

Comber

Town Centre Masterplan

Compendium of Appendices
March 2015



ARDS
BOROUGH
COUNCIL

AECOM



Rev	Date	Details	Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by
A	April 2015	Compilation of appendices	Kieran Carlin Town Planner	Kieran Carlin Town Planner	Una Somerville Associate Town Planner
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APPENDIX A PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT



Comber Town Centre Masterplan

Appendix A

Planning and
Environmental Context

April 2015

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1. PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

1.1 Environmental Context

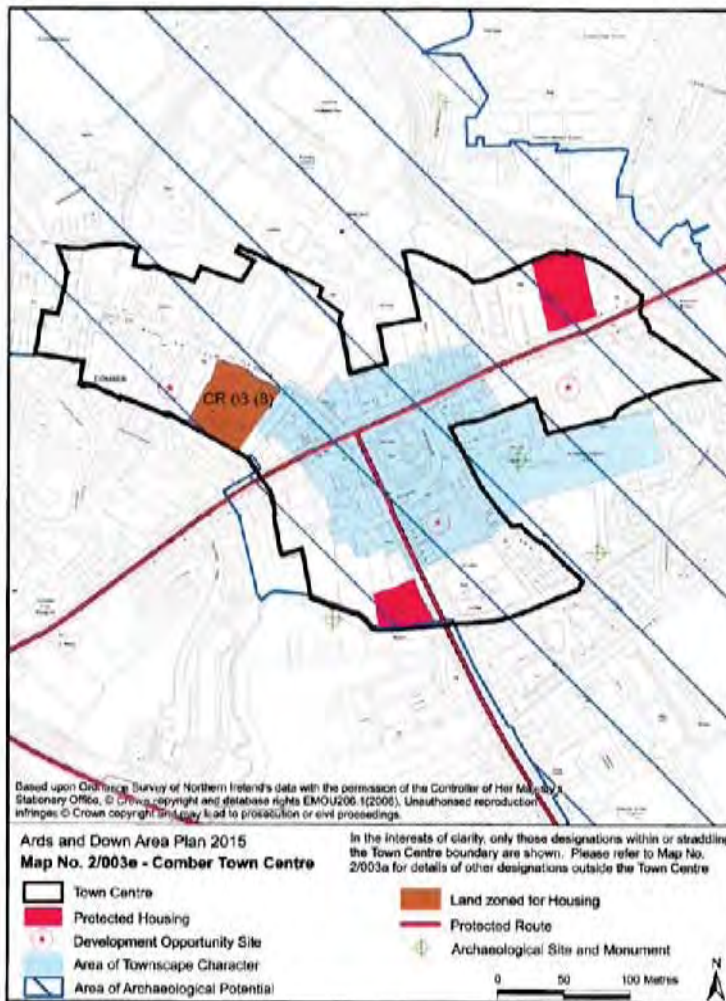
Comber has a wealth of built heritage assets including listed buildings. These designated sites will need to be considered in the context of the Masterplan and their protection emphasised where necessary. Obviously all projects and proposals identified in the Masterplan will require the necessary statutory consents, however it will be important for projects and proposals to consider their impact on built heritage at an early stage and indicate risks where necessary.

There are no natural heritage designations within the Town Centre. Strangford Lough however has multiple designations such as ASSI, Ramsar, SPA and SAC; but these are outside the settlement limit.

1.2 Planning Context

1.2.1 Ards and Down Area Plan 2015

Appendix A Drawing 1 below is an extract from the Ards and Down Area Plan illustrating the Town Centre boundary and plan designations.



Appendix A Drawing 1 – Comber Town Centre

The main shopping streets within Comber Town Centre are Castle Street, Bridge Street, part of High Street and Mill Street. The defined area will ensure the continuance of a compact and attractive shopping environment, offering both choice and convenience.

1.2.1.1 ***Development Opportunity Sites***

- Lands along the southern side of The Square

The buildings extending along the entire length of the southern side of The Square were last used as a car showroom. The site presents a redevelopment opportunity within the centre of the town. However, it also forms an important element within the Area of Townscape Character and would require sensitive development in conformity with Proposal CR 14. Any new building should present a continuous frontage to retain the sense of enclosure within The Square. The site would be suitable for a range of uses including commercial/residential/civic in accordance with prevailing regional Town Centre policy.

- 25-35 Bridge Street

The site lies along the southern side of Bridge Street in an area of mixed use. The buildings on site are mainly small residential units. There is a considerable area of backland between the dwellings and St. Mary's Church, a listed building. Future development proposals should carefully consider impact upon the listed building and the Area of Townscape Character under Proposal CR 14 of the Plan. There is currently no suitable access onto Bridge Street to facilitate the site. The access arrangements for this development opportunity site would require careful consideration of the existing accesses, both adjacent and opposite the site. Any future detailed design proposal must address this issue and the nature and extent of any future proposed site would determine if a right turning facility is required. The site has potential for a range of uses including commercial/office/ residential in accordance with prevailing regional policy.

- Lands along the southern side of Castle Street

Castle Street is a busy narrow commercial street characterised by its small commercial units. The street currently suffers from a degree of congestion. The lands to the rear of the buildings fronting the streets are underutilised and represent an opportunity for Town Centre development. The area is currently in a number of ownerships and would have to be developed as a whole. The main constraint to development is access; this would have to be taken through an existing entrance as permission is unlikely to be granted for a further opening which would have a detrimental effect of the streetscape. Any access would be required to be to the satisfaction of the Roads Service.

1.2.1.2 ***Proposal CR 21 Town Centre Housing***

The following areas of Town Centre Housing are designated in accordance with Policy HOU 3 in Volume 1 of the Plan and as indicated on Appendix A Drawing 1 Comber Town Centre Map. They include parts of:

- The Mews
- Stepping Stones

1.2.1.3 ***Proposal CR 14 The Square Area of Townscape Character***

An Area of Townscape Character is designated in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS 6): Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage at The Square as shown on Appendix A Drawing 1.

The distinctive character, appearance, key features and intrinsic qualities of The Square and the basis for its designation as an Area of Townscape Character derive from:

- the planned layout of The Square contrasting with the surrounding informal townscape;
- the Gillespie Monument and its setting representing the central focus of The Square;
- the Parish Church (1841), built on the site of the Cistercian Monastery;
- older buildings fronting The Square, best represented by those on the North side; and
- cobbled pavement at No's 9 and 11.

Within an informal and modestly scaled townscape, The Square is a distinctive key focus for the local community. It possesses a strong architectural presence and sense of enclosure. It is an important historic space of robust form, but an accumulation of recent minor developments has led to a significant erosion of traditional detailing and authentic artefacts, to the extent that Conservation Area status could not be justified. With the opportunity for new development limited, efforts to sustain the separate and distinctive identity of The Square should be concentrated on conservation of the present building fabric and enhancement and consolidation of the existing character.

The appearance of The Square would benefit from an elimination of street clutter, for example, wirescape, signage and cabling.

1.2.1.4 Proposal CR 15 The Mill Village Area of Townscape Character

The distinctive character, appearance, key features and intrinsic qualities and the basis for its designation as an Area of Townscape Character derive from:

- the arts and crafts flavour of the houses and the tones and colours of the natural stonework, brick and rendered finishes used throughout which combine in a sense of distinctiveness critical to this particular environment
- the Mill, a solid Victorian stone-built industrial building and the Andrews Memorial Hall, both strong individual architectural statements
- the First Presbyterian Church, dominating the height, but providing a tenuous link between the communities of Mill Village and the historic town, then latter epitomised by The Square
- the unity and individuality of each terrace
- the complementary role of the landscaped area between the Mill, the Hall and Carnesure Terrace through which passes Mill River
- the two terraces fronting Brownlow Street dating from the early years of the 20th Century; they are two storey, slated and rendered and comprise two alternating complementary designs influenced by the 'arts and craft' style
- row of trees on the eastern side of Railway Street
- the distinct and corporate character of Nos. 71-135 Railway Street – built in the early 20th Century as housing for Andrew's Mill

The Mill, the essential component within the town, dates from the 1860s and was in use until recently. The setting and the relationship with the local landscape elements and the mill housing, creates a cohesive and intimate composition with a distinct identity and intrinsic quality of its own.

Brownlow Street is residential and was developed in conjunction with Andrew's Mill. The street developed from the north and southward. At the south end Nos. 59-89 and Nos. 52-82 were developed as an entity.

Railway Street is residential with the older buildings lining the west side. The development to the east is relatively recent and on filled ground. The row of trees that characterises the eastern side is probably contemporary with the older housing and is an essential ingredient of the street's character.

Within the Mill Village Area of Townscape Character, a sense of completeness pervades and minimal potential exists for new development. The singular sense of place attaching to Mill Village can only be protected by conserving the physical fabric, which is the essence of its character and appearance.

In addition to meeting prevailing regional planning policy requirements, any future use within the Mill building should respect the industrial and architectural legacy of the building and its surroundings.

It is considered that Mill Village possesses all the qualities to merit protection as a Conservation Area. The Department's will consider designation of a Conservation Area when resources permit.

1.2.1.5 ***Proposal CR 16 Area of Archaeological Potential***

The area identified reflects the area of pre historic, medieval and post medieval settlements where, on the basis of current knowledge, it is likely that archaeological remains will be encountered in the course of development.

