

armagh

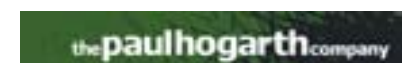
city centre masterplan



Department for Social Development

Armagh City & District Council

27 May 2009



FOREWORD

The Armagh City Centre Masterplan was commissioned by the Department for Social Development (Regional Development Office) with Armagh City and District Council in May 2008.

It was developed over a period of 11 months by a consultant team led by The Paul Hogarth Company and launched by the Minister for Social Development, Margaret Ritchie MLA, in the summer of 2009.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The City of Armagh has long been a place of importance, first associated with the kings of ancient Ulster and then with Christianity, becoming the capital of ecclesiastical Ireland. Whilst today Armagh is set within a very different cultural and political context, plentiful evidence of its continued status remains. Fine architecture and urban spaces adorn the City Centre. Two hilltop cathedrals celebrate the homes of the island's two principal denominations. And the North-South Ministerial Council, key to the process of peace in Northern Ireland, furthers its commitment to Armagh through construction of new headquarters.

Like any other modern day settlement, however, Armagh faces challenges as well as opportunities. Shifts in the current economic and administrative landscape bring changes to traditional sources of employment and services. Development dynamics see new buildings and spaces appear, greatly influencing the look and character of the historic City. Remnant divisions persist between residential areas based along socio-political lines and vehicles vie for space, causing congestion along narrow City Centre streets.

This Masterplan for Armagh City Centre was commissioned to help identify and address these and many more issues and opportunities. It provides the format for taking a fresh look at the City in a holistic manner, so that key aspects of its social, physical and economic character can be jointly understood. The Masterplan then provides the platform upon which Armagh's residents and stakeholders can shape a Vision for how they wish to see their City in the coming 10 to 15 years. By doing so, the Masterplan enables a series of strategic objectives for the City to be identified and in turn, projects devised to bring about their realisation.

At the time of writing, much publicity and debate surrounds the state of the global economy, affecting Northern Ireland as much as other places around the world. Understandably, this leads to questions being posed about a process that inevitably results in a series of initiatives requiring substantial funding. However, such times should only serve to sharpen the focus of a Masterplan process.

In an increasingly competitive environment, Armagh must work hard to clearly identify its strategic investment opportunities and articulate how and when these can be implemented in a coordinated fashion. Delivery and funding must be drawn from both the public and private sectors to provide the basis for sustainable growth and prosperity of this important City.

This report documents the process, findings and proposals of the Armagh City Centre Masterplan, begun in the summer of 2008. It critically analyses the City to identify key issues for consideration, followed by the articulation of a Vision for its future development. The report then summarises a series of proposals designed to achieve the Vision, followed by the Action Plan detailing the mechanics of how and when they can be brought to fruition.

2 BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

2.1 Methodology

The Armagh City Centre Masterplan was commissioned by the Department for Social Development (DSD) with Armagh City and District Council. DSD have statutory responsibility for the regeneration of Northern Ireland's towns and cities, commissioning this plan along with others through its Regional Development Office. Armagh City and District Council represent an area of 260 square miles, including Armagh and nearby settlements such as Markethill, Keady and Tandragee.

This masterplan was prepared concurrently with the Review of Public Administration (RPA), during which comprehensive changes to the administration of Northern Ireland were planned. By the time of writing it has been confirmed that Northern Ireland's councils will be reduced in number from 26 to 11 by May 2011 and that many responsibilities relevant to the masterplan, such as community planning and regeneration, area likely to transfer to new local authorities. Accordingly, DSD and Armagh City and District Council have worked in close partnership to ensure that this Masterplan remains of relevance to these and future organisations over a timeframe of 10 to 15 years, or until a review is necessitated.

The role of the Armagh City Centre Masterplan is to inform regeneration and development decisions of DSD and Armagh City and District Council over this period. While not a statutory

document, it serves to influence the formation of future planning policy, as well as investment decisions of stakeholders from public and private sectors.

By establishing a Vision shared by key stakeholder organisations, it provides a common point of reference to all with direct interest in the sustainable development and regeneration of Armagh.

The Masterplan study area is defined as the built limits of the City of Armagh, with a focus on the historic City Centre core. This study area was extended in November 2008 in response to the announcement of a proposed link road to be routed in the countryside to the north and west of the City limits.

The Masterplan has been prepared by a team of consultants led by The Paul Hogarth Company. An established practice with offices in Belfast and Edinburgh, its role was managing the team and Masterplan process, whilst leading on the Masterplanning, Urban Design and Landscape Architecture components of the plan. The complexity of issues addressed required a range of professionals to be involved. Therefore, the multidisciplinary team comprised of eight specialist organisations, all with extensive experience in town centre regeneration in Northern Ireland and further afield. Team member details are outlined to the right.

Organisation	Role
The Paul Hogarth Company	Team Leader, Masterplanning, Urban Design, Landscape Architecture
DTZ Consulting	Planning
CB Richard Ellis	Property
JMP Consulting	Transport Planning & Engineering
Pricewaterhouse Coopers	Economics
Alastair Coey Architects	Conservation Architecture
Nolan Ryan Tweeds	Quantity Surveying
Cleaver Fulton Rankin	Legal Consultancy

Key to the Masterplan process was establishing an Advisory Group. This comprised of political representatives from Armagh's four principal parties and private sector business leaders (see Appendix 3). The group met with the client and consultant teams on a monthly basis and provided invaluable critique and guidance on the development of the Masterplan. The Masterplan process began in May 2008 and ended in April 2009, undergoing several stages outlined here.

It began with the Information Gathering stage, involving desktop research, site survey work and stakeholder consultations. The main objective was to gather key data relating to all aspects of Armagh, covering a range of topics from the physical environment to conservation, planning, transport, economic and property issues.

This the information was then analysed in order to fully understand the issues and opportunities associated with Armagh. Analysis was conducted through the production of plans examining topics such as land use, topography, historical context and through reporting, the details of which are located in Appendix 2 Analysis Plans.

Next, the Vision, Aims & Objectives stage responded to the findings of the analysis process and consultation by jointly crafting an inspirational Vision of Armagh to aspire to.

The Vision was then followed by a set of Aims & Objectives outlining how to achieve the Vision.

Then, the Concept Plan stage developed the foundation of design thinking for the Masterplan. It relates the key priorities for regeneration and development to the physical form of the City.

Using the Concept Plan as a basis, the Draft Masterplan was then prepared. The Draft Masterplan proposed a series of initiatives at Citywide and City Centre levels and encompassed issues that include mixed use development, transportation and public realm.

Consultation was then undertaken to obtain feedback on the Draft Masterplan from key stakeholders, including members of the public in Armagh, who were invited to comment on draft proposals. See Appendix 3 for an account of this process.

After responding to feedback, the Final Masterplan was prepared along with an Action Plan detailing each proposal and its priority, timeframe, delivery agent and associated stakeholders.

Finally, the Masterplan was launched at a public event, marking completion of the report and the beginning of the delivery process.

Masterplan PROCESS

Desktop research - Information
Site Appraisal -
Stakeholder Consultation - Gathering

Analysis

Vision, Aim & Objectives

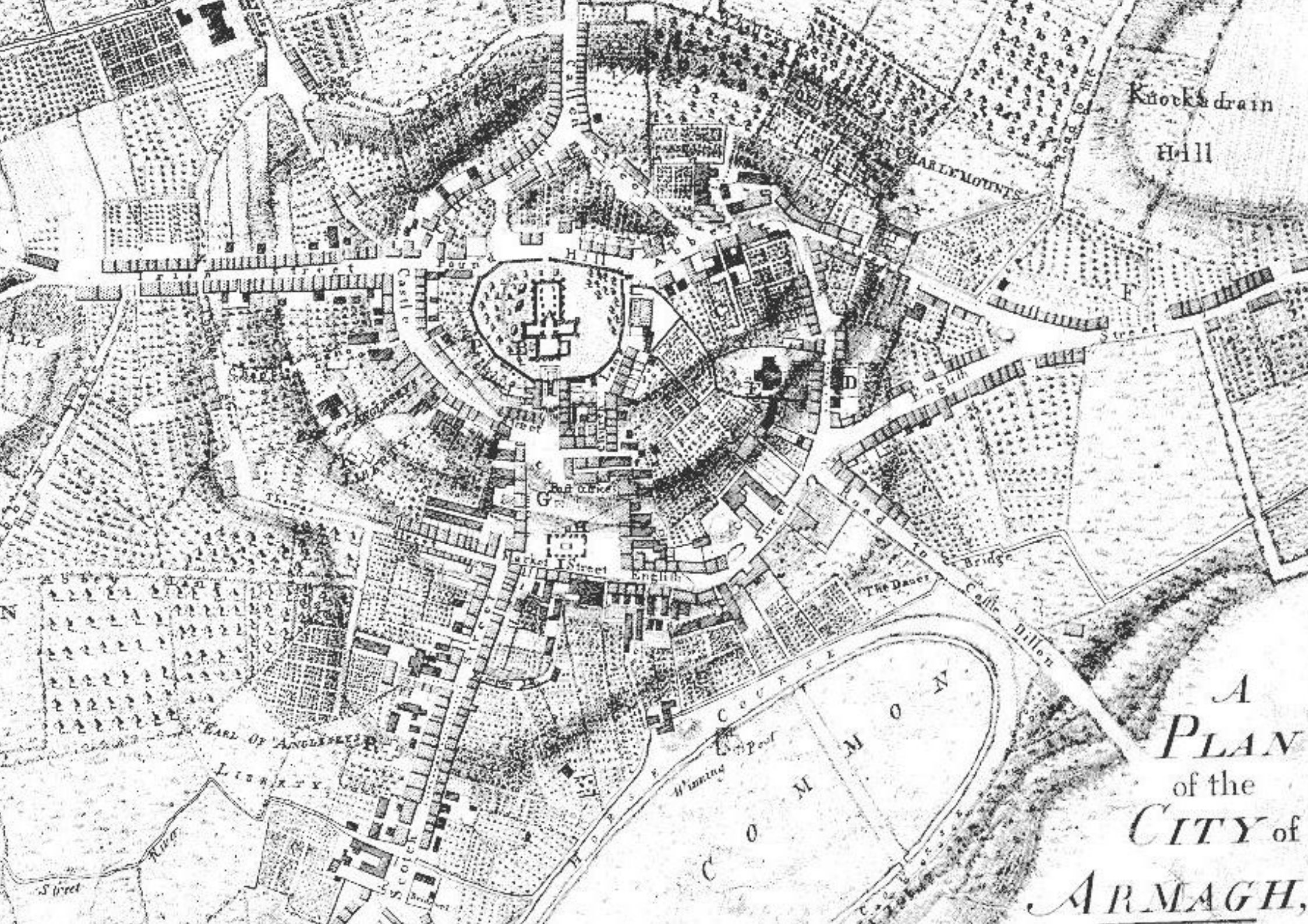
Concept Plan

Draft Masterplan

Consultation

Final Masterplan & Action Plan

Masterplan Launch



A
PLAN
of the
CITY of
ARMAGH,

2.2 Location, Geography & History

The City of Armagh is located in the south of Northern Ireland, some 40 miles south west of Belfast and 15 minutes drive north of the border with the Republic of Ireland. Major towns in the proximity include Dungannon (13 miles north), Portadown (11 miles east), Newry (18 miles south) and Monaghan (22 miles west). Smaller towns in the vicinity include Keady, Markethill and Richhill. Armagh is located at the junction of several cross-country transport connections including the A3 (Portadown – Monaghan), A28 (Newry – Aughnacloy) and A29 (Armagh – Cookstown).

The City of Armagh is set within a picturesque landscape of drumlins, characteristic of counties Armagh and Down. Surrounding the City, these drumlins predominantly consist of pastures with occasional woodlands and orchards and criss-crossed by hedgerows and tree belts. Small dwellings and farms, connected by narrow winding roads, punctuate the rolling landscape, often in places with striking open views. In the small valleys between hills, more enclosed and intimate views are enjoyed. As a result of this highly contoured scenery, consideration of views to, within and from the City are especially important in Armagh.

This surrounding area is drained by a network of rivers and streams, the most significant of which are the Callan and Ballynahone Rivers.

Armagh's geography also includes notable archaeological sites, such as Navan Fort, the King's Stables, Haughey's Fort and several raths. These protected sites and others are testament to Armagh's long and significant history. Armagh's landscape is also characterised by a number of wooded historic estates, park landscapes, and heritage gardens such as the Palace Demesne, Castle Dillon and Drumsill House.

