contrast of natural stone to be used and the accessibility of any SMART technology features proposed.

Sensory Elements

Guide Dogs and RNIB welcome the proposal of incorporating sensory elements into on-street features such as planters and urban garden spaces. In order for this to function as a feature that adds value, rather than a hindrance to someone with sight loss, we would suggest specific engagement with the VI community during the design process.

In conclusion, Guide Dogs and RNIB would like to thank Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Council and RPS for the opportunity to meaningfully consult on these public realm proposals for Banbridge.

Moving forward, we would appreciate continuing to be included in the subsequent stages of consultation and would welcome an opportunity to undertake a site walk of the scheme with some of our visually impaired customers.

APPENDIX SIX

Consultation Feedback from Mae Murray Foundation

1. I would reiterate my previous input at Dromore in regard to disabled parking bays. The Dfl standard is not suited to some wheelchair accessible vehicles. Positioning in such a way e.g. end of parking bays, would allow longer vehicles to use these bays. Dropped kerb positioning would need to accommodate kerb mounting - to rear of bay.
2. Glad to see improved linkages between car parks and pedestrian areas highlighted. I would welcome taking that a stage further to ensure there are safe appropriate linkages between blue badge parking bays and the pedestrian areas of the car park itself. Every blue badge parking bay within the car park should have a point at which to join the pedestrian area and access the ticket machine if needed as well as the pedestrian linkage to town - without having to journey on the road.
3. Bridge choice - it's difficult to decide without being there in person. I would just highlight that obviously wider footpaths are preferred. Crossing near a junction without a pedestrian crossing is difficult.
4. General comment in relation to the design of pedestrian crossings - they cause difficulties for some wheelchair users due to the positioning often on a slope and turning to press a button can de-stabilise chairs. The Neatbox app allows persons to activate the button from a mobile phone but this won't suit all. It would be great to see extra large buttons which are available in some other countries and any avoidance of positioning at steep sloped kerbs would be beneficial.
5. I'll concur with general comments which others will have made in relation to the importance of access to buses and reduction of street furniture.
6. Lastly, there is reference to installation of event structure. Is there any more information available? It would be welcomed to specifically consider how wheelchair users would use this space.

Thank you for sending through.

APPENDIX SEVEN

DfI Roads Initial Consultation and Walkover Notes from Meeting

QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

RECORD OF DISCUSSION

PROJECT TITLE:	Banbridge Public Realm Scheme		RPS PROJECT REF:	NI 2110
MEETING:	Consultation Meeting & Site Walkover	ABCBC Offices	DATE:	7 th August 2019
ATTENDEES:	Stuart Anderson (SA)– RPS Lissa O'Malley (LM) – ABC Dianne Kelly (DK)– ABC Shane Kelland (SK)– ABC	<u>DfI Roads Attendees</u> Martin Ferris (MF) (New Works) David McCullough (DM) Val Russell (VR) Brendan Coleman (BC) (Section engineer) Andrew Steel (AS) (Maint.) David Ewing (DE) (Structures) Joseph O'Neill (JO) (Lighting)	TIME :	13:30pm
APOLOGIES				
SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION:		Initial DfI R Meeting		
ACTION POINTS NOTED				ACTION
1.0	Introduction			
	SA gave a brief over view of the proposed scheme extents being looked at by RPS as part of the overall project. SA commented that whilst all areas within the red line were being brought forward together for planning purposes, that the area around Church Square would form a later development (Phase 2) SA Commented that the purpose of the meeting was to establish what, if any, where the current issues within the scheme area, whether there was any scope for improvement to existing public realm and to initiate early discussions.			
2.0	Points Noted			