1.3 **Review of Previous Planning Reports**

1.3.1 ***Comber Town Strategy (GVA Grimley, 2005)***

The strategy was commissioned by Comber Regeneration Ltd in 2005 to prepare a Town Centre Strategy for Comber. This would go towards helping produce a framework that would assist Comber by:

- Defining the town's role;
- Capitalising on the surrounding assets;
- Ensuring infrastructure is in place for future development;
- Unlock opportunities for development and growth;
- Utilise Comber's unique characteristic to retain its presentation;
- Improved design quality and access to ensure awareness.

Following a comprehensive overview of the consultation and SWOT analysis, the strategy identified 6 no. priority opportunities to be taken forward for physical implementation. These are listed below along with an assessment of development to date:

a) Movement and Infrastructure

2005 report: Promote the implementation of shared surfaces within the town's retail core area to prioritise people and combat the issue of insufficient footway widths and traffic build up along the streets e.g. Castle Street. Promote timed access around The Square to ensure

continued access by service vehicles whilst providing a pedestrian friendly zone throughout the day.

Progress to date: The public realm scheme which is currently under construction has not been able to deal with the issue surrounding insufficient footway widths due to land ownership restrictions; however the footways will become a safer environment for pedestrians. The junction at Castle Street still remains a major constraint on traffic movement through Comber. Timed initiatives to the junction are yet to be implemented.

b) Development at The Square

2005 report: The report recommends protecting and enhancing the integrity of The Square and implementation of the following measures:

- Alter traffic flow and timed access;
- Provide parking along the side of The Square;
- Implement a planting scheme on the approach roads to The Square to enhance its definition;
- Implement a public realm scheme and lighting strategy to improve the area and could integrate with St Mary's Church;
- Create an events space with a regular maintenance programme to attract a larger footfall to The Square.

Progress to date: The public realm scheme has addressed many of the issues raised in the earlier plan, however there still appears to be a lack of integration with St Mary's church.

c) Development of the public realm

2005 report: Implement a quality public realm scheme to attract investment to the town.

Progress to date: A public realm scheme has been designed and is currently at pre-construction stage. It should address many of the points raised in the original plan.

d) Development sites

2005 report: The development sites adjacent to The Square should offer protection to ensure the frontages match the existing context as well active frontages on the ground floors. It is noted that there are lots of residential development opportunities throughout the town, and that the Town Centre infrastructure should be improved in general to cater for the increase in numbers that is expected.

Progress to date: Sites have been developed

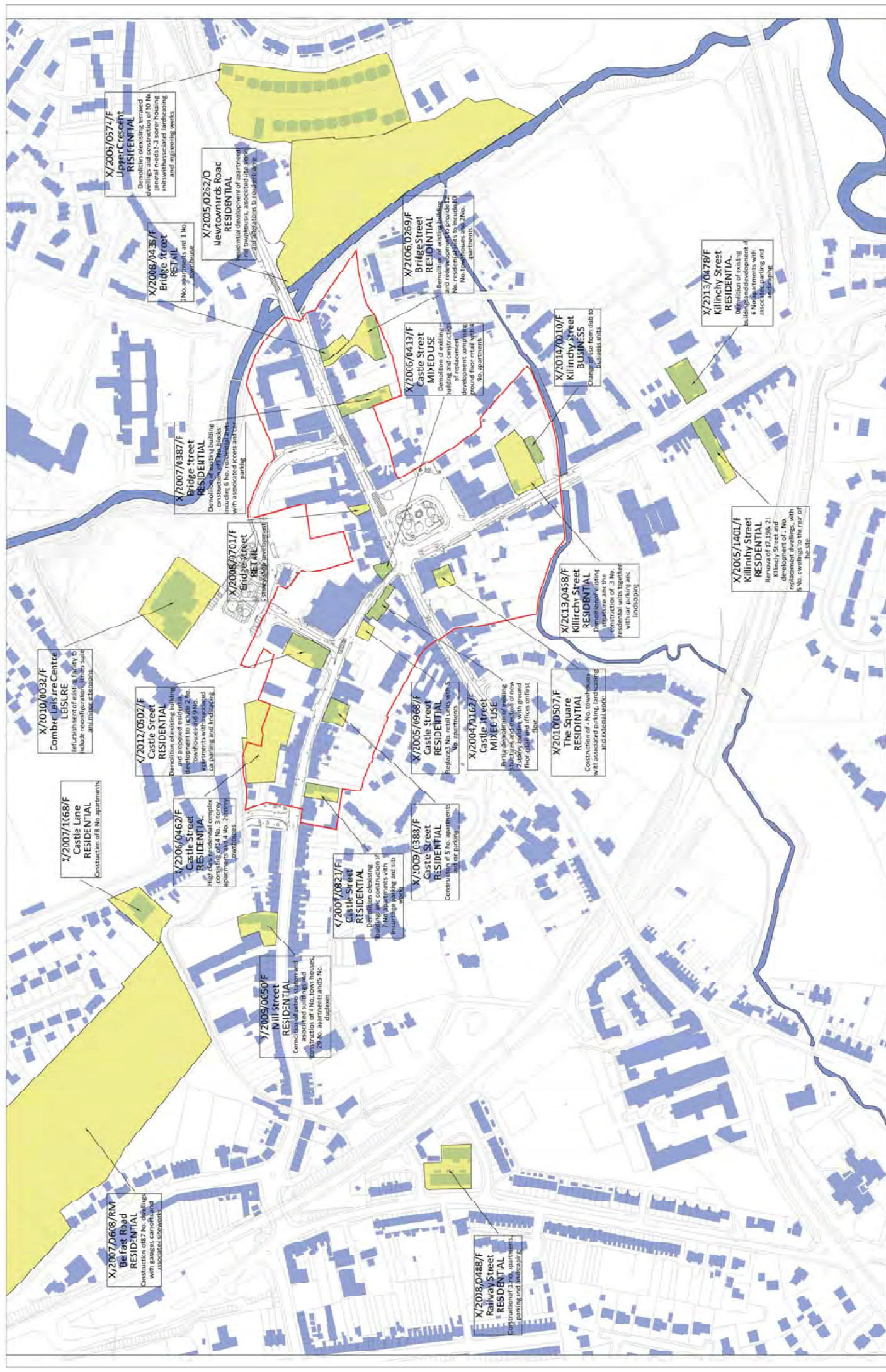
e) Other key opportunity sites

The following opportunity sites were noted as having development potential – airstrip site, bus depot, corner of Castle Street and backlands of Castle Street. These still remain undeveloped apart from the corner of Castle Street which has an approval for residential apartments.

f) Potential land use changes

Encourage specialist retailing in and around the Town Centre. This has happened to an extent but should be built upon further within the Masterplan.

The report suggested a variety of options for the future development of Comber but there has been a low level of projects taken forward to the implementation stage. The main scheme which has progress to date is the public realm works, which should play a fundamental role in the improvement of the town.



X/2005/0574/F
Upper Crescent
RESIDENTIAL
Demolition of existing terraced dwellings and construction of 50 No. new dwellings with associated landscaping and engineering works.

X/2008/0438/F
Bridge Street
RETAIL
1 No. apartments and 1 No. shop house.

X/2005/0262/O
Newtownards Road
RESIDENTIAL
Residential development of apartments and alterations to road structure.

X/2006/0369/F
Bridge Street
RESIDENTIAL
Demolition of existing building and construction of 10 No. residential units including 4 No. town houses and 2 No. apartments.

X/2006/0413/F
Castle Street
MIXED USE
Demolition of existing building and construction of 10 No. residential units including 4 No. town houses and 6 No. apartments.

X/2014/0010/F
Kilinchy Street
BUSINESS
Change of use from club to business units.

X/2013/0478/F
Kilinchy Street
RESIDENTIAL
Signification of existing building and construction of 6 No. apartments with associated parking and landscaping.

X/2007/0387/F
Bridge Street
RESIDENTIAL
Demolition of existing building and construction of 10 No. residential units with associated access and parking.

X/2008/0701/F
Bridge Street
RETAIL
3 storey multi development.

X/2010/0032/F
Comber Leisure Centre
LEISURE
Refurbishment of existing facility to include reconfiguration, fitness suite and minor extensions.

X/2012/0502/F
Castle Street
RESIDENTIAL
Demolition of existing building and proposed residential development to include 2 No. town houses with associated car parking and landscaping.

X/2005/0968/F
Castle Street
RESIDENTIAL
Replace No. retail units with 5 No. apartments.

X/2004/0162/F
Castle Street
MIXED USE
Bring development of existing structures and erection of new 2 storey building with ground floor open to street on first floor.

X/2010/0507/F
The Square
RESIDENTIAL
Construction of 7 No. town houses with associated parking and landscaping.

X/2007/1668/F
Castle Lane
RESIDENTIAL
Construction of 8 No. apartments.

X/2006/0462/F
Castle Street
RESIDENTIAL
High class residential complex consisting of 1 No. 3 storey apartment complex.

X/2007/0827/F
Castle Street
RESIDENTIAL
Demolition of existing building and construction of 10 No. residential units including 4 No. town houses and 6 No. apartments with associated parking and site works.

X/2009/0388/F
Castle Street
RESIDENTIAL
Construction of 5 No. apartments with car parking.