Armagh is one of the most ancient cities in Northern Ireland, with evidence of human settlement dating back about 6,500 years. In early history, Navan Fort, on the western edge of the City, was seat to the kings of Ulster. Arguably, Armagh's defining moment occurred when St. Patrick arrived in 445 AD, establishing a principal church on a hilltop. From then on, Armagh has become an ecclesiastical centre, featuring two landmark cathedrals of the Protestant and Roman Catholic denominations.

Due to its importance, Armagh also became an academic centre with educational institutions such as the Public Library in 1771, the Armagh Observatory built in 1790 and much later the Planetarium in 1968.

Armagh and its people suffered the impact of the 'Troubles' that took place in Northern Ireland between the late 1960s and 1990s. The lives of numerous Armagh residents were lost through violent acts that occurred in the City, resulting in physical and social scars that remain in evidence today.

Today, in more peaceful times, the City provides the role of an administrative centre, home to Armagh City and District Council, Southern Education and Library Board and the North/South Ministerial Council.

Armagh's geography and unique history form a critical background to the development of this Masterplan. Its richness provides the intrinsic qualities upon which a Vision for its future development must be based.



Moy Road

Portadown Road

Navan
Fort

Cathedral
(RC)

Cathedral
(CoI)

Palace
Demesne

Monaghan Road

Newry Road

2.3 Policy

In addition to Armagh's geography and history, existing policy shapes the form and function of Armagh and consequently has direct relevance to this Masterplan. The following is a summary of major planning and economic policies that have particular bearing on the Masterplan.

The main regional policy is the *Regional Development Strategy 2025* (RDS), the overarching strategy for Northern Ireland for the next 20 years. Reviewed and adjusted in 2008, it advocates development that enhances sustainable economic competitiveness and renews and revitalises established towns and villages. Within the RDS, Armagh is designated as a Main Hub, defined as having the potential to develop as areas where economic activity clusters and where employment, services and other amenities are located. It is one of only a few Main Hubs however, not located on a Key Transport Corridor, instead being linked via the A3 Portadown Road. The RDS also identifies Local Development Guidelines applied to each location, including identity, vitality, proximity, accessibility, amenity and quality. The RDS indicates 6,000 housing units are needed in Armagh City and District by 2015. The City is also identified as a Major Tourism Development Opportunity, featuring as a component of the St Patrick / Christian Heritage Signature Project. The RDS also encourages strengthening public transport in accessing town centres.

In local planning policy, the *Armagh Area Plan* (2004) sets out the broad planning framework for Armagh District. The Plan outlines the strategic direction of policy regarding retail and commerce, housing, transport, tourism, conservation, regeneration and business. The *Area Plan* sets out three main transport issues: links with Portadown and Belfast, linkages within the City and City Centre pedestrianisation. Planning Service is in the process of preparing a revised *Armagh Area Plan 2018* for Armagh. However, at the time of writing, it has temporarily suspended substantive work on this plan pending the outcome of the Department's appeal of the legal judgements handed down in relation to Area Plans for two other areas.

In economic policy, the Government's *Building a Better Future: Programme for Government 2008-2011* seeks to ensure that all parts of Northern Ireland enjoy sustainable economic and social development by setting a framework of priority areas and highlighting the importance of priority areas and highlighting the importance of better North-South and East-West linkages. Another important document is the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment's *Economic Vision for Northern Ireland* (2005) which sets out the direction of economic policy over the next ten years.

The *Economic Development Strategy* was commissioned by South Eastern Economic Development to undertake research, consultation and prepare a strategy and action plan for delivery. Armagh was reported to have risks and opportunities within its economy; hence the resulting strategy is to create "a skilled and flexible workforce supporting a diverse and competitive economy".

The *Review of the Socio-Economic Situation and Outlook* (2006) prepared by Armagh City and District Council includes a detailed analysis of the local economy in regards to employment, identifies the key challenges of the dynamic environment, describes the key opportunities available, researches the resources available to assist in realising new opportunities, and formulates a plan of action to drive the local economy forward.

The policy context set by these documents and others is central to the development of the Masterplan. Whilst itself not a statutory document, the Masterplan proposals are developed to align with current policy. Importantly, this document also has significant potential to inform future policy relating to the City of Armagh, both through development of the Area Plan once resumed and subsequent policy formed by a newly devolved planning authority.



2.4 Consultation

Consultation and the participation of stakeholders is a critical component of the process of developing a shared Vision for Armagh. Stakeholder consultation for the Masterplan involved meeting with a number of key groups and organisations, as well as the general public. These sessions were crucial to the Masterplan team as a means to collate information and views at the outset of the project and also test the appropriateness of draft proposals as they emerged.

While it is never possible to meet all residents of Armagh, the client and consultant teams, working closely with the appointed Advisory Group, worked hard to ensure a good cross section of relevant parties had the opportunity to take part in the consultation process. Moreover, two widely publicised consultation events were held in Armagh, one in St. Patrick's Trian and another in the Mall Shopping Centre, to allow members of the public to view draft proposals and comment.

All information and feedback received from consultees was recorded and collated by the consultant team. This information was then given full consideration through the process of analysis, joined by the findings of desktop research and site appraisal. The input of all consultees was gratefully received and DSD, the Council and the consultant team would like to formally thank all who gave their time and effort to this process.

For a full list of consultees, please see Appendix 3, page 122.





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3 ANALYSIS

3.1 Regional Position: Something Different

To understand the current and potential roles of Armagh, it is necessary to begin with its regional position.

The City's location, at the heart of south-central Northern Ireland and close to the Republic of Ireland, should be viewed as an opportunity. Armagh is in relative proximity to many centres of population and economic activity, including the Belfast Metropolitan Area, Newry, Craigavon and the Irish towns of Monaghan, Clones and Cavan. The City must therefore capitalise on this geographic advantage through the realisation of employment and commercial opportunities both to and from such centres.

Consequently, the quality of Armagh's transport connections must be high. Armagh is located between Northern Ireland's two principal transport corridors, the East/ West M1 and North/ South A1. Investment in these will also be supplemented by a major project known as the A5 Western Transport Corridor, with a proposed upgrading of the A5 links between Londonderry/Derry and the border at Achnacloy, continuing southwards to Dublin. As the City is not located within any of these three corridors, an importance must therefore be placed on its links to them.

At present, these routes are variable in quality and condition, with the Portadown Road (A3) and Newry Road (A28) showing a need for improvement and potential widening.

Westward links to the new corridor will also become increasingly important. With evidence to suggest that Armagh's transport infrastructure dissuades investors from locating in the city, improving the quality of such connections should be viewed as critical. In addition to roads, this must also include public transportation links such as bus routes and in the longer term, potential re-establishment of a rail connection.

In terms of economic position, current and future economic trends have several implications for Armagh. Like all areas, Armagh and its regional economy are likely to face slower growth in the short term, as a global recession continues to impact. However, over the medium and long term, a shift is expected to continue from more traditional sectors such as Agriculture and Manufacturing to a knowledge-based economy of business and finance. Suitable accommodation and targeted development of education and skills must therefore be provided to capitalise upon this skilled sector, with long term potential to attract university level education back to Armagh.

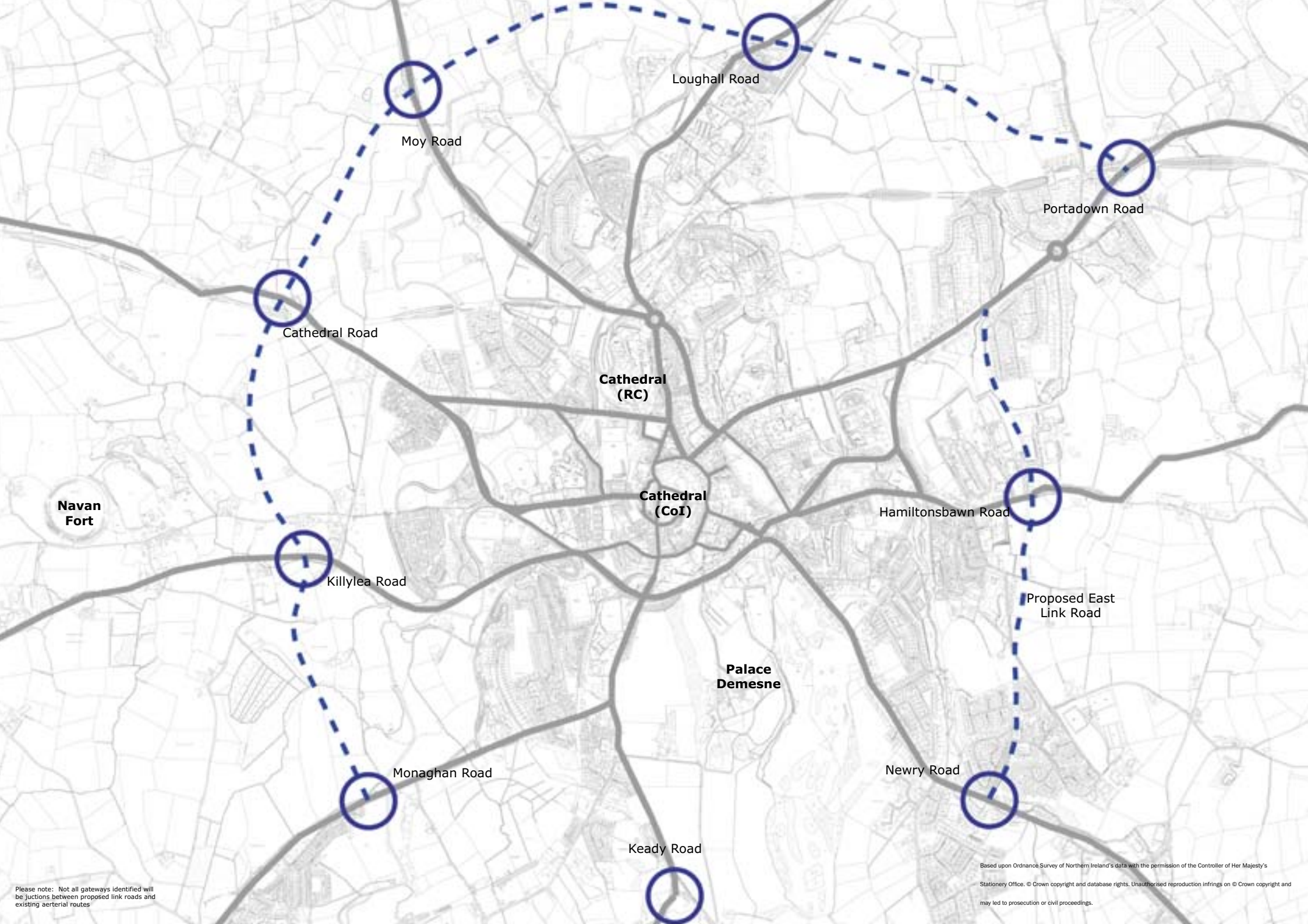
Traditionally, Armagh has been an administrative centre, with the public sector accounting for a relatively high proportion of its work force. Both the Review of Public Administration and restructuring of healthcare provision pose a threat to the retention of these posts.

The City must ensure that it makes a strong case for its continued role as an administrative centre, whilst also improving itself in order to attract and retain such facilities. This will require continued efforts from both the public and private sectors.

Retail is also an important component of Armagh City Centre, with several long established independent stores remaining in business there. However, the strength of nearby centres of Craigavon and Newry means that shops in Armagh operate in a competitive market. Supporting existing outlets and attracting new ones through a range of improvements will therefore be important to the sustainability of retail in the city.

Armagh's rich history and attractive architecture makes it ideally suited to tourism. Further detailed in Section 3.4, significant efforts are required to ensure that the tourism offering is adequate enough to attract and maintain visitors, encouraging them to stay in the City. As part of this, improved linkage with nearby attractions such as Navan Fort will be key.

Armagh stands out from its neighbours a place of historical and cultural importance. It boasts an attractive location with rich environmental and cultural qualities. These strengths must therefore form the foundation upon which increased investment can be attracted.



Please note: Not all gateways identified will be junctions between proposed link roads and existing aerial routes

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3.2 Links & Gateways: Welcome to Armagh

Armagh has long been a meeting place, strategically located at the junction of two cross-country routes. Whilst bringing activity and trade to this historic City over the years, recently this challenges its capacity to accommodate high volumes of through traffic. At present, vehicles travelling between the North East (Belfast) and the South West (Monaghan) and between the South East (Newry) and the North West (Dungannon) travel through the heart of Armagh, passing its principal public spaces, landmark buildings and narrow streets. The result is congestion, most notably in the vicinity of the Mall and Friary Road. Addressing this is crucial as congestion has two detrimental effects. Firstly, poor vehicular circulation can impact economic competitiveness by decreasing efficiency, deterring people and business. Secondly, high volumes of traffic and the associated infrastructure have a negative impact on the environmental quality of the City Centre due to effects like noise and air pollution, barriers to pedestrian movement and associated fragmentation of urban form. These effects are particularly detrimental in a City with such a historic centre as Armagh.