2.1	<p>AS commented that the only current known issue within the project area was a single gully located on the south-eastern edge of Church Square, which becomes periodically blocked and causes minor flooding issues at the junction.</p> <p>AS commented that in order to alleviate the flooding the gully is periodically jettied, though AS also commented that the current blockage may be a legacy of the PR Scheme previously carried out in the area.</p>	
2.2	<p>AS also commented that there were issues with some of the paved areas within Gospel Lane – mainly to be with overriding by vehicular traffic.</p> <p>SA commented that proposed footpath makes ups would be done in line with the DMRB, with identification of loading categories. However this would be undertaken as part of the detailed design / construction phase of the scheme.</p>	
2.3	<p>SA asked for feedback from Dfl attendees in regard to the existing natural stone paving in Rathfriland Road and Gospel Lane.</p> <p>No comments received – Dfl attendees generally happy with the stone product used, however concerns were voiced regarding the storage of materials (e.g. paving / kerbs) as Dfl currently have no space for same.</p> <p>SA commented that this would be looked at during the detail design stage / ITT document stage as agreement on % spares would have to be reached with Dfl and Council. This may entail alterations to the broad 5 – 10% spares requirement, currently included for in PR Schemes.</p>	
2.4	<p>SA queried whether there was scope for narrowing of existing carriageway widths in order to improve the width of footpath / public realm. SA clarified that this maybe looked at within localised areas, eg improvement to narrow footpaths on Downshire Bridge / Scarva Street junction.</p> <p>Whilst not discounted as a potential option, within localised areas, feeling from Dfl attendees was that the existing carriageway widths, parking bay dimensions etc within the project area should be retained as they currently stand.</p>	
2.5	<p>SA queried whether there was scope within the scheme to increase the number of disabled parking spaces within the town centre (Newry Street & Bridge Street) – query raised during earlier discussion with Section 75 user groups</p> <p>VR – commented that additional information would be required as part of the Planning Application that identified existing locations, proposed locations and additional / moved signage – as such changes require a legislative process that can be protracted in nature. Similar information would also be required for alterations to existing roads (change from two way to one way) and alterations to loading bay locations etc.</p>	
2.6	DE – commented that current linkages to / from car parks at The Mall and	

	Downshire Road where in the process of being transferred to the Council. Town Centre car parks have already been transferred over to the Council.	
2.7	SA requested 'adoption' maps from Dfl in order to alleviate potential 3 rd party land issues during the planning application process. Comment received from various Dfl members was that there was no formal adoption mapping for Banbridge Town Centre, and that the majority of the project area was already maintained by Dfl R. Linkages to car parks were now being handed over to the Council.	
2.8	SA requested design information from Dfl Structures in relation to the deck / make up of Bann Bridge and Downshire Bridge. DE – would look into providing information if on record / system	Dfl R (DE)
2.9	SA commented that there was a substantial crack within the Bann Bridge (southern side), and was unsure as to reasons for same appearing and damaging the existing concrete parapet to the bridge. DE – commented that as far as Dfl concerned this was not a structural issue, though could be looked at during site walkover. Note – during site walk over, area of damage along southern parapet edge was looked at by Dfl R attendees, though no reasons as to why cracking has occurred were given.	Dfl R
2.10	SA requested information on current street lighting circuits within and directly adjacent to the project area from JO and clarification on lighting specification (columns etc) JO commented that Dfl R – did not have records for the current street lighting arrangements along Bridge Street or Newry Street, however it was known that majority of the area was currently run from the NIE system. JO commented that new lighting diagrams / circuits would be provided from Dfl R in relation to the Scarva Street / Commercial Road junction improvements scheme and that the newer circuitry on Rathfriland Road, Commercial Road and Gospel Lane would be re-searched and provided if available. JO also commented that all new lighting within the project area would have to be run from new circuit throughout. JO also commented that Standard columns should be provided, and that these should be purpose construction with Festive lighting sockets, banner arms and hanging basket arms pre constructed into the column rather than as an 'add on' – specification to be forwarded	Dfl R (JO)
2.11	JO also commented that the lighting design should be to current design requirements, which for town centre would be C2 lux levels. SA commented that RPS often utilise design services provided by Urbis as part of the lighting design requirements – confirmed as acceptable by JO. JO also commented that preference for column location was to the rear of the footpath, though final column locations would be dependent upon widths of footpaths, underground service locations and other site	

	constraints. JO also confirmed that there was a requirement for 800mm set back from kerb face to column edge if column to be placed at kerb edge of roadway.	
3.0	Notes from Site Walkover	
3.1	SA queried potential for replacing railings on Bann Bridge with DE. SA commented that potential replacement railings would utilise the existing post system buried within the concrete parapet in order to minimise / negate potential for damage to the bridge structure. DE commented that there was new guidance on railings over bridges, which could be forwarded – guidance preferred for obscuring views to what lay below bridge e.g. river, road or railway as a deterrent to potential ‘jumpers’. DE also commented that new railings may have to be extended vertically to account for cyclists (1.4m height) and that they would have to be ‘unclimbable’ in form	
3.2	AS commented that high voltage cable ran immediately below the paving on within the footpath on the northern side of the Bann Bridge – had been hit during previous works- and that there was a steel protection plate buried within the roadway at the junction between Downshire Road and lower end of Bridge Street – depicted by recent asphalt replacement section.	
3.3	DM commented that there was a preference to have no bollards protecting pedestrian crossing points due to issues with paving damage when they are struck by vehicles. Protective railings (similar to those in Church Square) would be acceptable in locations, though very much dependent upon street widths, street furniture and turning requirements for vehicles.	
4.0	Any Other Business	
	None	
5.0	Date of Next Meeting TBC	
DISTRIBUTION		PROJECT FILE
To those present		