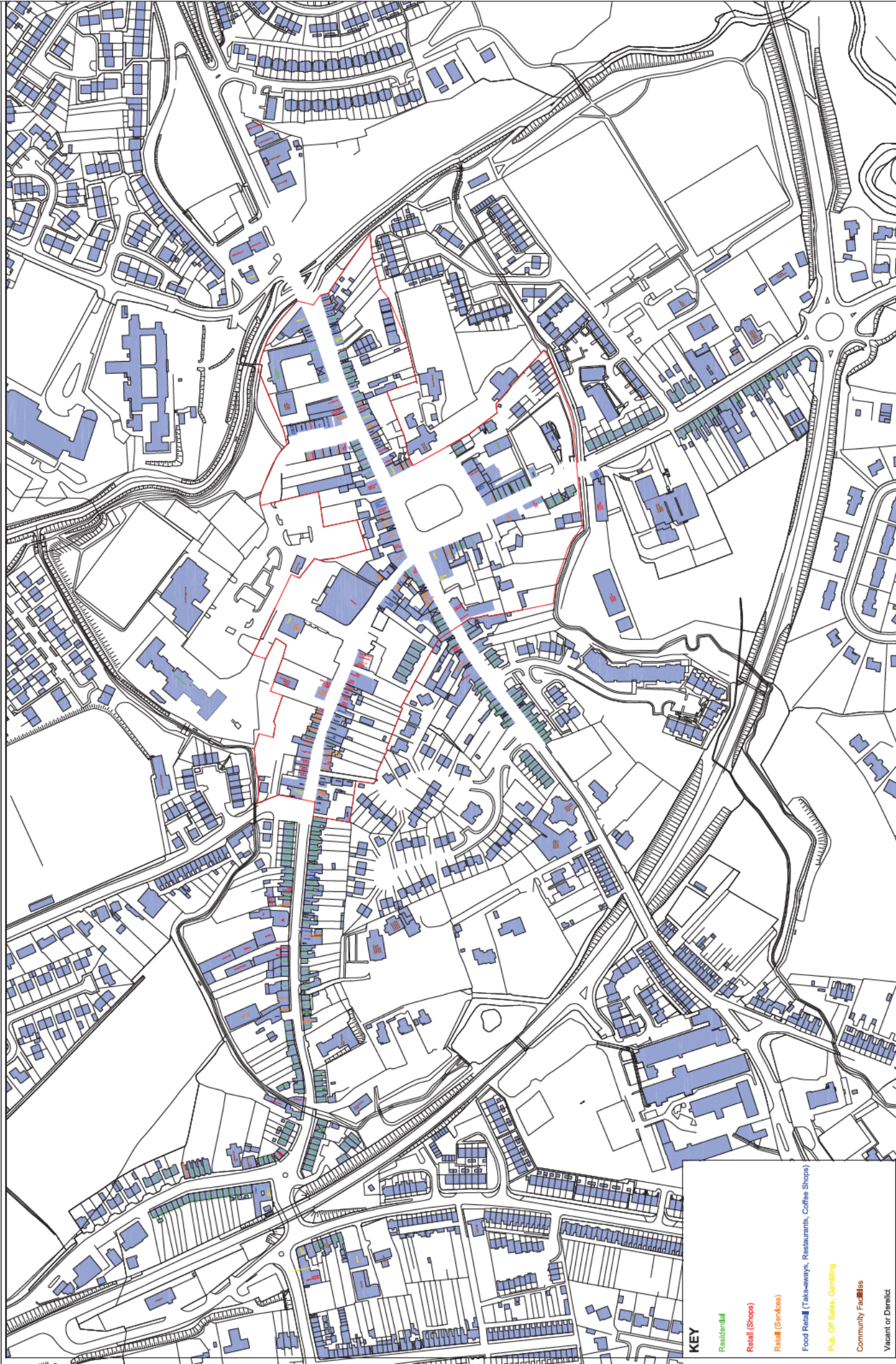
X/2009/0050/F
Mill Street
RESIDENTIAL
Construction of 4 No. town houses and associated building and construction of 4 No. town houses, 29 No. apartments and 5 No. duplexes.

X/2007/0668/RM
Belfast Road
RESIDENTIAL
Construction of 87 No. dwellings with garage, carport and associated site works.

X/2008/0488/F
Railway Street
RESIDENTIAL
Construction of 1 No. apartments with associated parking and landscaping.

X/2005/1401/F
Kilinchy Street
RESIDENTIAL
Removal of 12, 198, 21 and 218 No. dwellings and replacement dwellings, with development of 1 No. 5 No. dwellings to the rear of the site.

NOTES		Information		Comber Master plan		Planning History	
CONSTRUCTION/REPAIRS	MAINTENANCE/CLEANING	DEMOLITION/REUSE	OTHER	RESIDENTIAL	COMMERCIAL	INDUSTRIAL	OTHER
<p>IN ORDER TO BE CONSIDERED FOR FURTHER WORK, ALL PROPOSALS MUST BE REFERRED TO THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT. IT IS ADVISED THAT THE WORKS OF THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT ARE SUBJECT TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLANNING (CONSTRUCTION) REGULATIONS 2007 AND THE PLANNING (CONSTRUCTION) REGULATIONS 2007 (AS AMENDED).</p>							
<p>SAFETY, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION: SEE THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT WEBSITE FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.</p>							
<p>URRS URRS Infrastructure & Environment Ltd Newry, Northern Ireland Tel: 0300 200 0000 www.rrs.com</p>		<p>Project No. 11/0000 Scale 1:1000</p>		<p>Project No. 11/0000 Scale 1:1000</p>		<p>Project No. 11/0000 Scale 1:1000</p>	



KEY

- Residential
- Retail (Shops)
- Retail (Services)
- Food Retail (Take-aways, Restaurants, Coffee Shops)
- Pub, Off Sales, Gambling
- Community Facilities
- Vacant or Derelict

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<p>Information</p> <p>Project No: 1428850 Title: Comber Masterplan</p>		<p>Shop Names, Uses and Vacancy</p>	
<p>Department for Social Development</p>		<p>NOTES</p> <p>1. This map is for information only and does not constitute a contract. It is subject to the terms and conditions of the contract. The user of this map is responsible for its use and for any errors or omissions. The user of this map is responsible for its use and for any errors or omissions.</p>	

APPENDIX B SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT



Comber Town Centre Masterplan

Appendix B

Socio-economic Context

April 2015

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1. SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

This socio-economic profile for Comber seeks to provide an overall demographic context in order to create a profile for the area. This in turn will provide an important foundation, informing the basis of the development framework.