In recognition of this issue, the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) proposes two link roads to help alleviate congestion in the City Centre.

The first is a proposal for an East Link connecting the A3 East Portadown Road and the A28 South Markethill Road. Partially constructed, this route is envisaged to be completed within the next five to ten years. In principle private sector funding associated with adjacent development lands could accelerate that timetable. However, there are doubts over this situation currently in light of existing market conditions and the associated slowdown in development activity.

The second is the North & West Link Road proposed between the A3 West Portadown Road and the A3 Monaghan Road. Announcing the preferred corridor for this route in 2008, DRD Roads Service envisages construction to commence within the next five years and predicts a reduction in City Centre traffic, including heavy vehicles, by as much as 30%.

The commitment to construct these Link Roads is welcomed. They will decrease traffic volumes within the City Centre and contribute to improving environmental quality. However, through research and analysis, evidence suggests that the City may require further investment in transport infrastructure to adequately alleviate the impact of vehicles on the historic City Centre.

In the short term, this will require improvement to the layout and functioning of Armagh's City Centre road network. In the longer term and potentially beyond the lifespan of this Masterplan, more substantive measures may be required.

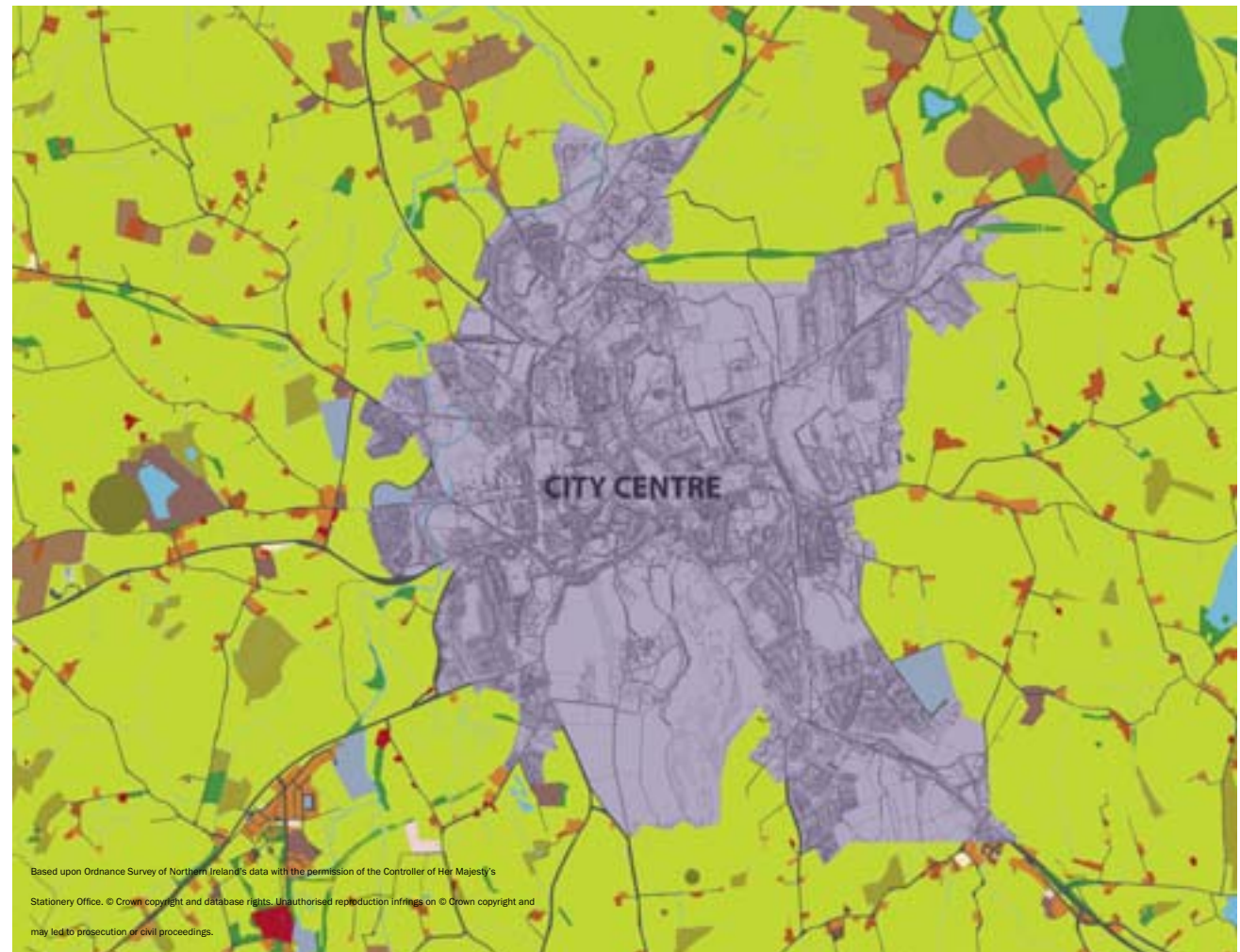
The construction of Link Roads around Armagh must consider the quality of approaches into the City. How Armagh welcomes those who arrive by car or public transport is of paramount importance, particularly in its drive to attract investment and tourism. At present, the quality of arrival experiences into Armagh is varied. Views to the Cathedral skyline give a tantalising glimpse of the historic City. These views must be safeguarded from obstruction by future development. Other key areas, however, require significant improvement as they send out negative first impressions due to unsightly or poorly maintained buildings and open spaces. Building the aforementioned Link Roads will create more formalised gateways to the City at the junctions with radial routes. Therefore, it will be important to capitalise upon this opportunity to greatly improve the arrival experience into Armagh, welcoming visitors and residents alike in a positive and friendly fashion.

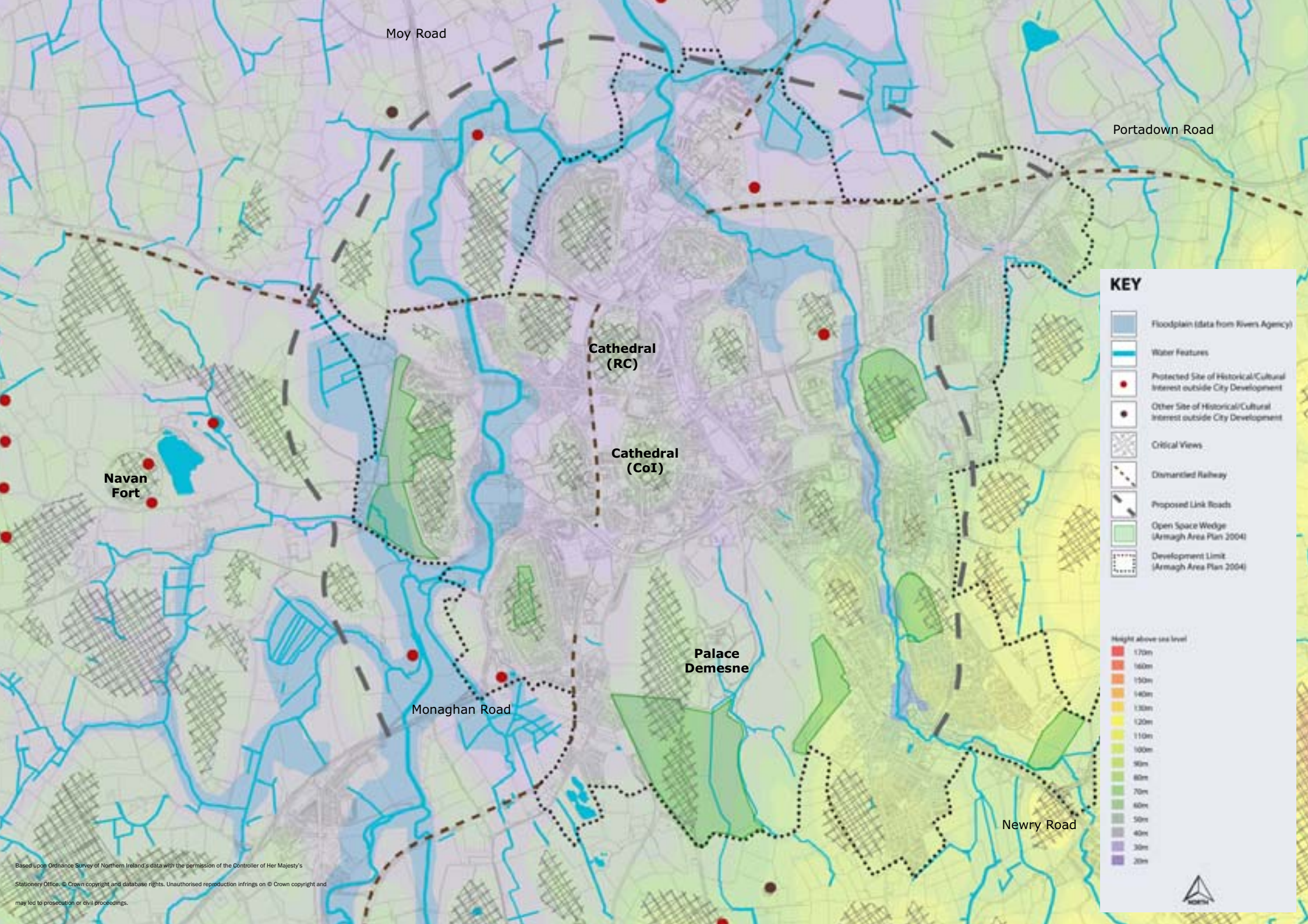


3.3 City Environs: Expansion or Protection

The decision to route the proposed North & West Link Road in the countryside surrounding Armagh will bring benefits to the city through reduced city centre congestion currently caused by through traffic. However, wider implications of the chosen route and in particular, its potential relationship with development of the city, have still to be fully understood. To assist in the exploration of this issue, the study boundaries of this Masterplan were widened so that analysis of the lands surrounding the City of Armagh could be undertaken. Serving as a prelude to more detailed environmental impact assessments required for construction of the roads, this process helps to inform us of the characteristics and potential of the land between the city and the link road. This in turn should be used to help inform future policy decisions relating to the area.

Desktop research and site surveys using visual analysis techniques were undertaken to assess land use, topography, hydrology and views. This enabled a process of Sensitivity Analysis to take place, leading to the production of a constraints map, by which land with development potential could be identified.





KEY

- Floodplain (data from Rivers Agency)
- Water Features
- Protected Site of Historical/Cultural Interest outside City Development
- Other Site of Historical/Cultural Interest outside City Development
- Critical Views
- Dominated Railway
- Proposed Link Roads
- Open Space Wedge (Armagh Area Plan 2004)
- Development Limit (Armagh Area Plan 2004)

Height above sea level

- 170m
- 160m
- 150m
- 140m
- 130m
- 120m
- 110m
- 100m
- 90m
- 80m
- 70m
- 60m
- 50m
- 40m
- 30m
- 20m



3.3.1 Land Use

Land use surrounding the City of Armagh area is predominantly farmland, consisting of grazing pastures delineated by hedges and in places orchards, which are characteristic to this part of the country. Residential properties are relatively evenly spread throughout the area. These were originally associated with farms, but now many individual houses also exist. Land use mapping also revealed a limited number of industrial and commercial areas, again associated with farming, as well as isolated areas of wasteland where buildings have been demolished. Finally, several sites of archeological interest were also mapped, the most prominent of which is Navan Fort located to the west of the city.

3.3.2 Hydrology

This area is drained by a network of rivers, tributary streams and farmland ditches. The most notable of these are the Callan and Ballynahone Rivers, located to the East and West and joining to the North of the City. Areas of low-lying land play the role of important floodplains, the existence of which are vital to the alleviation of flood risk in built up areas in Armagh. Whilst of lower agricultural value and unsuited to development, these lands provide rich habitat for meadow and bog species of plant and animal.