Historic Environment Department Initial Consultation

QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

RECORD OF DISCUSSION

PROJECT TITLE:	Banbridge Public Realm Scheme		RPS PROJECT REF:	NI 2110
MEETING:	Consultation Meeting & Site Walkover	ABCBC Offices	DATE:	8 th August 2019
ATTENDEES:	Stuart Anderson (SA)– RPS Lissa O'Malley (LM) – ABC Dianne Kelly (DK)– ABC	Sinead McAvoy (SM) – Planning Officer ABC Jacqui Stokes (JS) – HED Senior Area Architect	TIME :	13:30pm
APOLOGIES				
SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION:	Initial Discussion Meeting			
ACTION POINTS NOTED				ACTION
1.0	Introduction			
	<p>SA gave a brief over view of the proposed scheme extents being looked at by RPS as part of the overall project.</p> <p>SA commented that whilst all areas within the red line were being brought forward together for planning purposes, that the area around Church Square would form a later development (Phase 2)</p> <p>SA noted that there were a number of listed buildings / structures etc either within or directly adjacent to the project boundary, and that the purpose of the meeting was to establish early discussions regarding future / proposed public realm scheme.</p>			
2.0	Points Noted			
2.1	<p>LM – commented that there was a preference to have the railings on Downshore Bridge replaced, with potential to have lighting columns re-instated at end of parapets.</p> <p>JS commented that new railings should be simple in nature rather than an attempt at re-instating previous railings. Need to differentiate between old and new structures. Lighting columns could be looked at as part of the overall design but would also need to be simple and not a copy of former</p>			

	<p>design.</p> <p>SA commented that design of same could be looked at though such features may have to be designed to utilise existing column posts etc in order to minimise damage to existing bridge structure / parapet stones etc. SA also commented that previous Dfl R meeting had indicated that such structures over bridge would be subject to current guidance requirements regarding pedestrian / cyclist safety and be robust enough to prevent vehicle damage etc.</p>	
2.2	<p>LM – commented regarding additional lighting in the Cuts – could this be of a temporary nature fixed to the Retaining wall faces?</p> <p>JS commented that preference would be not to have lighting fixed to the walls, though if being looked at lighting fixtures should be fixed within current limestone jointing in order to preserve the stone work. JS also commented that cabling / connections could be an issue – depending upon connection points. Lighting would have to be sympathetic and not a distraction to vehicular users – perhaps consider ground mounted lighting, but was also aware of maintenance issues with same.</p>	
2.3	<p>JS commented that Listed Building consent would be required as part of the overall application. If undertaking any railing replacement etc, then HED would require existing and proposed elevations in order to assess aesthetical changes. Specification sheets / notes would also have to be provided as part of the application process.</p>	
2.4	<p>DK commented regarding potential for cleaning stone work, removing weed growth and maintaining walls to The Cuts generally.</p> <p>JS recommended DOFF cleaning system – utilises steam cleaning rather than chemical cleaning systems. If clearing weed/ plant growth from the jointing then weeds should be cut rather than pulled and remaining roots be chemically treated over a number of years in order to preserve the jointing.</p> <p>Re-pointing of the joints would have to be undertaken by a limestone mortar specialist, which could be expensive and take a protracted length of time if doing all walls.</p>	
2.5	<p>JS also made general comments for design consideration;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preference to not have additional street tree planting obscuring views towards Listed Buildings – e.g. Town Hall; 2. Street furniture should be similar location to existing – simple design required 3. Street lighting columns to be at back of footpath and not overpowering in numbers; 4. Paving to be sympathetic and not mixed pallet of colours which can lead to a distracting ‘pie-bald’ effect if not utilised sympathetically; 	
2.6	<p>LM commented that litter bins housed a 240Lt wheelie bin – which allowed for easier maintenance and collection to be undertake by cleansing department. New arrangements / bins will have to allow for same.</p>	

3.0	Any Other Business				
	None				
4.0	Date of Next Meeting				
	TBC				
DISTRIBUTION				PROJECT FILE	
To those present					