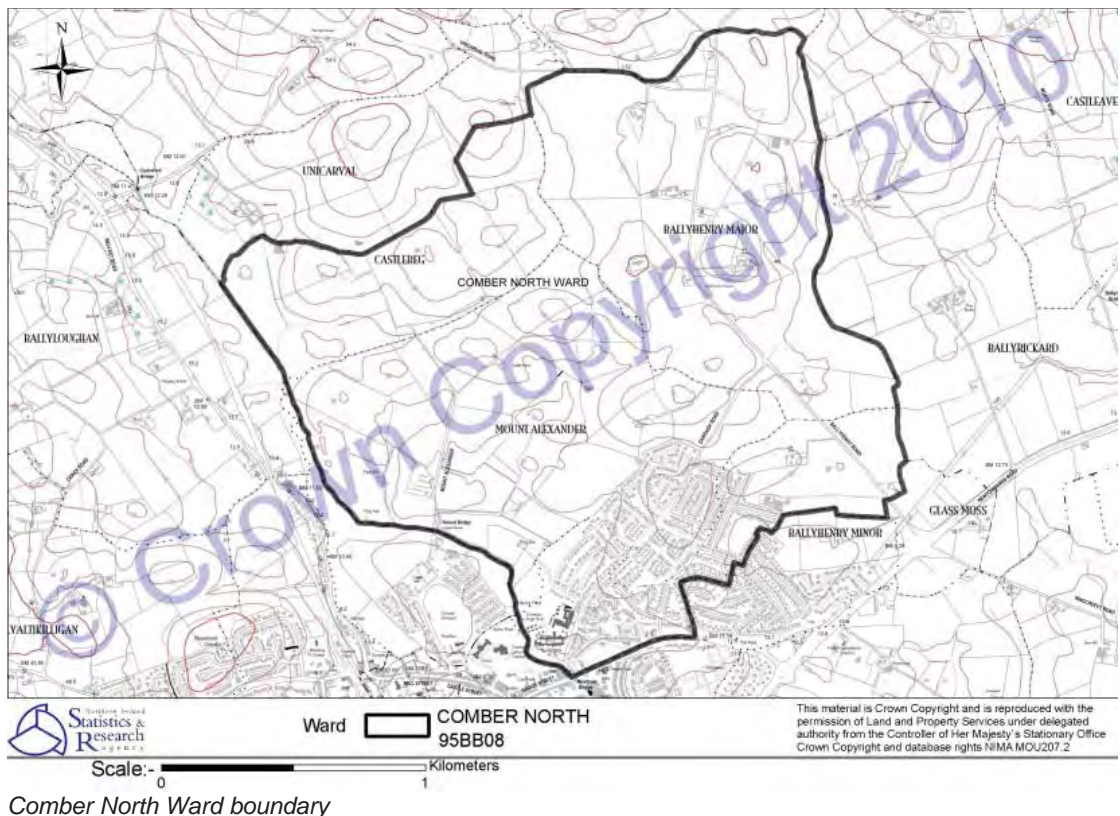
1.1 Wards and Super Output Areas

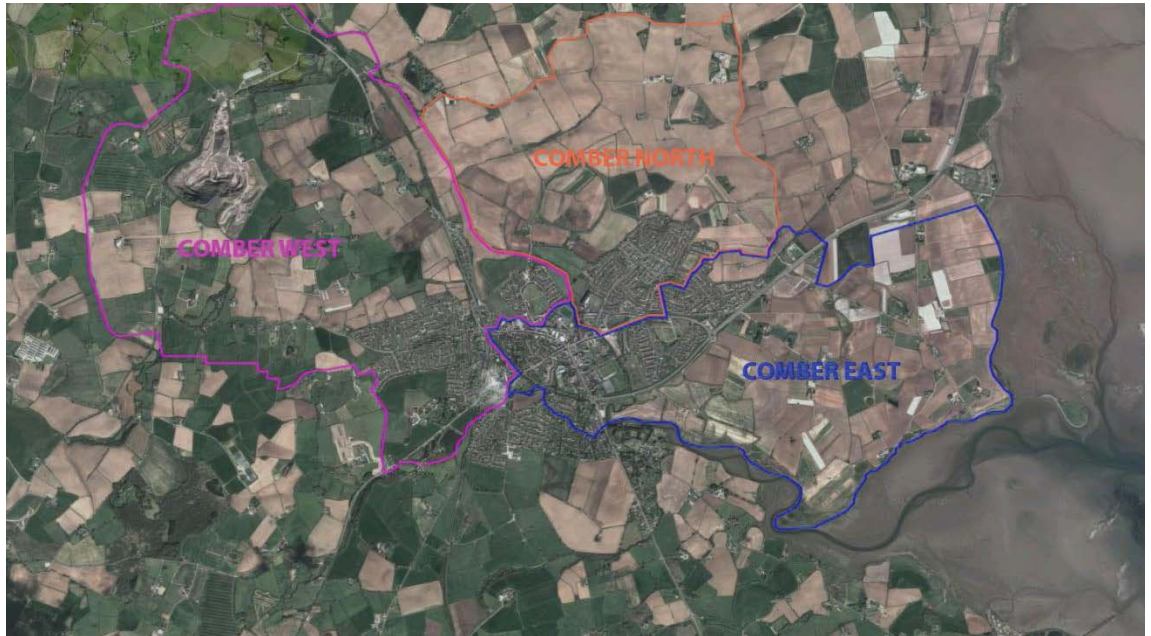
Super Output Areas were developed by NISRA to improve the reporting of small area statistics. These are aggregates of 2001 Census Output Areas (OAs) and are a relatively small scale unit, containing an average of just more than 2,000 people.

There are three wards for Comber (Comber North, East and West), however, there are four Super output areas (Comber North 1 2, Comber East 1 2, Comber West 1 2) which take into account the environs of the settlement and provide more detailed and accurate data.

1.2 Rationale

A desktop survey of the NISRA data for the relevant output areas for Comber was carried out. Analysis of this data has identified key points which will contribute to the overall development framework.