3.3.4 Topography and Views

As noted in 2.2 Location, Geography & History, the topography of Armagh is one of rolling drumlins, characteristic to this county and neighbouring Down. From earliest settlement, Drumlins were greatly influential in the development of the city, valued for their defensive and highly visual properties. Most strikingly, Armagh's two cathedrals were sited atop of drumlins, making the skyline of the city so unique. The topography of Armagh is generally not steep enough to prevent development taking place in most areas. However, the visual role of drumlins in determining the setting and character of this historic city, mean that many parts are unsuited to development. To map the areas with importance to the visual setting of Armagh, photographic surveys were taken from both Cathedrals and from Navan Fort (See Appendix). This reveals significant areas of land upon which development may be inappropriate, due to their visual relationship with the City.

3.3.5 Summary

Having analysed land use, hydrology, topography and views, a Sensitivity Analysis was undertaken as shown on the adjacent page. Also on this drawing are the proposed routes of both link roads, one in the North West and the other in the East. Analysis reveals that many areas of land surrounding the city are unsuited to development, due to hydrological or topographical implications. Whilst other socioeconomic factors and the political process must also inform future planning policy, it is advocated that great attention is paid to the visual impact of any development in these areas. Safeguarding the characteristic setting of the historic City of Armagh should be seen as a high priority, so that its qualities are preserved for future generations.

Deriving from this process, land with development potential has been mapped and is located on Page 43. These areas are less effected by the above constraints and may therefore, subject to further investigation and policy decisions, lend themselves to appropriate development in the future.



3.4 Heritage & Tourism: Celebrating a Cathedral City

Armagh has an extraordinary heritage. No other city in Northern Ireland has been so distinguished since ancient times, first becoming the seat of royalty and then the most important religious centre in Ireland. As a City with thousands of years of history, Armagh's heritage is central to its identity and character.

Armagh's heritage is most visibly reflected in the extensive collection of landmark buildings and spaces, many of which are protected by listing and the City Centre's status as a Conservation Area. The most prominent of these are the City's two Cathedrals, both of which are devoted to St. Patrick. Other notable buildings include the former City Hospital, Public Library, City Library, Tourist Information Office (formerly Northern Bank), Courthouse, Gaol and the Palace. Similarly, open spaces such as the Palace Demesne and the Mall are also central features of Armagh's heritage. The continued protection and enhancement of these buildings and their settings will be fundamental to the future of the City, as discussed in the following section.

Given such rich history and architecture, Armagh should be a leading tourist destination akin to other great cathedral cities in the UK, Ireland and Europe. However, analysis would suggest this is not the case. Whilst visitors do come to Armagh, time spent in the City and likelihood of repeat visits are often limited. Such patterns point to the fact that Armagh's collection of buildings cannot sustain high visitor numbers alone. Analysis for the Masterplan, as well as the emerging Armagh Tourism Strategy, identifies a need for the City to enhance existing visitor attractions, provide a better range of tourist services and invest in new and innovate types of accommodation. These should focus on underpinning the unique elements of Armagh's offer, including both Cathedrals and the Bishop's Palace. They should also complement the hospitality and conferencing role played by the Armagh City Hotel. In doing so, Armagh has potential to become a stand out short break, cultural destination, comparable to the best in Europe.

Of course, the quality of Armagh as a place to visit is also greatly influenced by factors of relevance to all who live and work there. To that extent, addressing a number of key issues affecting the City Centre as a whole will be of benefit to visitors as much as residents of Armagh.

One issue is the ease of navigating the City Centre by foot, wayfinding and easily accessing various attractions and facilities. Also, the evening economy has significant scope to improve and diversify the existing offer of public houses, restaurants, cafes and cultural facilities. Closely linked is the availability and quality of hotels and guesthouses. Armagh has scope to increase the available offer and provide a range of budgets and tastes.

Finally, safety and perception of safety in the City Centre is another critical element. The current lack of activity and the abundance of security shutters create an evening environment that feels unsafe, even though actual crime levels are relatively low. Armagh must strive to create spaces and places that are welcoming to all visitors and sections of the community both day and night.

3.5 Urban Form & Public Realm: Defining the Character of Armagh

Armagh's heritage is also reflected in its urban form and public realm, both of which define the special character of the City Centre. Through the Masterplan, it is important to conserve and enhance Armagh's character, as it is one of the City's greatest assets.

Given Armagh's status as an ecclesiastical centre, it is no surprise that the urban form of Armagh centres around the ancient site where St. Patrick founded his original church, now St. Patrick's Cathedral (CoI). This site is at the centre of the City, both physically and metaphorically, as radial streets lead to it and surrounding streets encircle it, possibly following ancient defensive structures.

Armagh's urban form, while orientated around the ancient site of the Cathedral, is mainly made up of narrow streets with a generally cohesive building line similar to most historic City Centres. Overall, buildings are about three stories on principal streets such as Upper English Street. Smaller buildings of two stories, typically residential structures, occur on side streets such as Dobbin Street.

Armagh's topography has also had considerable impact on the urban form. As mentioned earlier, views to, within and from the City are an important feature of Armagh.

The historic urban fabric reflects the geography by creating specific views, such as the view north from Newry Road through Scotch Street, terminating at St. Patrick's Cathedral (CoI). Another important view from Market Square to St. Patrick's Cathedral (CoI) is created by the dramatic difference in levels. At St. Patrick's Cathedral (CoI), there is an almost 360 degree view of the City. The tall spires of St. Patrick's Church (RC) are particularly visible from many places.

Buildings in Armagh typically feature pitched roofs and are rendered in either stone, painted cement or red brick. Windows are generally larger on the ground floor and smaller on the upper stories, usually establishing a coherent rhythm along the building line. This coherency in architectural elements creates a strong sense of character in the City Centre, contributing to its picturesque quality.

Of course, this regularity in buildings, while forming the foundation of Armagh's historic character, is punctuated by some fantastic historic buildings unique in Northern Ireland.





Due to its long history and cultural importance, Armagh has a wealth of listed buildings. The most prominent of which are the two Cathedrals. St. Patrick's Cathedral (CoI) is mainly from the 1830's with some parts from the 13th century, while St. Patrick's Cathedral (RC) was completed in 1904.

Armagh's historic buildings and spaces are one of the City's most important assets, thus preserving them and ensuring new development fits into this historic streetscape is a critical priority. While a Conservation Area is in place in the City Centre, it is nonetheless important to pro-actively ensure the re-use and preservation of historic structures as well as establish design guidelines for new development.

Throughout the City Centre, however, examples of lesser quality architecture exist. Generally of 20th Century origin, such buildings present a challenge to Armagh as they undermine the quality of streets and spaces. Examples include the current PSNI Station on Friary Road, the nearby Bridge House block of flats and also 1960s and 70s buildings located along the Mall. Where possible, the most prominent of these buildings should be targeted for improvement or redevelopment.

In terms of public realm, Market Square is Armagh's most central public space at the foot of St. Patrick's Cathedral (CoI). As a gateway to the Cathedral, Market Square features some important buildings such as the City Library, Northern Bank and the modern Market Place Theatre. Most recently, the reopening of the cinema along with surrounding cafes and restaurants present the opportunity for Market Square to have a greater role as a public space both day and night. Recently completed public realm works have also greatly enhanced the Square

To the east of St. Patrick's Cathedral is the Mall, once the Commons, Armagh's principal open green space. The Mall is flanked by the Courthouse and the Gaol and fronted by many excellent examples of terrace housing, Georgian architecture and other monumental buildings along the western and eastern lengths. Recently, traffic congestion on the Mall West has undermined the Mall and surrounding buildings, diminishing the importance of this public space in the urban fabric of Armagh.

Shambles Market is another important public space in Armagh. While it is mostly a car park where vehicles can park and display their merchandise, Shambles Market does retain a listed market building. There is potential for Shambles Market to play a larger part in Armagh City Centre as a valuable open space.

The Palace and Demesne are a major component of the architecture and public realm of Armagh. Currently home to Armagh City and District Council, the fine Palace building dominates a lush landscape of grass and woodland, located immediately to the south of the City Centre. Unfortunately, access to the main building by the public is restricted, due its function as Council offices. Potential clearly exists for change in time, allowing the building to be enjoyed more widely. Similarly, access to the Demesne itself is currently hindered by Friary Road. This busy and fast vehicular thoroughfare creates a hostile environment for pedestrians, effectively cutting the Demesne off from the rest of the City Centre. The quality of this area is further affected by prominent yet unattractive buildings and a disjointed urban form shattered by the impact of road infrastructure.

Environmental quality of the public realm is an issue in the City Centre. While ongoing public realm works will greatly improve the City Centre streetscape, there remain a variety of factors which have a detrimental effect on the overall look and feel of Armagh's central streets. These include issues like untidy frontages and signage clutter. Also traffic related issues like congestion disruption caused by Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV) and their unloading activity during the day. Also in places, cars parked on the pavement block pedestrian movement.





3.6 Movement & Parking: Pressure Points

In section 3.1, the impact of congestion on Armagh City Centre was discussed. Congestion has led to clear environmental and economic ramifications affecting the historic City. These must be resolved predominantly through the implementation of strategic transport measures, including link roads and enhanced public transport provision. However, more focussed measures within the City Centre are also required to alleviate congestion, improve pedestrian connectivity and reduce the negative environmental impact of traffic at key pressure points.

A particularly evident pressure point in central Armagh exists to the south of the City Centre. Here, a number of major roads converge to meet Friary Road, creating substantial congestion and a very poor environment for pedestrians. The negative environmental qualities of this area are compounded by a lack of built form and some highly visible examples of architecture that is inappropriate in style and character to the City. As noted in 3.5, such volumes create a significant barrier to pedestrian movement between the City Centre and areas to the south, including the Palace Demesne, Armagh Gaol and the City Hotel.

Improving conditions for the safe movement of pedestrians and cyclists is much needed in Armagh, particularly to encourage reduction in car dependency among nearby residents. Current public realm works will do much to improve such provision. However, more substantial issues exist around the periphery of the City Centre in connecting to neighbouring residential areas. To be successful, pedestrian and cycle links must be safe and secure, passing through areas of activity, whilst reducing the potential for conflict with vehicles.

In addition to problems associated with the movement of vehicles and pedestrians, car parking in Armagh is another critical issue. Consultation revealed that many people are frustrated by a perceived lack of available spaces in the City Centre, an experience confirmed through analysis. Armagh has approximately 1,072 on-street spaces and 966 off-street, 485 of which are currently free. This provision is estimated to be approximately 150 spaces short of requirements for the City Centre. However, the dynamics of current parking trends add further problems, with the decriminalisation of parking resulting in greater levels of enforcement and reduced illegal parking.

Pressure is also placed on free spaces, both in public car parks but also in those associated with private premises including City Centre churches and the City Hotel. Evidence also suggests that commuters and those working in City Centre offices use spaces for the full extent of the day, restricting available space for shoppers and visitors. Therefore, the Masterplan must seek to rationalise this complex array of issues that currently influences parking in Armagh. However, the need for convenient parking must also be balanced with the physical impact of cars and car parks on the City.



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3.7 Retail, Business and Residential: The Value of Diversity

Armagh City Centre is primarily focussed on retail and commercial uses, especially along the core retail spine. Upper English Street, Thomas Street and Scotch Street have a variety of shops, cafes, banks and services, the majority independently owned. There are also two relatively small shopping centres located at the Mall and Ogle Street. However, a number of vacant units exist throughout the City Centre, reflecting a challenging economic climate within which these businesses operate.

In comparison to the neighbouring towns of Craigavon, Newry and Portadown, Armagh has a relatively limited retail offering, an issue cited by residents through consultation. As a result, many people shop outside the City, particularly for comparison goods such as clothing and household items. To stem this 'leakage', Armagh is likely to need a greater critical mass of shops, including some multiple chains, to attract and retain customers for a longer period of time. This will require provision of good quality units of sufficient size. In doing so, the indigenous, niche retailers that are key to the identity and culture of Armagh can benefit from increased footfall and business.