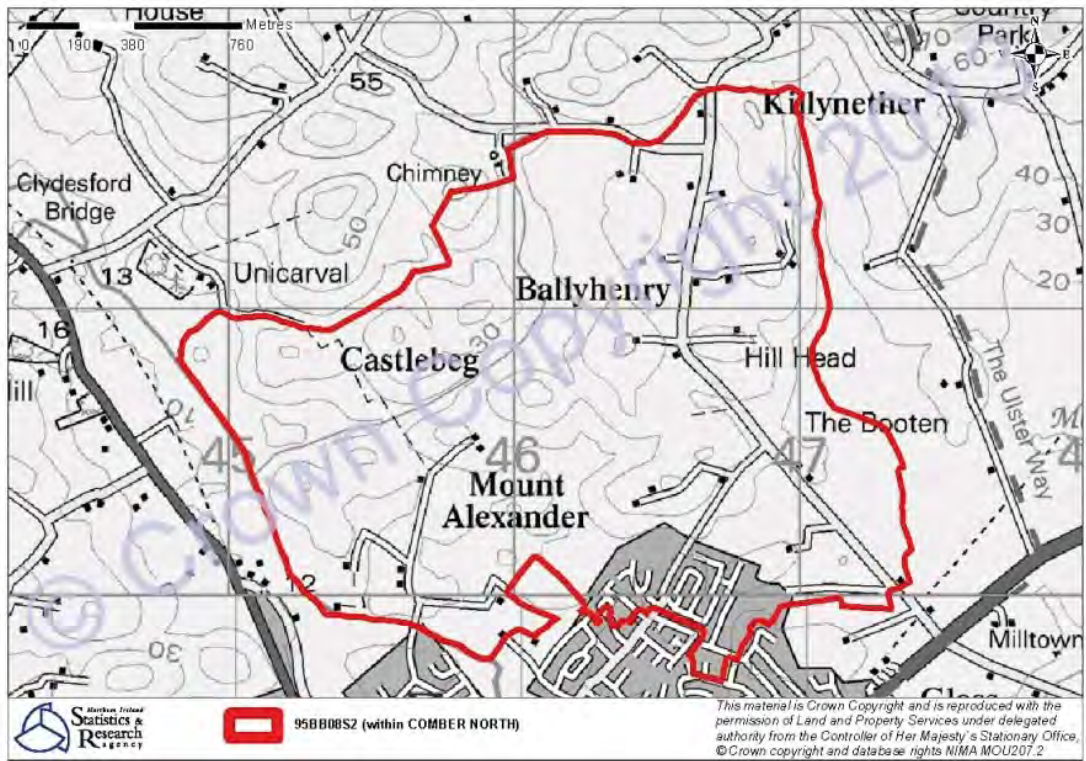




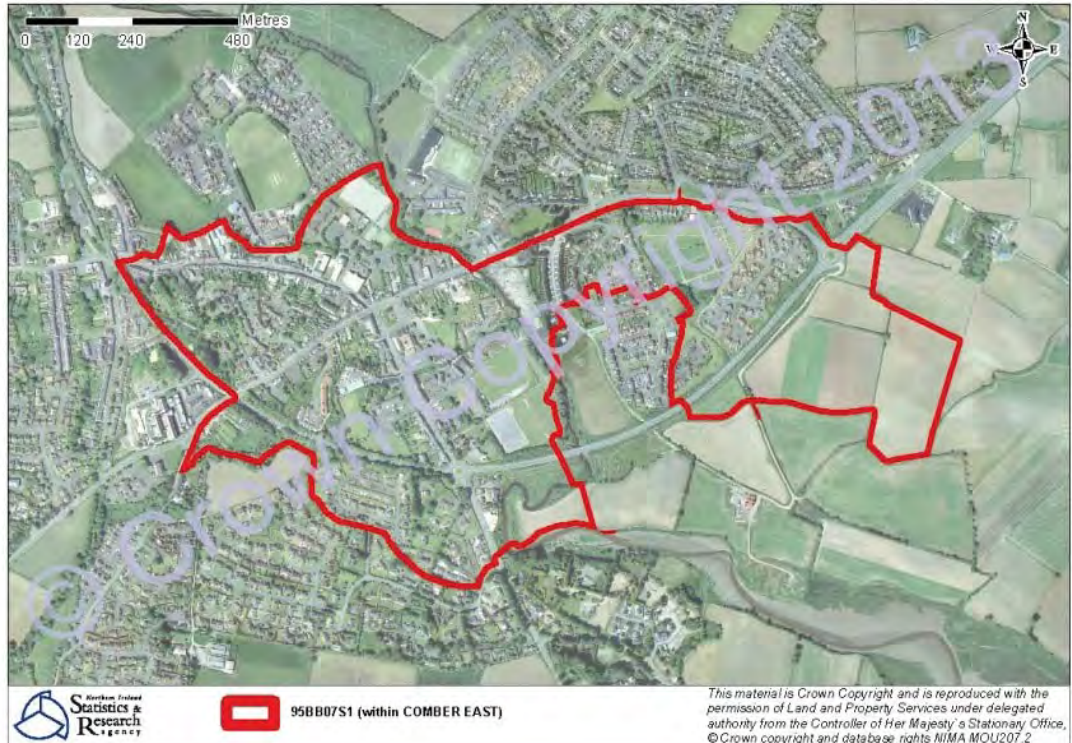
Comber's combined ward boundaries



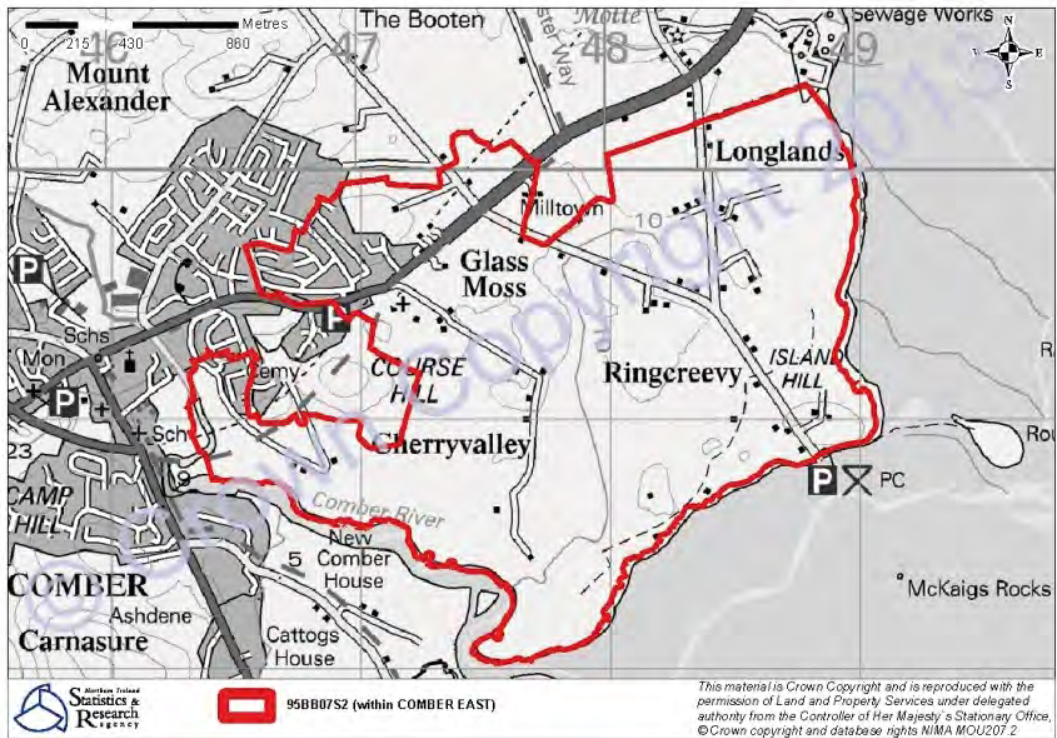
Comber North 1 SOA boundary



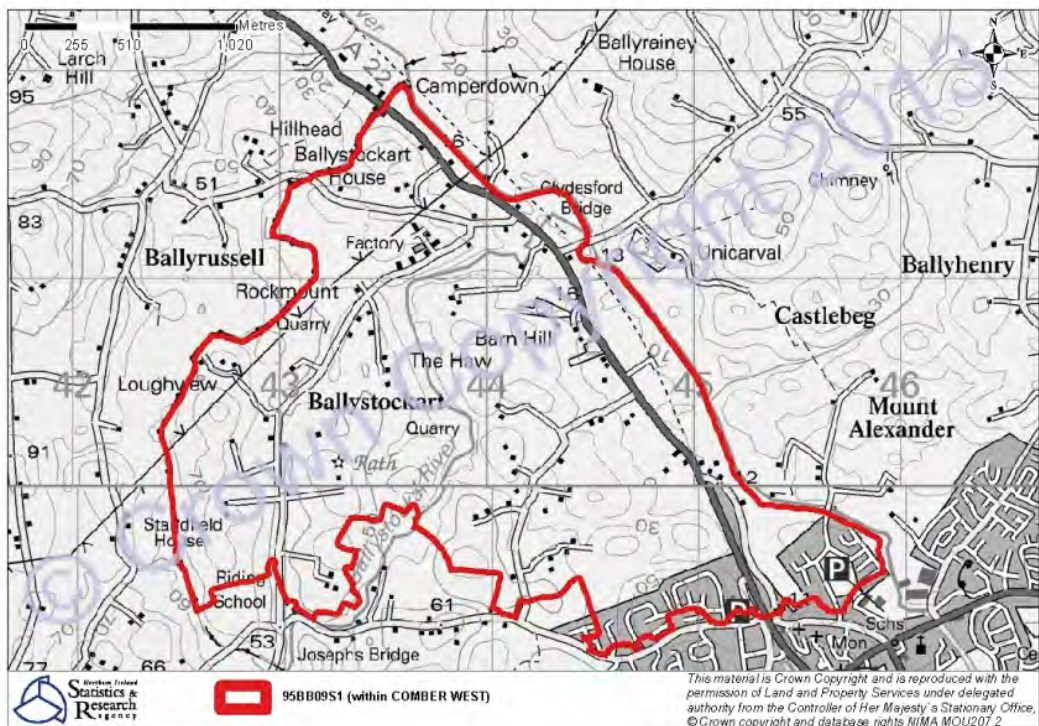
Comber North 2 SOA boundary



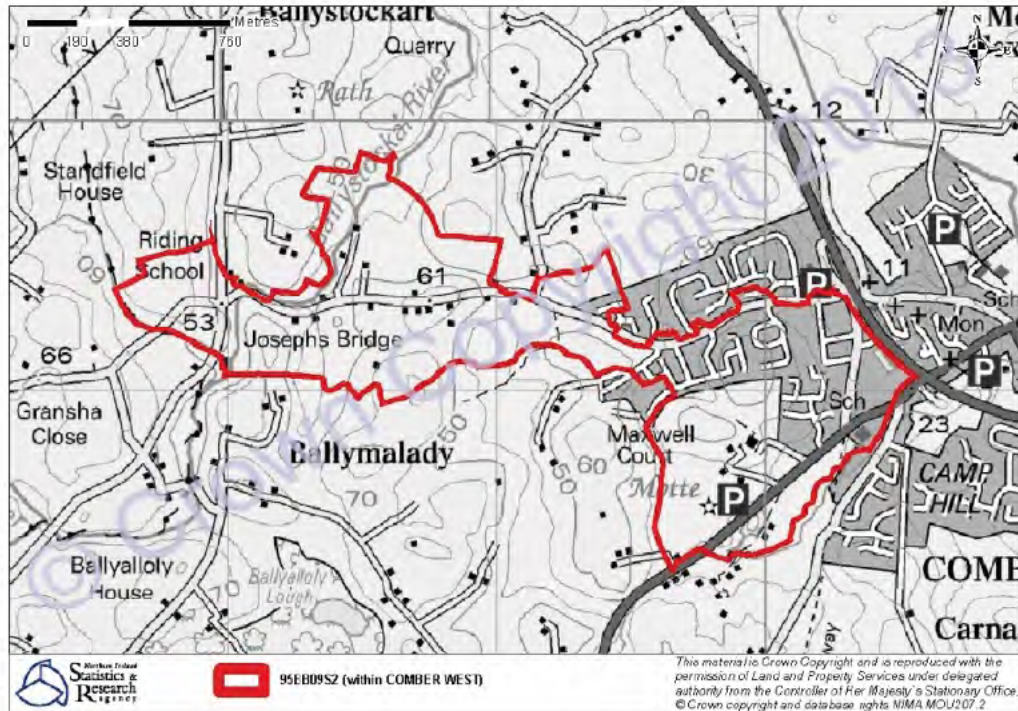
Comber East 1 SOA boundary



Comber East 2 SOA boundary



Comber West 1 SOA boundary



Comber West 2 SOA boundary

1.3 Key Statistics

Statistic	Comber North 1 SOA	Comber North 2 SOA	Comber East 1 SOA	Comber East 2 SOA	Comber West 1 SOA	Comber West 2 SOA	Total/ Overall Ave.
Usually resident population	1,331	1,294	1658	1,295	1,325	1,618	8521/ 1420.16
Households (average. size)	589 (2.26)	479 (2.70)	819 (1.95)	496 (2.61)	561 (2.30)	692 (2.34)	3636/ 606 (2.35)

Statistic	Comber North 1 SOA	Comber North 2 SOA	Comber East 1 SOA	Comber East 2 SOA	Comber West 1 SOA	Comber West 2 SOA	Total/ Overall Ave.
Demography	<p>18.48% were aged under 16 years and 20.29% were aged 65 and over;</p> <p>45.30% of the usually resident population were male and 54.70% were female; and</p> <p>42 years was the average (median) age of the population.</p>	<p>21.41% were aged under 16 years and 9.74% were aged 65 and over;</p> <p>47.84% of the usually resident population were male and 52.16% were female; and</p> <p>38 years was the average (median) age of the population.</p>	<p>16.16% were aged under 16 years and 23.94% were aged 65 and over;</p> <p>45.60% of the usually resident population were male and 54.40% were female; and</p> <p>42 years was the average (median) age of the population.</p>	<p>18.53% were aged under 16 years and 17.14% were aged 65 and over;</p> <p>49.42% of the usually resident population were male and 50.58% were female; and</p> <p>42 years was the average (median) age of the population.</p>	<p>14.79% were aged under 16 years and 24.38% were aged 65 and over;</p> <p>48.83% of the usually resident population were male and 51.17% were female; and</p> <p>49 years was the average (median) age of the population.</p>	<p>14.83% were aged under 16 years and 13.41% were aged 65 and over;</p> <p>49.51% of the usually resident population were male and 50.49% were female; and</p> <p>43 years was the average (median) age of the population.</p>	<p>17.37% Under 16</p> <p>18.15% 65+</p> <p>47.75% Male</p> <p>52.25% Female</p> <p>42.67</p>
	Ethnicity, identity, language and religion	<p>99.17% were from the white (including Irish Traveler) ethnic group;</p> <p>6.76% belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion and 81.67% belong to or were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; and</p> <p>74.38% indicated that they had a British national identity, 3.76% had an Irish national identity and 29.53% had a Northern Irish national identity*.</p>	<p>97.99% were from the white (including Irish Traveler) ethnic group;</p> <p>5.33% belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion and 86.24% belong to or were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; and</p> <p>80.45% indicated that they had a British national identity, 3.48% had an Irish national identity and 30.29% had a Northern Irish national identity*.</p>	<p>98.19% were from the white (including Irish Traveler) ethnic group;</p> <p>5.43% belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion and 82.45% belong to or were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; and</p> <p>73.76% indicated that they had a British national identity, 5.07% had an Irish national identity and 30.58% had a Northern Irish national identity*.</p>	<p>99.31% were from the white (including Irish Traveler) ethnic group;</p> <p>2.16% belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion and 89.11% belong to or were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; and</p> <p>79.85% indicated that they had a British national identity, 3.17% had an Irish national identity and 28.96% had a Northern Irish national identity*.</p>	<p>98.79% were from the white (including Irish Traveler) ethnic group;</p> <p>4.23% belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion and 85.89% belong to or were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; and</p> <p>78.57% indicated that they had a British national identity, 5.96% had an Irish national identity and 32.15% had a Northern Irish national identity*.</p>	<p>99.44% were from the white (including Irish Traveler) ethnic group;</p> <p>4.57% belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion and 84.98% belong to or were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; and</p> <p>78.74% indicated that they had a British national identity, 5.32% had an Irish national identity and 32.32% had a Northern Irish national identity*.</p>