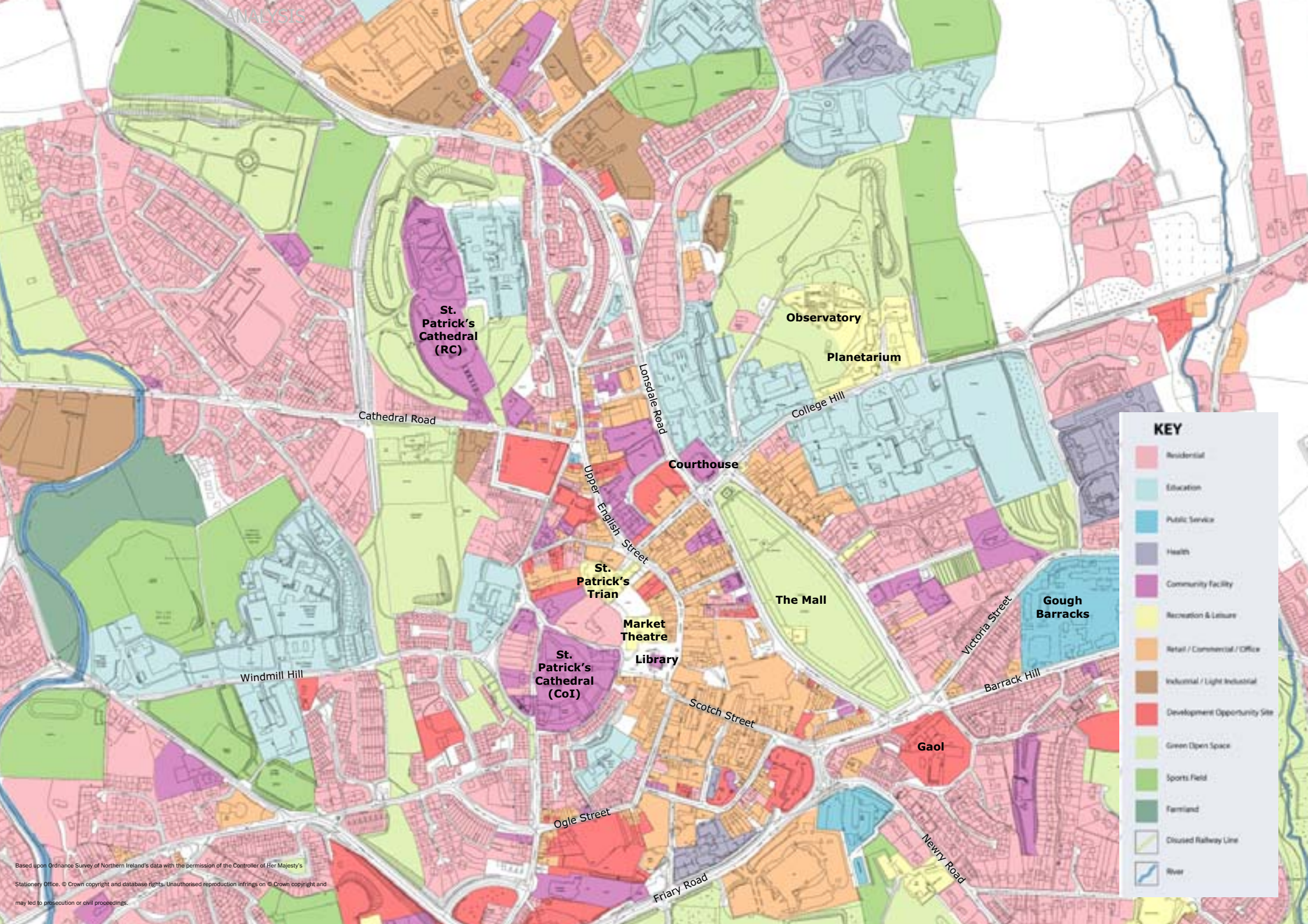
However, because of its unique historic and aesthetic qualities, Armagh must be careful not to lose its greatest asset in an effort to compete with more modern places such as Craigavon.

Large floorplan supermarkets, for example, must be carefully planned in relation to the historic City Centre to avoid becoming detrimental to Armagh's overall character. A balance must be struck, identifying the retail identity of Armagh which is appropriate to its setting. Nurturing a unique offering should complement its potential in tourism and as a place to live and work. To that extent, efforts should include the retention and attraction of high quality independent retailers, complemented with increased activity from the Arts and Crafts sector, linking further education provision within the City.

Office uses in the City Centre are related to the diversity and types of economic activities. Statistics show a relatively small financial and business services sector in Armagh with some growth potential. Yet growth in these sectors requires availability of modern office space as much of the current provision is inadequate for modern business requirements such as flexible spaces, raised floors with power distribution and data network cabling. Forming a larger business community would bring numerous economic and social benefits to the City Centre, including increased employment. Thus, development in the City Centre should allow for modern office space in the upper floors for a range of business from small start-ups to large local service providers.

Being a relatively small City, many people live within walking distance of Armagh's City Centre. The presence of residential properties helps diversify the activity and use of the City Centre and should therefore be encouraged. Scope exists to support greater levels of City Centre living in accommodation types that often appeal to the younger and older sectors of the market with less reliance on car travel. Advantages to the City would be more than just economic, as residents' activity contributes to safety due to a greater presence of people and watchful eyes on the City Centre streets.

Therefore, Armagh City Centre must seek to nurture its mixed use character so that retail units are complemented by range of others uses, including offices, residences and leisure facilities.



KEY

	Residential
	Education
	Public Service
	Health
	Community Facility
	Recreation & Leisure
	Retail / Commercial / Office
	Industrial / Light Industrial
	Development Opportunity Site
	Green Open Space
	Sports Field
	Farmland
	Closed Railway Line
	River

3.8 Development Sites: Opportunities for Change

At the outset of the Masterplan process, a number of key development sites were widely known in Armagh and have been identified on the adjacent plan accordingly. These vary in size and potential, including small in-fill units and large areas of unused open space. Developing these key sites, especially those in the City Centre, is an urgent priority given the high visibility of these sites as they are currently detrimental to the City Centre.

In addition, the process of analysis has identified other sites that may have development potential. These include areas currently of low quality and or density, as well other others that have fallen into disuse or dereliction. Opportunities for development also exist on many of the City's surface car parks. Whilst these perform an important parking role in the City, scope exists to integrate this provision with development by the use of multi-storey or underground parking. This would give Armagh the opportunity to greatly improve the look and character of these car dominated areas.

Critical to Armagh City Centre is that new development is designed to fit into the existing historic urban fabric, enhancing and not diminishing Armagh's unique character. Design guidelines for new development are covered in detail in section "5.6 Design Guidance".



3.9 Analysis Conclusions

Armagh is a City of unparalleled significance in Northern Ireland. Its history and heritage form a strong identity and character which is one of Armagh's greatest assets and therefore must be conserved. The City Centre has a historic urban form and a wealth of listed buildings, making it a special place to live, work and visit. By underpinning existing assets, Armagh has the potential to greatly enhance tourism.

While off the major vehicular and rail connections, Armagh nonetheless enjoys a good regional location in south-central Northern Ireland. To further capitalise on its location, the quality of regional transport linkages must be regularly reviewed and enhanced where possible. However, congestion due to through traffic is a problem which should be addressed by committed strategic transport measures and improved parking arrangements. For similar reasons, encouraging sustainable modes of transport should also be a priority.

Specific areas within the city require particular attention to the quality of their environment. The centre's recent transformation of public realm now sets a standard of other areas of the City. This includes the Friary Road, where the area's urban form has been effectively shattered by road infrastructure. Similarly, the quality of approach roads and gateways into the City should also be considered.

The City Centre has a number of development sites which have the potential to add to Armagh's character and economic growth. Such growth should be based upon existing strengths, promoting a healthy and diverse mix of uses, including continued independent retail and increased housing in the City Centre. Together will underpinning the City's evening economy, such measures would add to the liveliness, vitality and safety of the City.

All new developments must be carefully designed to contribute positively to the city by creating coherent streetscapes. Design guidance should be introduced to ensure that this requirement is met in sensitive locations.

The issues and opportunities identified through analysis form the foundation upon which the Masterplan proposals are built. Armagh faces challenges connected to the economic climate but also in balancing the needs of a modern settlement within an historic context. This includes resolving issues such as access and dominance of the car, as well as incorporating modern facilities in old streets. Importantly for Armagh, these issues are surmountable and must be seen in the context of significant opportunities based on the City's wonderful assets. Now, the opportunity arises to develop a Vision for Armagh, so that the Masterplan proposals can begin to take shape.



4CONCEPT

4.1 Shared Vision

The Shared Vision presents a verbal picture of what Armagh can achieve, benefiting all people who live, work and visit the City. Developed through consultation, the Shared Vision was written to guide the Masterplanning process.

“The City of Armagh will be a **safe, lively** and **attractive** place in which to **live, work** and **visit**. Its **historic centre** will form the heart of the island’s **oldest City** known far and wide as a **cultural** and **religious capital** of Ireland. Its well-maintained **historic buildings, streets** and **spaces** will provide the backdrop for a **forward-thinking** City, with excellent amenities for its **residents**, provision for **retail, business** and **enterprise** and a **welcoming environment** for those who come to **visit**. Improved transportation **connections** and **environmental quality** will facilitate the development of a **friendly, people orientated** City Centre.”

4.2 Aims & Objectives

Corresponding to the Shared Vision is a set of Aims & Objectives that articulate the most important goals for the Masterplan. Resulting from the study of Armagh's background and analysis, the Aims & Objectives were developed to focus and direct proposals towards specific targets.

1. Enhance the quality of life for Armagh's residents

- Provide safe and shared environments for all members of the community, day and night
- Support and enhance the provision of healthcare and education
- Provide good open spaces and recreational facilities for exercise, relaxation and play
- Provide access to good jobs within the City and further afield
- Ensure a supply of good quality housing that meets the needs of all of Armagh residents
- Ensure that residential neighbourhoods are well serviced with physical connections to and from the City Centre

2. Maintain and enhance Armagh's historic character and identity

- Preserve and enhance the built fabric of Armagh's historic buildings
- Preserve and enhance the setting of historic buildings, including streets, open spaces and views
- Ensure that sustainable uses are found for all of Armagh's important buildings
- Ensure that new developments contribute positively to the identity and character of Armagh
- Communicate the importance of the City's heritage
- Further the strong, positive and unique identity and brand image for Armagh

3. Develop a sustainable economy based on existing strengths

- Support and develop existing businesses in Armagh
- Identify opportunities for new economic activity within the City
- Underpin Armagh's retail offer, focussing on quality rather than quantity
- Sustainably develop the City's evening economy
- Ensure that the physical environment of Armagh serves to attract investment

4. Develop Armagh as a leading tourism destination

- Improve the quality of regional connections to and from Armagh
- Support and enhance the quality of existing tourist attractions
- Realise the potential of new attractions and activities
- Extend a Citywide itinerary of attractions throughout the day, evening, week and year
- Strengthen and support hospitality and evening economy offering in the City

5. Develop a sustainable transportation network

- Facilitate growth in the City economy
- Enable better access to services and employment, including car parking
- Safeguard benefits from committed transport improvements
- Protect the local environment through sustainable transport solutions



4.3 Concept Plan

To realise the goals set forth by the Shared Vision and Aims & Objectives, a Concept Plan for Armagh has been developed. This forms the design foundation of the Masterplan's proposals and seeks to capitalise upon opportunities identified through analysis, whilst also addressing issues in a proactive manner. The Concept for Armagh is shown over two plans, one focussing on the City Centre and the other on Wider City, both working together to form a strategic vision for the City as a whole.