Statistic	Comber North 1 SOA	Comber North 2 SOA	Comber East 1 SOA	Comber East 2 SOA	Comber West 1 SOA	Comber West 2 SOA	Total/ Overall Ave.
Health	28.93% of people had a long-term health problem or disability that limited their day-to-day activities;	15.30% of people had a long-term health problem or disability that limited their day-to-day activities;	29.13% of people had a long-term health problem or disability that limited their day-to-day activities;	18.69% of people had a long-term health problem or disability that limited their day-to-day activities;	19.92% of people had a long-term health problem or disability that limited their day-to-day activities;	14.28% of people had a long-term health problem or disability that limited their day-to-day activities;	21.04%
	69.35% of people stated their general health was either good or very good; and 13.60% of people stated that they provided unpaid care to family, friends, neighbours or others.	83.85% of people stated their general health was either good or very good; and 13.14% of people stated that they provided unpaid care to family, friends, neighbours or others.	71.71% of people stated their general health was either good or very good; and 11.10% of people stated that they provided unpaid care to family, friends, neighbours or others.	82.32% of people stated their general health was either good or very good; and 14.75% of people stated that they provided unpaid care to family, friends, neighbours or others.	80.75% of people stated their general health was either good or very good; and 15.09% of people stated that they provided unpaid care to family, friends, neighbours or others.	84.18% of people stated their general health was either good or very good; and 15.08% of people stated that they provided unpaid care to family, friends, neighbours or others.	78.69%
Housing and residential dwellings	48.90% of households were owner occupied and 43.63% were rented;	89.35% of households were owner occupied and 8.14% were rented;	45.05% of households were owner occupied and 49.33% were rented;	85.89% of households were owner occupied and 11.69% were rented;	83.96% of households were owner occupied and 14.26% were rented;	77.75% of households were owner occupied and 19.65% were rented;	71.82%
	19.69% of households were owned outright;	36.53% of households were owned outright;	21.98% of households were owned outright;	45.97% of households were owned outright;	49.02% of households were owned outright;	36.71% of households were owned outright;	24.45%
	17.83% of households were comprised of a single person aged 65+ years;	5.22% of households were comprised of a single person aged 65+ years;	19.90% of households were comprised of a single person aged 65+ years;	9.48% of households were comprised of a single person aged 65+ years;	13.19% of households were comprised of a single person aged 65+ years;	9.68% of households were comprised of a single person aged 65+ years;	34.98%
	7.98% were lone parent households with dependent children; and 29.54% of households did not have access to a car or van.	4.80% were lone parent households with dependent children; and 4.59% of households did not have access to a car or van.	10.99% were lone parent households with dependent children; and 25.89% of households did not have access to a car or van.	6.05% were lone parent households with dependent children; and 8.47% of households did not have access to a car or van.	4.81% were lone parent households with dependent children; and 8.73% of households did not have access to a car or van.	4.05% were lone parent households with dependent children; and 9.10% of households did not have access to a car or van.	12.55%
							6.45%

Statistic	Comber North 1 SOA	Comber North 2 SOA	Comber East 1 SOA	Comber East 2 SOA	Comber West 1 SOA	Comber West 2 SOA	Total/ Overall Ave.
Qualifications	9.40% had a degree or higher qualification; while	20.50% had a degree or higher qualification; while	22.52% had a degree or higher qualification; while	18.67% had a degree or higher qualification; while	27.37% had a degree or higher qualification; while	30.70% had a degree or higher qualification; while	21.53
	57.14% had no or low (Level 1*) qualifications.	44.46% had no or low (Level 1*) qualifications.	34.71% had no or low (Level 1*) qualifications.	39.72% had no or low (Level 1*) qualifications.	33.57% had no or low (Level 1*) qualifications.	29.46% had no or low (Level 1*) qualifications.	39.84%
Labour Market	62.08% were economically active, 37.92% were economically inactive;	73.63% were economically active, 26.37% were economically inactive;	65.91% were economically active, 34.09% were economically inactive;	66.53% were economically active, 33.47% were economically inactive;	66.53% were economically active, 33.47% were economically inactive;	72.60% were economically active, 27.40% were economically inactive;	67.88%
	54.52% were in paid employment; and	68.36% were in paid employment; and	58.00% were in paid employment; and	59.43% were in paid employment; and	61.84% were in paid employment; and	65.71% were in paid employment; and	32.12%
	4.62% were unemployed.	3.35% were unemployed.	5.30% were unemployed.	3.96% were unemployed.	2.30% were unemployed.	3.10% were unemployed.	61.31%
							3.77%

1.4 Multiple Deprivation Measures

The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM) 2010 provides information on seven types of deprivation and an overall measure of multiple deprivations for small areas.

Super Output Areas (SOA) are ordered from most deprived to least deprived on each type of deprivation and then assigned a rank. The most deprived SOA is ranked 1, and as there are 890 SOAs, the least deprived SOA has a rank of 890. The deprivation rankings for the Comber Super Output Areas are given in the table below.

Multiple Deprivation Measure	Comber North 1 SOA	Comber North 2 SOA	Comber East 1 SOA	Comber East 2 SOA	Comber West 1 SOA	Comber West 2 SOA
Multiple Deprivation Measure	296	858	391	693	779	812
Income Deprivation	213	847	378	683	771	764
Employment Deprivation	358	797	411	574	660	794

Multiple Deprivation Measure	Comber North 1 SOA	Comber North 2 SOA	Comber East 1 SOA	Comber East 2 SOA	Comber West 1 SOA	Comber West 2 SOA
Health Deprivations and Disability Deprivation	326	805	313	708	760	751
Education Skills and Training Disability	146	728	455	452	818	817
Proximity to Services Deprivation	679	492	726	538	453	486
Crime and Disorder	421	873	114	725	698	707
Living Environment	411	647	159	665	593	445

1.5 Summary

The following key points can be highlighted:

- The total resident population of the Comber Super Output Areas is 8521, with a total of 3636 households of an average size of 2.35 people.
- There is a clear disparity between several of the SOA's, Comber North 1 SOA is ranked as one of the most deprived areas in Northern Ireland, in contrast to Comber North 2 SOA which is one of the least deprived areas in Northern Ireland. This is particularly clear with regards to education skills, with a rank of 146 and 728 respectively.
- Comber East 1 SOA is ranked relatively high regarding crime and disorder in comparison to the other Comber SOA's, particularly Comber North 2 SOA which is ranked as one of the lowest SOA's for crime and disorder.

APPENDIX C ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND HERITAGE



Comber Town Centre Masterplan

Appendix C

Environmental Quality
and Heritage

April 2015

UNITED
KINGDOM &
IRELAND



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1. ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND BUILT FORM

1.1 Introduction

It is important to reflect upon the existing condition of the environment within the town to help determine if environmental improvements would be required in the future. This section includes a street-by-street analysis of the environmental quality, which will consider the following elements:

- General appearance and atmosphere
- Quality of existing public realm (paving, street furniture etc.)
- Negative elements (litter, graffiti, vandalism)
- Green spaces and planting
- Health and safety
- Linkages and usable civic spaces

1.2 The Square & Environs



Figure 1 – The Square



Figure 2 – Junction between High Street and Castle Street



Figure 3 – Apartment development to the south of The Square

Positive Aspects	Negative Aspects
The Square provides an excellent civic space which is used for certain events throughout the year e.g. Christmas Market. High quality planting exists.	High volumes of traffic in and around The Square, creates an unrelaxing environment.
The proposed public realm scheme will provide a vast improvement to the existing low quality public realm.	Pedestrian linkages between The Square and the adjacent buildings are poor considering the volumes of traffic the area can experience.
The layout of The Square and the enclosure created by the adjacent historic buildings creates a pleasant experience for shoppers and visitors.	New apartment development to the southern side of The Square is not complementary to the historic built form.