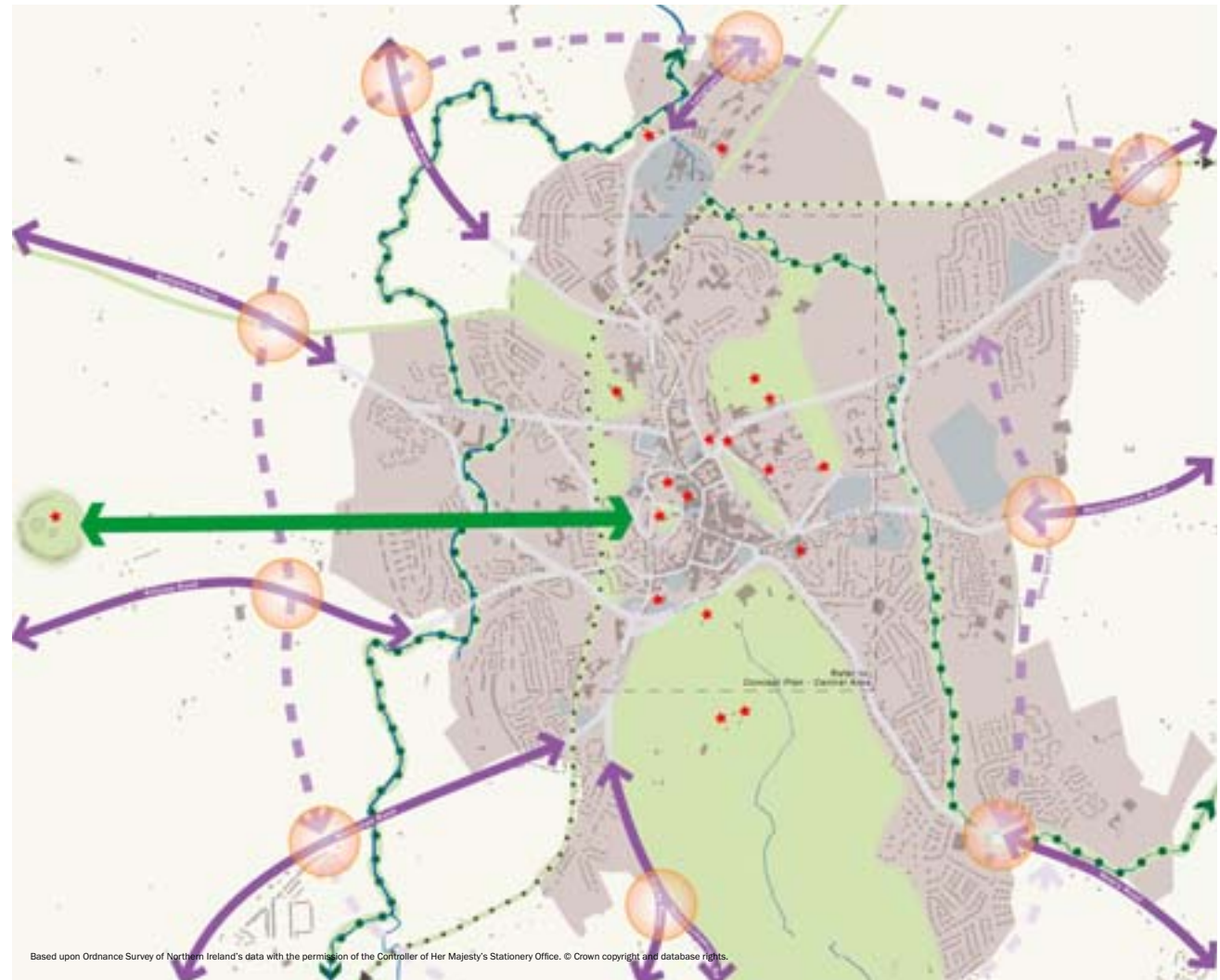
The Concept Plan for the City Centre shows the historic core of the City, with its landmark buildings, streets and spaces. They must be protected and enhanced as the City develops, so that it looks and functions as well as possible for residents and visitors. A Central Retail Spine is also shown, broadly defined as Upper English Street, Thomas Street and Scotch Street. This forms the core of Armagh City Centre and must remain the focus for continued commercial and retail activity. This will be underpinned by physical improvements and a proactive approach to support economic activity in the area.

At present, however, much of the physical and socio-economic activity associated with this spine dissipates to the north and south. The Concept therefore proposes four key nodes of activity, anchored by important buildings and public spaces. These are Shambles Market, the Courthouse & College, the Gaol and Irish Street.

These nodes would become focal points of activity, attracting users and becoming destinations in their own right. As a result, they effectively help anchor the Central Retail Spine and provide a clear definition of gateways into the City Centre.

The Concept also seeks to physically integrate the Palace and Demesne with the City Centre via greatly improved linkages, including the re-establishment of the old carriageway route that once linked the Palace with Scotch Street. This linkage would form part of a broader conceptual connection between the Palace, Mall and Observatory. Similarly, Friary Road is the subject of comprehensive improvements to reduce its impact as a barrier and improve the setting of key buildings, such as the City Hotel. Sports provision in this area will also be supported via a consolidated Sports and Leisure area. Scope exists to further develop first-class facilities for use by the public and all of the City's sporting bodies. It is also important to link surrounding residential areas to the City Centre through pedestrian connections and Greenways, improving existing footpaths and public spaces.

A network of Greenways is also proposed for the City, following the routes of rivers and former railway lines, thus providing valuable open space to adjacent communities, whilst safeguarding these routes from further development.



The Wider City Concept Plan illustrates how the Greenways link to Armagh's outlying areas. It also emphasises a stronger connection between Navan Fort and the City Centre. The proposed Link Roads are shown along with existing radial roads into the City Centre.

These and key gateway locations along them will be the focus of improvements to positively influence the arrival experience into the City.



Key	
	Existing Built Form
	Proposed Development
	Potential Development Sites
	Open Green Space
	Existing EI works
	Proposed additional EI Works
	High Quality Public Realm
	Car Park
	Pedestrian

5 MASTERPLAN

The Masterplan details how the Aims and Objectives as set out by the Concept Plan can be developed into a series of proposals for the City. These proposals or projects vary in nature, scale and the timeframe associated with their delivery within an approximate period of 10 - 15 years. Proposals relate to land both in public and private ownership, therefore requiring a number of different stakeholders to be involved with their development. However, common to all proposals is a strategically founded rationale that will bring physical, social and economic benefits to Armagh, contributing towards attainment of the Shared Vision.

This section of the document serves to summarise all proposals contained within the Masterplan. It begins with a summary of the projects and strategies for the Wider City, followed by a more detailed account of proposals for the North and South areas of the City Centre.

5.1 Summary of Wider City

In relation to the Wider City, the Masterplan proposals focus on improving the transport and pedestrian connections, enhancing arrival experiences into Armagh, ensuring the appropriateness of long-term development of outer City areas and maximising the contribution of the Palace Demesne to the City.

5.1.1 Strategic Transport Measures

As noted through analysis, Armagh's strategic regional location and current transport infrastructure arrangements have resulted in significant levels of City Centre congestion. The two proposed Link Roads identified by Regional Transport Strategy plus the proposed improvement of the A3 link to Portadown will help to reduce this problem.

However, achieving further alleviation of the impact of vehicles on Armagh City Centre will also require a number of complementary measures.

As part of a sustainable transport approach, incentives to reduce car travel in Armagh should be explored. This would include improved provision of public transport, such as ensuring access to good quality bus services.

The reintroduction of rail travel to Armagh is unlikely to be economically feasible over the lifespan of this Masterplan. However, it should remain a long-term objective for the City, most likely as part of the reinstatement of cross border link connecting north and south. To that extent, former railway routes should be safeguarded from future development to enable future transport uses in the long term.

As Armagh is relatively compact in size, efforts should be made to encourage walking and cycling wherever possible. The provision of good quality, safe routes between residential areas and facilities is therefore of vital importance to the future of Armagh. This will include the City's existing street network, but also community Greenways, as proposed later in this section.

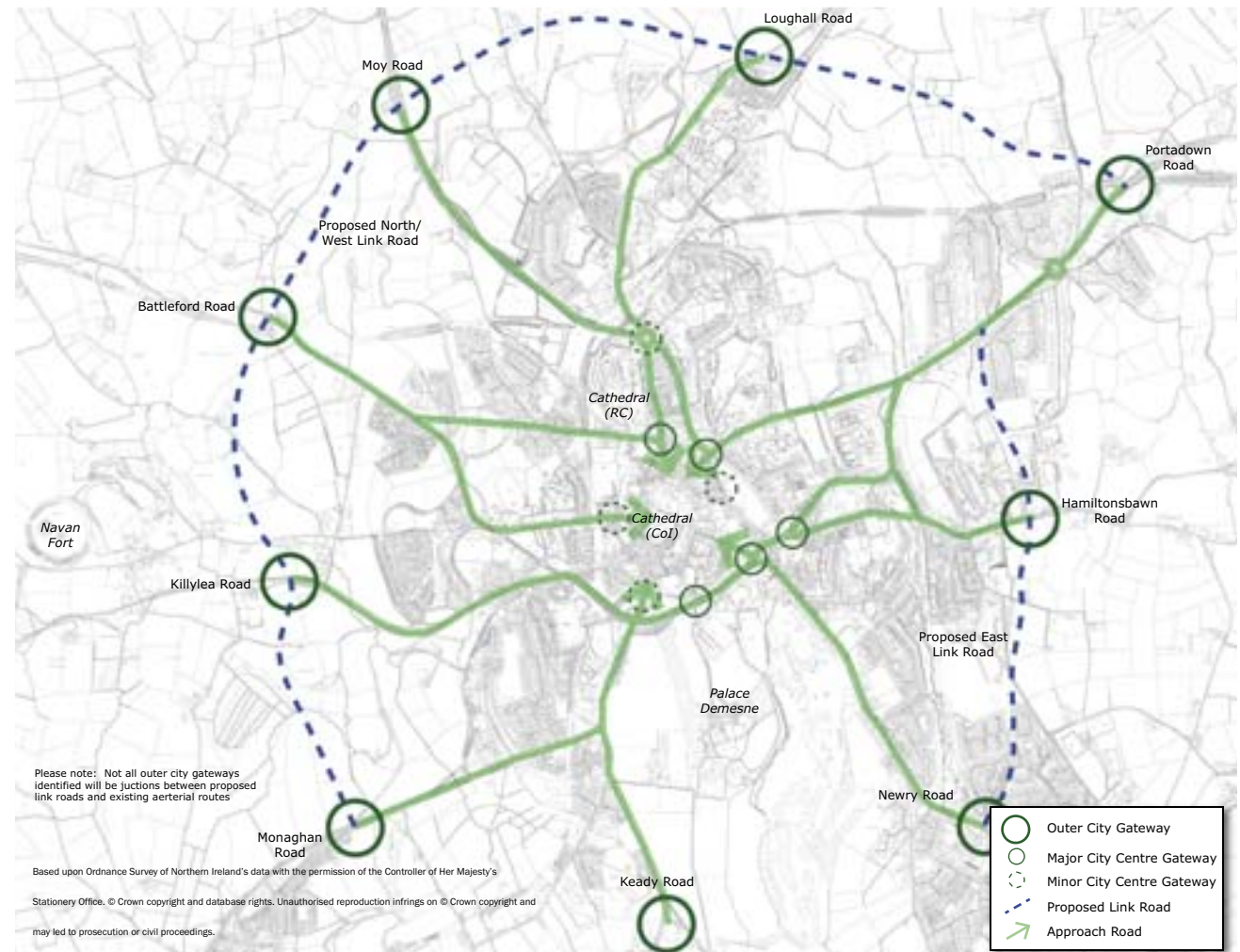
Consideration of additional strategic road infrastructure in Armagh may also be necessary over the long term. This would seek to further alleviate the impact of traffic on central areas such as the Newry, Monaghan and Friary Roads. The exploration of alternative strategic routes to the south of Armagh may be therefore required in the future.

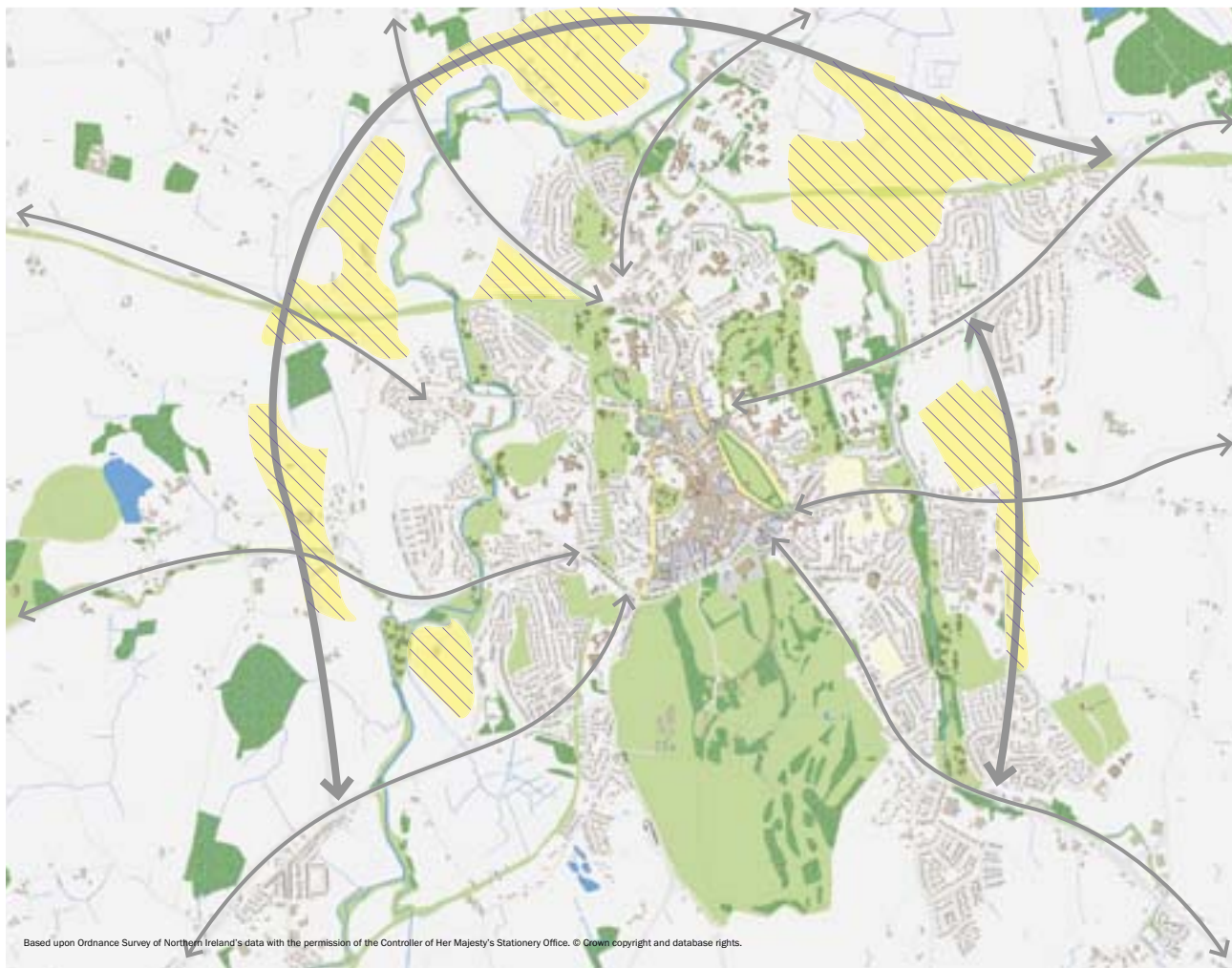
The continued exploration of long term transportation measures such as these should be undertaken via a Strategic Transport Strategy that considers Armagh in a comprehensive manner focussing principally on reducing the role of the private vehicle in lieu of more active travel and sustainable transport modes.