1.3

Castle Street



Figure 4 – Retail frontage on Castle Street



Figure 5 - Footpath linking Castle Street to The Square



Figure 6 - Backlands between Castle Street and the Comber Leisure Centre car park

Positive Aspects	Negative Aspects
<p>Castle Street is the primary retail street within Comber and provides a variety of retail and service options.</p>	<p>Vacant sites and derelict properties cause blight to a potentially pleasant retail street. One major retailing unit has disengaged entirely with Castle Street.</p>
<p>The proposed public realm scheme will provide a vast improvement to the existing low quality public realm.</p>	<p>Dumping and littering issues on the underused backlands site between Castle Street and the Leisure Centre car park.</p>
	<p>The dominance of the car on Castle Street creates a negative experience for pedestrians due to the narrow nature of the street, especially at the bottle neck junction between The Square.</p>

1.4 Mill Street



Figure 7 – Listed buildings on Mill Street



Figure 8 – Narrow carriageway width on Mill Street



Figure 9 - By-pass infrastructure creates a physical barrier

Positive Aspects	Negative Aspects
Mill Street has some fine examples of architecture such as the JA McDonald building and the Non-Conforming Presbyterian Church.	Vacant sites and derelict properties cause blight to a potentially pleasant retail street. Some major retailing units have disengaged entirely with Castle Street.
The proposed public realm scheme will provide a vast improvement to the existing low quality public realm.	Narrow carriageway results in cars having to mount the footpaths in certain sections creating an unsafe atmosphere for pedestrians.
The street consists of a mix of residential and retail units. The residential units are generally well maintained which adds to the built quality.	The hard engineered by-pass bridge is an unpleasant experience to connect the Town Centre with the western part of Comber.

1.5 High Street



Figure 10 - Courtyard spaces utilised



Figure 11 - Properties well maintained



Figure 12 - Limited space for residents/shopper parking

Positive Aspects	Negative Aspects
Some alleyways have been opened up, allowing access to courtyards lined with coffee shops and small businesses.	High Street carries a high volume of vehicular traffic which has a negative influence on pedestrians.
The proposed public realm scheme will provide a vast improvement to the existing low quality public realm.	A narrow carriageway coupled with on-street resident car parking creates a congested streetscape.
The street consists of a mix of residential and retail units. The residential units are generally well maintained which adds to the built quality.	

1.6

Killinchy Street



Figure 13 – Problems with littering and dog fouling



Figure 14 – Town Centre new build residential properties



Figure 15 – Low quality bus shelter environment

Positive Aspects	Negative Aspects
The properties along Killinchy Street are generally well maintained and create a positive impression and atmosphere.	The main bus shelter for the town is located outside the former bus depot. It is a low quality installation with graffiti and vandalism present.
The proposed public realm scheme will provide a vast improvement to the existing low quality public realm.	Problems with littering and dog fouling along the street.
Unlike some of the other arterial routes in Comber, Killinchy Street appears to function well as a vehicular and pedestrian transport corridor in tandem, primarily because the widths and spaces are adequate for both modes.	Presently there are a couple of large vacant sites on Killinchy Street (the former bus depot and PSNI station). These create visual gaps which lead to a negative impression of the area.

1.7 Bridge Street and Bridge Street Link



Figure 16 – Linkages from the frontage to rear parking and amenity areas



Figure 17 – Access to the Enler River walkway is unwelcoming



Figure 18 – Bridge Street Link car parking and amenity area

Positive Aspects	Negative Aspects
Some examples of high quality architecture exist, for example the Georgian House. These are complemented by linkages to the rear where the primary parking is located.	Litter generated by fast food outlets.
The proposed public realm scheme will provide a vast improvement to the existing low quality public realm.	The access to the riverside walkway currently is unwelcoming due to hard engineered features.
The street functions as a pedestrian link for residents to the east of Comber. It consists of quite a few fast food outlets and service retail units.	

1.8 Proposed public realm scheme

Ards Borough Council has received major funding support from the Department for Social Development for a Public Realm scheme in Comber Town Centre which is planned for construction between summer 2014 and completion by summer 2015. The Public Realm scheme extents include Castle Street, Bridge Street Link, Bridge Street, The Square and Killinchy Street.

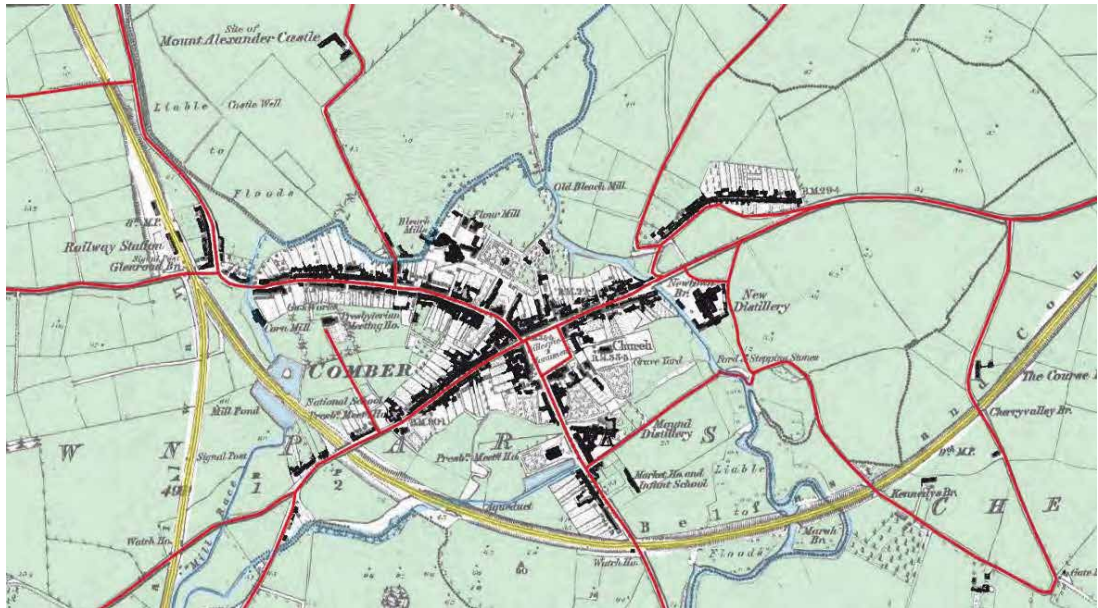


- The design proposals seek to complement Comber’s townscape character, rich history and listed features with a high quality public realm scheme which will include:
- New natural stone paving on footpaths to provide a more appropriate setting for the town’s historic buildings;
- Providing a complimentary setting for The Square;
- Street furniture;
- Street lighting;
- Improving accessibility by removing channels in the footway where possible; and
- Semi-mature tree planting.

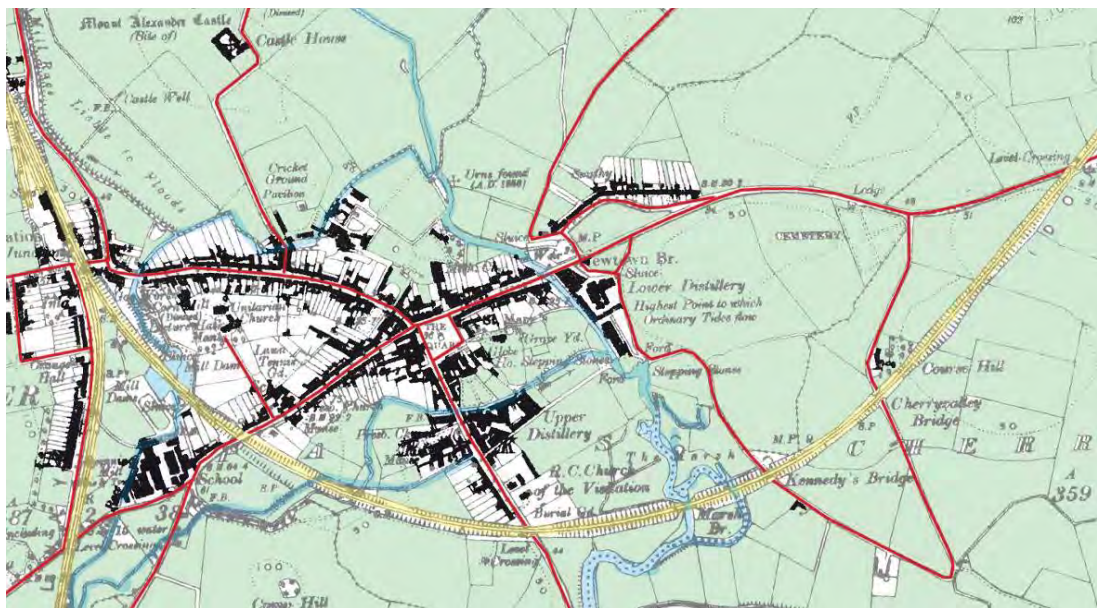
The Proposals reflect the views of the Steering Group, Local Traders, Ards Borough Council and Technical Stakeholders.

1.9 Development of the Physical Structure

For centuries, the settlement of Comber has developed around a healthy production and milling industry due to the nearby availability of materials and the natural environment required for the industrial processes. This heritage has led Comber to become a famous producer of Comber Whiskey and linen products. Today, these industries have become redundant, but the remnants of the physical infrastructure remain. This can be illustrated by the footprint of the former railway line, the mill ponds and mill buildings. The range of maps aims to illustrate the physical changes from 1904 – 1957.

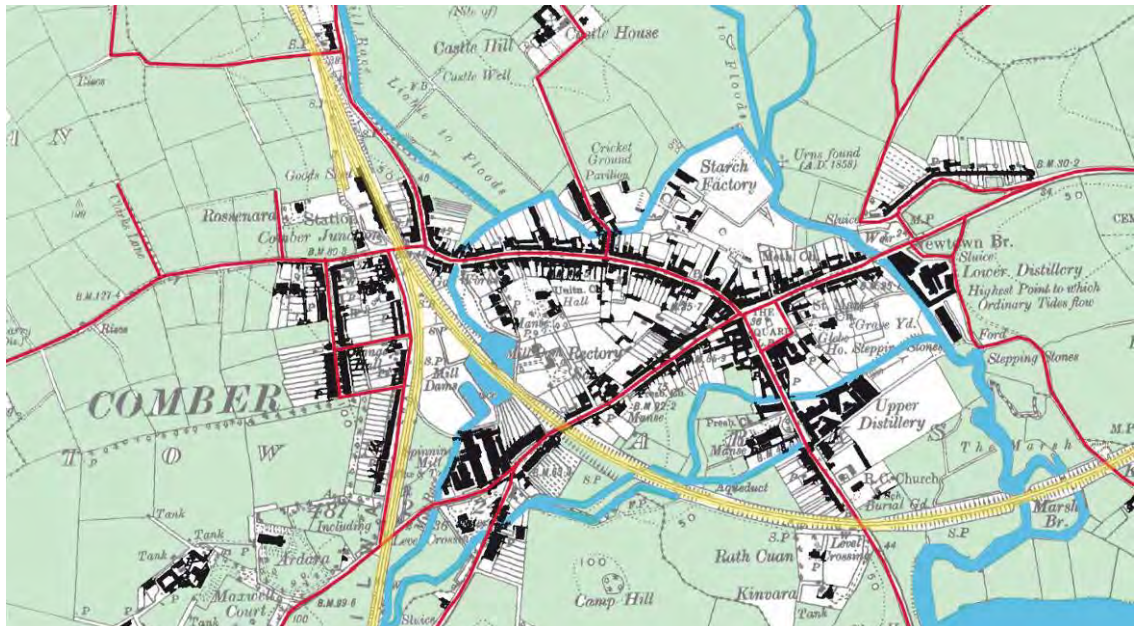


Comber 1904 – The Town grew around The Square and developed in a linear fashion outwards from this point along the major arterial routes of Castle Street, High Street, Bridge Street and Killinchy Street. The map indicated the major role the railway had at this time.



Comber 1932 – Further industrial buildings have begun to form around this period. This is evident from the new mill on High Street and the distillery off Killinchy Street. A new mill complex also opened on the

opposite side to the distillery. To accommodate growth, additional residential properties have started to develop along Railway Street.



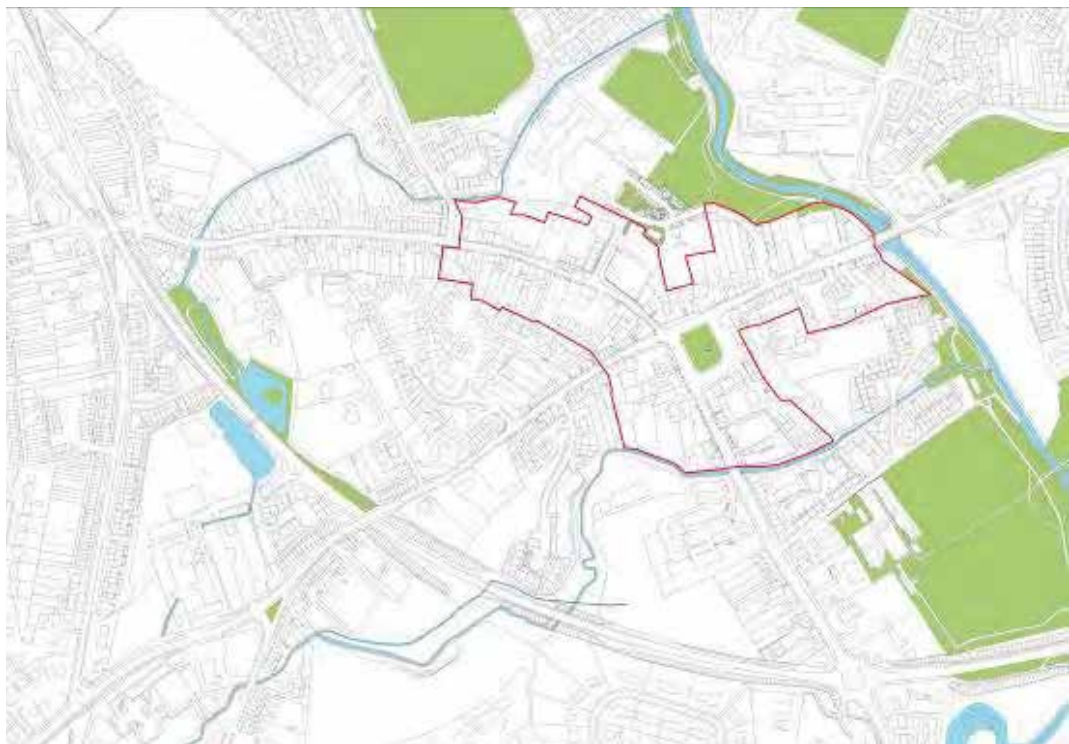
The town continues to grow around its industrial heritage with further increases in the residential provision. The core of the town is still based around The Square, which has remained intact even to the present day.

1.10 The current physical structure

The physical structure remains rigidly similar to what existed over the past two centuries. The footprint of the former railway line to Donaghadee and Newcastle has now been converted to a vehicular by-pass which underlines how the preferred mode of transportation has changed over time. The civic core of the town is still based around The Square, with the primary retail offering on the adjacent streets. Residential developments have continued to grow and expand the population on the peripheries of the settlement. Fortunately, Comber has managed to retain a large proportion of its green space, in particular the Enler River walkways. Some of the buildings associated with the industrial renaissance period still remain and have been gentrified to become residential apartments. Others such as the distillery have been demolished to make way for new build residential apartments to facilitate the rise in demand for new accommodation as Comber has been established as a primary commuter town supporting Belfast.



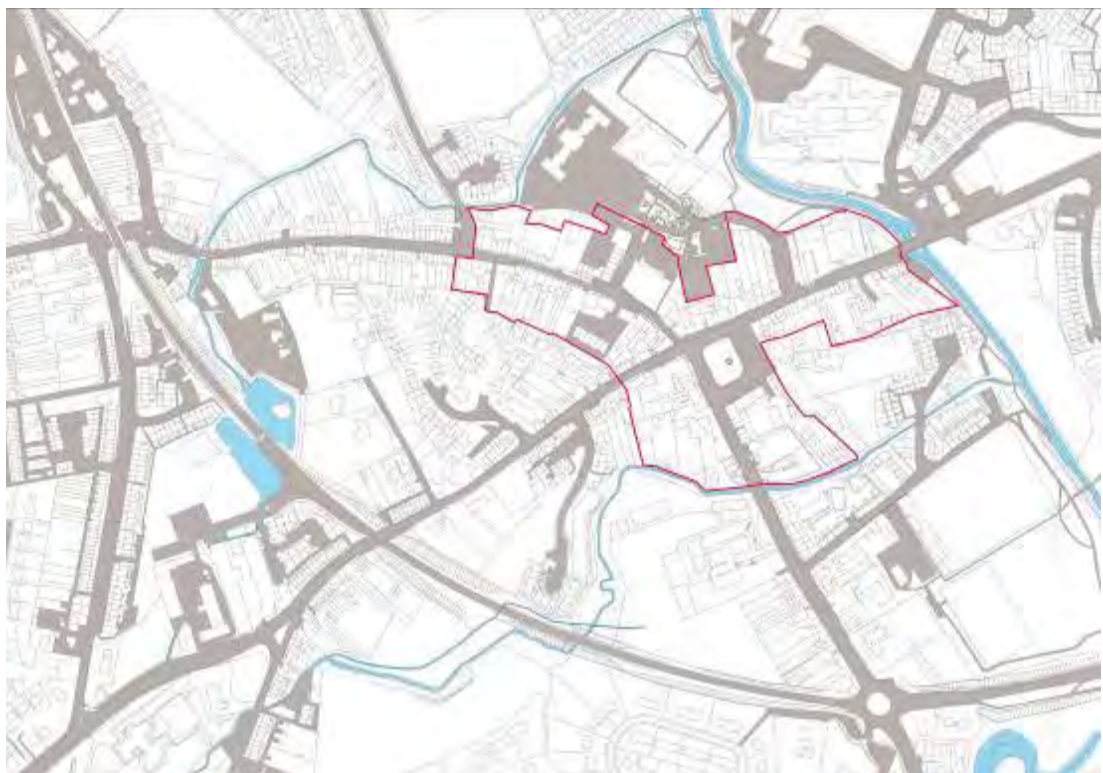
Combined analysis



Useable public space



Built form



Transportation network

1.11 Conclusion

The quality of the Town Centre environment within Comber is generally in good condition. The proposed public realm scheme will replace the existing fatigued scheme with a high quality environment for pedestrians and visitors to the town. A new suite of street furniture and street lighting will help create a more legible and accessible environment for people of all ages. The Square is the centrepiece of Comber and the proposed scheme will reinforce this principle by attracting an increased footfall to the Town Centre.

The built environment consists of some great examples of historic architecture, however on the main retail streets such as Castle Street; this has been blighted by neighbouring vacancy and dereliction of key buildings.

Large volumes of traffic coupled with narrow streetscapes have resulted in a perception of risk when walking along many of the central streets in Comber. This is particularly emphasised at the junction between The Square and Castle Street where it would not be feasible to travel with a push chair or as a wheelchair user. Alternatives should be examined to try and achieve a better solution that creates a safe environment for pedestrians.