5.1.2 Gateways & Approach Roads

As also referenced in Section 3.2, opportunities must be found to enhance the gateways and approach roads into Armagh to ensure a better arrival experience for residents and visitors alike. The locations of these gateways, as identified on the adjacent plan, would be the subject of comprehensive environmental improvements. This should include gateway markers designed specifically for the City, which help define entrances in a style fitting to this historic City. In addition, landscape works, lighting and improvement of prominent buildings and boundaries must also be undertaken, working in partnership with relevant landowners. Signage in these areas should be restricted to essential provision to avoid unnecessary visual clutter.





5.1.3 Potential City Expansion

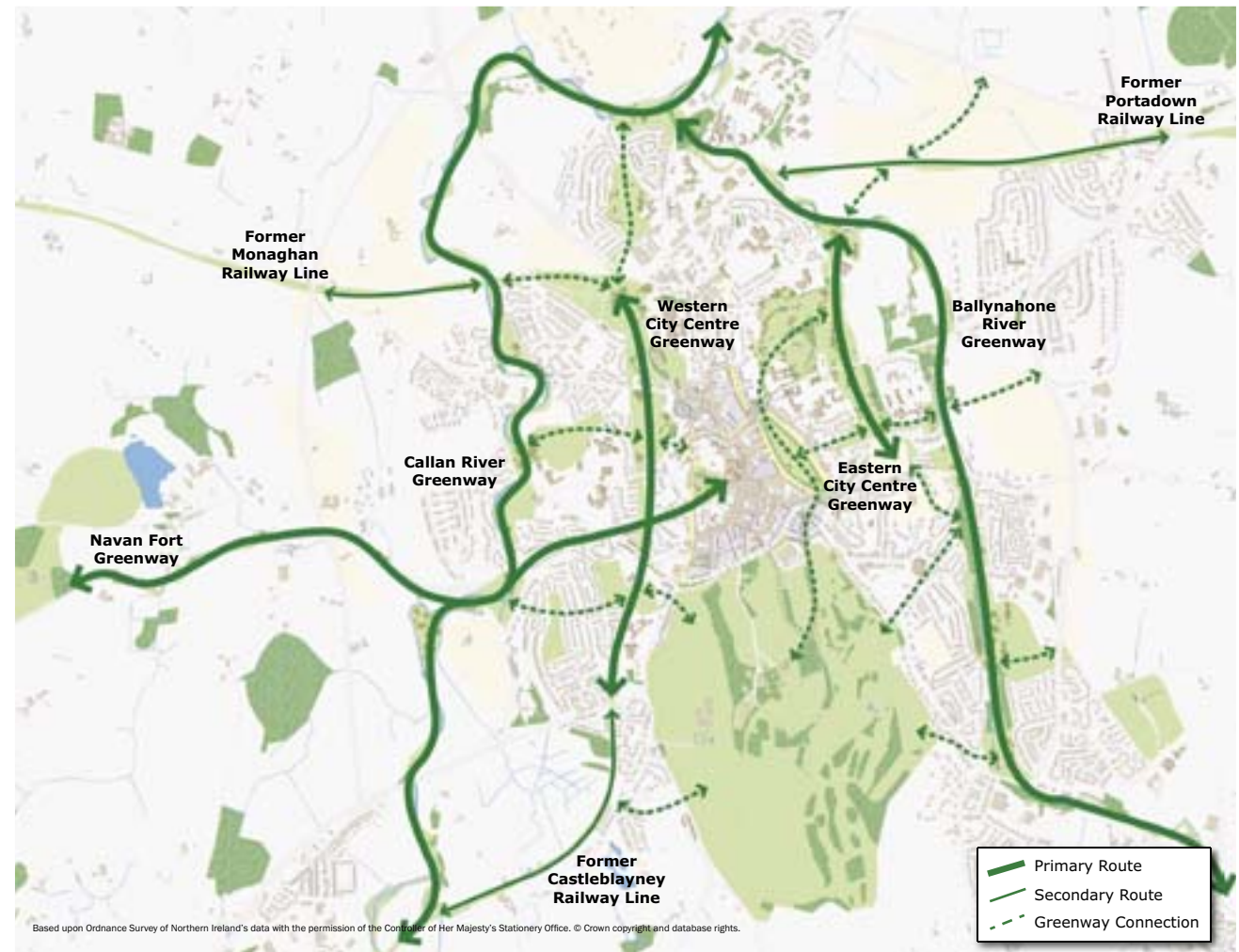
Related to proposed link roads, analysis of the lands beyond the existing City boundaries of Armagh highlighted the opportunities and constraints associated with their potential for development. It found that significant areas of sensitivity exist in relation to flood plains, archaeology and topography, resulting in large areas of land that are impractical and inappropriate for development. However, the study also identified other focussed areas that may have potential use as part of a wider programme of City expansion.

Consideration of the development potential of such greenfield lands must be very carefully undertaken, supported by a process of specific consultation, detailed technical appraisal and alignment with emerging planning policy. It must also be done in a manner that fully considers the physical and socio-economic impact on the wider City as a whole. Analysis of the City for this Masterplan identified a number of existing brown field development sites. It is therefore strongly advocated that development of these sites is prioritised in lieu of potential greenfield development in the future. However, sites on the periphery of the City may be identified as appropriate for uses such as industry and employment, requiring large areas of land. Should this be the case, the quality of physical connections with the remainder of the City will be key.

5.1.4 Community Greenways

Successfully linking the City Centre with existing and future neighbourhoods is crucial to ensuring the sustainability of Armagh from an environmental and social perspective. Community Greenways afford the opportunity to provide linkage by connecting open spaces and allowing continuous foot and cycleway to be established. These provide valuable open space for leisure and recreation, as well as the protection of wildlife habitats.

In Armagh, Greenway routes are proposed following the Callan and Ballynahone Rivers, while other Greenways would follow the routes of the disused Monaghan, Portadown and Castleblayney railway lines, until such time as they are viewed feasible once more for rail travel. These should build upon existing links and gateways previously identified. As shown on the adjacent plan, these would establish a 'green network' throughout the City, allowing for the safe movement of people between them, adjacent neighbourhoods and the City Centre. The Greenways would be suited to pedestrians, joggers, cyclists and potentially horses. It is proposed that these routes are safeguarded from future development that prevents continuous movement along them. However, appropriate development that positively fronts onto the Greenways should be encouraged to ensure that they are safe and lively places. Consultation with all stakeholders, including residents, is key to this proposal.





5.1.5 Navan Fort

Navan Fort is included as part of the greenway network. This very important site was identified through analysis as a major asset to Armagh. Although, it was also noted that physical and interpretative connections between the two attractions is currently poor. Navan Fort and the City Centre would benefit from a mutual advantage by encouraging visitors of one place to visit the other. A specialised form of transport to efficiently connect tourists between both sites would augment this route. This could take the form of an environmentally friendly 'busy bus' or other innovative forms of transport.

5.1.6 Sport & Leisure Provision



While Greenways will create additional recreational facilities, the opportunity also exists to enhance and consolidate existing sports provision in close proximity to the City Centre. At present, a critical mass of sports clubs exists to the immediate south of the City Centre, including club grounds for Rugby, Gaelic Games, Cricket and Golf. The Masterplan proposes that these facilities be further developed in relation to one another, thus establishing a Centre for Sporting Excellence on the doorstep of Armagh City Centre. This would involve increased partnership between sporting institutions, Armagh City and District Council and others in assessing how facilities can be managed and developed together. Proposals should relate to the councils 'Recreational & Leisure Strategy'.

5.1.7 Armagh Palace & Demesne

The Armagh Palace and Demesne is a particularly fine feature of the City's historic layout and consequently should feature highly in its future development and regeneration. Through analysis, it was identified that potential exists for greater public access to the Demesne and the Palace building.

Accordingly, it is proposed that opportunities are explored to relocate Council administrative offices from the Palace to the City Centre, as part of wider changes associated with the Review of Public Administration. In turn, this would enable restoration of the building to accommodate a number of potential uses, such as the continued hosting of ceremonial events and civic receptions, working in partnership with city centre hotels and hospitality providers.

Improvements to the Palace Demesne are also proposed, so that it can perform more effectively as a public park, whilst retaining its unique historic character. This would include re-establishing the former carriage route that once connected the Palace buildings with the Newry Road and Scotch Street (see "5.2.1 New Pedestrian Connections"). The tree-lined route would be designed to accommodate pedestrian and cyclists only, reinstating an important physical connection between these two parts of the City.





5.1.7 Development Opportunities

There are a number of development sites located outside of the City Centre that present opportunities for a variety of uses. In this regard, the Masterplan summary of these sites must be read in conjunction with prevailing planning policy. Profiles of each development site are also located in the appendix. Key sites include:

Loughall Road Mill is an impressive stone building, currently used as a haulage yard. Development of this site should be encouraged, including restoration and refurbishment of the historic building. The building's strong character is a significant asset and should be conserved.

The **Alexander Road Dairy** Site, located at the junction of Railway Street, Alexander Road and Moy Road, is understood to be no longer operational. Potential exists for development of this site, potentially including commercial and residential uses.

Gough Barracks is located very close to the City Centre, along gateway routes Barrack Hill and Victoria Street. The site would also be potentially near the Ballynahone River Greenway, increasing accessibility of the site. Residential uses would be particularly appropriate here.

Drumadd Barracks is located on the periphery of the City Centre, along the gateway route Hamiltonsbawn Road. The site would also be potentially located near the Ballynahone River Greenway on the east side, increasing accessibility. One potential use for this site is industry, consolidating the Hamiltonsbawn Industrial Estate. Other uses, including housing, may also be viable.

St. Luke's Hospital is a major site located north of the City Centre. It currently serves an important health care function and discussions are ongoing regarding its future role in this area. Development of this site must seek to capitalise upon its listed building and designed landscape, both of which are clear assets of value to the City. A range of healthcare related uses may be suitable for parts of this site, including specialised homes for the elderly and disabled. Scope also exists for research and science uses, potentially associated with the region's agricultural and food production industries.





St. Patricks Cathedral (RC))

Cathedral Road

Londale Road

Upper English Street

Planetarium & Observatory

College Hill

The Mall West

The Mall

The Mall East

Victoria Street

Barrack Hill

Scotch Street

St. Patricks Cathedral (CoI))

Armagh Gaol

Ogle Street

Friary Road

Palace Demesne

Newry Road

Key

- Existing Built Form
- Proposed Development
- Potential Development Sites
- Open Green Space
- Existing EI works
- Proposed additional EI Works
- High Quality Public Realm
- Car Park
- Pedestrian

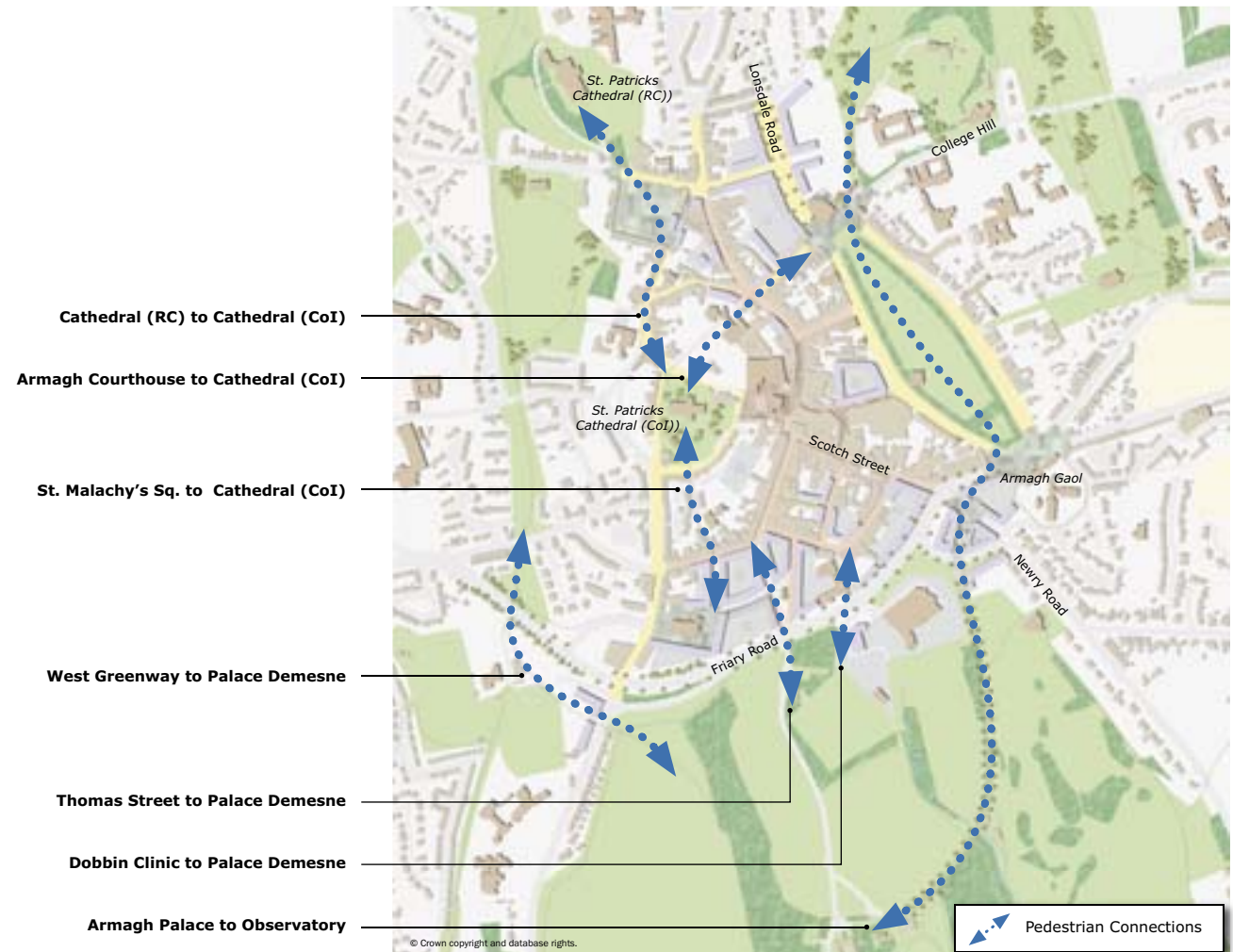
5.2 Summary of City Centre

The Masterplan proposes an extensive range of projects relating to the City Centre of Armagh, including individual development sites, public realm projects and transportation initiatives. Together they seek to fulfil the Aims and Objectives identified for Armagh, striving to ensure that the City Centre is a safe, lively and attractive place to live, work and visit.

This section summarises the proposals that relate to the City Centre in its entirety, whilst site specific projects are detailed in sections "5.4 North City Centre" and "5.5 South City Centre".

5.2.1 New Pedestrian Connections

Improving public realm is not only about upgrading existing spaces aesthetically, but also creating better pedestrian connections to facilitate movement through the City. The Masterplan therefore proposes a number of new pedestrian connections through the City Centre which complement the significant investment associated with the Public Realm scheme and the Roads Service walking blueprint included in the Transport Strategy for the City.





One proposed connection is from the Courthouse to St. Patrick's Cathedral (CoI) through College Street, the former Post Office site, St. Patrick's Trián and the Rectory Grounds. This connection would provide another access point to St. Patrick's Cathedral of relevance to churchgoers and tourists alike.

Another proposed connection is from St. Malachy's Church (proposed as an urban square, see "Public Spaces") to St. Patrick's Cathedral (CoI) through Chapel Lane. This will physically connect these two landmark buildings and once again, extend the range of routes available to local people and visitors.

To overcome the barrier presented by Friary Road, three pedestrian connections focus on providing better links between the City Centre and the Palace Demesne. Specifically, these connect Dobbin Clinic, Thomas Street and the Western Greenway to the Palace Demesne. Their relationship to road crossing points would require an assessment in relation to traffic movements.





Another important connection would be the upgrade of McCrum's Court, an existing pedestrian connection linking Market Square with the Mall. This existing link needs improvement; however, there is scope to improve it through the extension of the Mall West Shopping Centre.

Finally, another important connection is from the Palace Demesne to the Observatory. Based on the historic "Palace Carriageway", this proposed pedestrian connection would not only link three green spaces (the Palace Demesne, the Mall and the Observatory grounds), but also extend to the Ballynahone River Greenway (see "5.1 Summary of Wider City"). This connection would serve tourists parking in the Palace tourist car park (see "5.3 Welcome Parking") as well as Armagh residents seeking to utilise these valuable open spaces.

5.2.2 Enhanced Streets & Public Spaces

High-quality streets and public spaces are recognised as an essential component to a successful City. Recent works to upgrade The Mall and the Armagh City Centre Regeneration Scheme (under construction at the time of writing) have already contributed greatly to improving the public realm of the City. This includes Armagh's two most important spaces, Market Square and The Mall. The Masterplan proposes that over the next 10 years, further public realm works to a similar high quality are carried out. These will help to greatly enhance the pedestrian environment of the City Centre, encouraging people to spend more time in the City and attracting investment accordingly.

Improvements are proposed to the public realm of Shambles Market, as part of wider upgrade of this important space. This would be oriented towards people gathering and spending time in the area, whilst creating a flexible space suitable for market activity as well as events.

The Courthouse is an important landmark building, located at the northern end of the Mall. Opportunities exist to greatly improve the setting of this building through high quality public realm. Throughout the future, the necessity of security railings and fences at the front of this building should be reviewed with the ultimate objective of their removal in time.





Directly opposite the Courthouse is Armagh Gaol. This imposing historic building is due to be redeveloped, providing an opportunity to address the quality of its public realm, particularly at the front entrance. Efforts to reduce the impact of vehicles in this area will greatly enhance its setting, as well as the ease of pedestrian access. This must be taken forward in line with bypass proposals and proposals for accessing the Gaol.

The Masterplan also proposes a new urban square for Armagh. This would be located at St Malachy's Church off Irish Street, as part of wider development proposed in section "5.5 South City Centre".

Finally, a new public square at the end of Scotch Street would be created by new developments in this area, given the reorganisation of the Friary Road and Scotch Street junction (see "5.5.1 Scotch Street Junction").

In addition to public spaces, a number of streets have also been identified for public realm improvements. These are Lonsdale Road, College Street, the Mall East, the Mall West, Abbey Street, Dawson Street, Cathedral Close, Vicar's Hill, Castle Street, and Upper Irish Street. Improving these streets would ensure that the entire City Centre has the same degree of environmental quality, creating a cohesive and attractive streetscape throughout.



5.2.3 Frontages & Living Over The Shops

Another way the environmental quality of the City Centre can be improved is through frontage improvements. A well supported Frontage Improvement Strategy is currently in place in Armagh and this must be continued throughout all areas of the City Centre, applicable to shops, restaurants, offices and public buildings. A detailed survey of frontages forms the basis for proposals and includes works to surface treatments, architectural details and signage.

Derelict or vacant properties can also be addressed through this approach, with temporary improvements made to alleviate blight caused by such properties in high profile locations.

Additionally, Armagh is currently a part of Northern Ireland Housing Executive's Living Over the Shops Scheme, which allows landowners to apply for grants to renovate living accommodation in town centres. Efforts should be made to support and boost this scheme to encourage City Centre living.



Image from 'Armagh City Centre Facade Improvement Grant Scheme - Design Guide' (Nov.08)



5.2.4 Signage & Interpretation

A Signage and Interpretation Strategy would enhance the directional and informational legibility of Armagh. This strategy would focus on ensuring the City Centre is easy to navigate, with a suite of well designed and located signs for all users including pedestrians and drivers. Accompanying maps of the City Centre would also be located at key positions. The history and folklore of Armagh would also be communicated through a series of interpretive panels located near buildings and features of historical importance. These should be carefully designed to be attractive and easy to read, without negatively affecting the location in which they are placed. Potential exists to designate a series of different walks through the city centre, enabling self-guided tours based on interests and target audiences. Given the aim of increasing tourism in Armagh, a coherent Signage and Interpretation Strategy would be crucial to creating a better City for tourists. This strategy would be supported by other interpretative initiatives including printed literatures, dramatisations and events.

5.2.5 Evening Economy

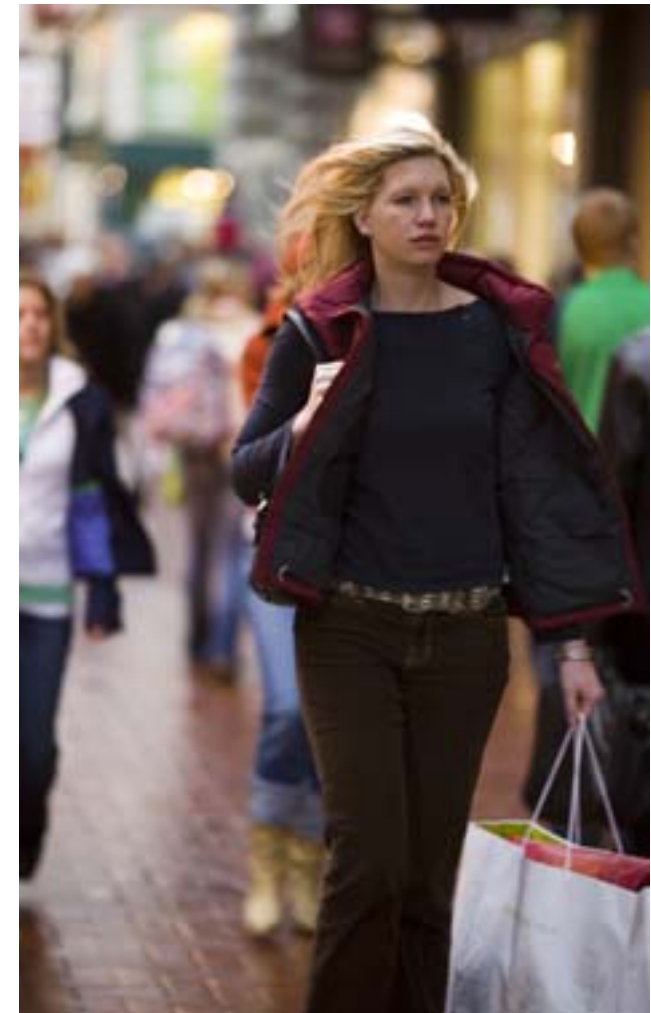
A weakness in the evening economy of Armagh City Centre was discussed in section 3.7. Therefore, the Masterplan proposes an Evening Economy Strategy which would be a targeted approach to improving and diversifying the evening economy of Armagh City Centre.

This would focus on a range of interconnected areas, including the support and promotion of existing businesses in their evening operations, encouragement of the extension of day time activities and the attraction of new evening uses and events that add to the evening economy.

An Evening Economy Strategy would also work with businesses, the Council and the Police to address the perception of safety in Armagh City Centre. This would include lighting, the replacement of security shuttering and visible community policing.

5.2.6 City Investment Strategy

To successfully attract investors to the City of Armagh, a proactive rather than reactive stance must be adopted by key agencies, including the Council, DSD, INI and the Chamber of Commerce. Finding tenants for vacant properties, restoring derelict buildings and undertaking new developments are crucial to the delivery of this Masterplan and its objectives. This strategy will bring more businesses into the City Centre, increasing employment and socioeconomic activity.



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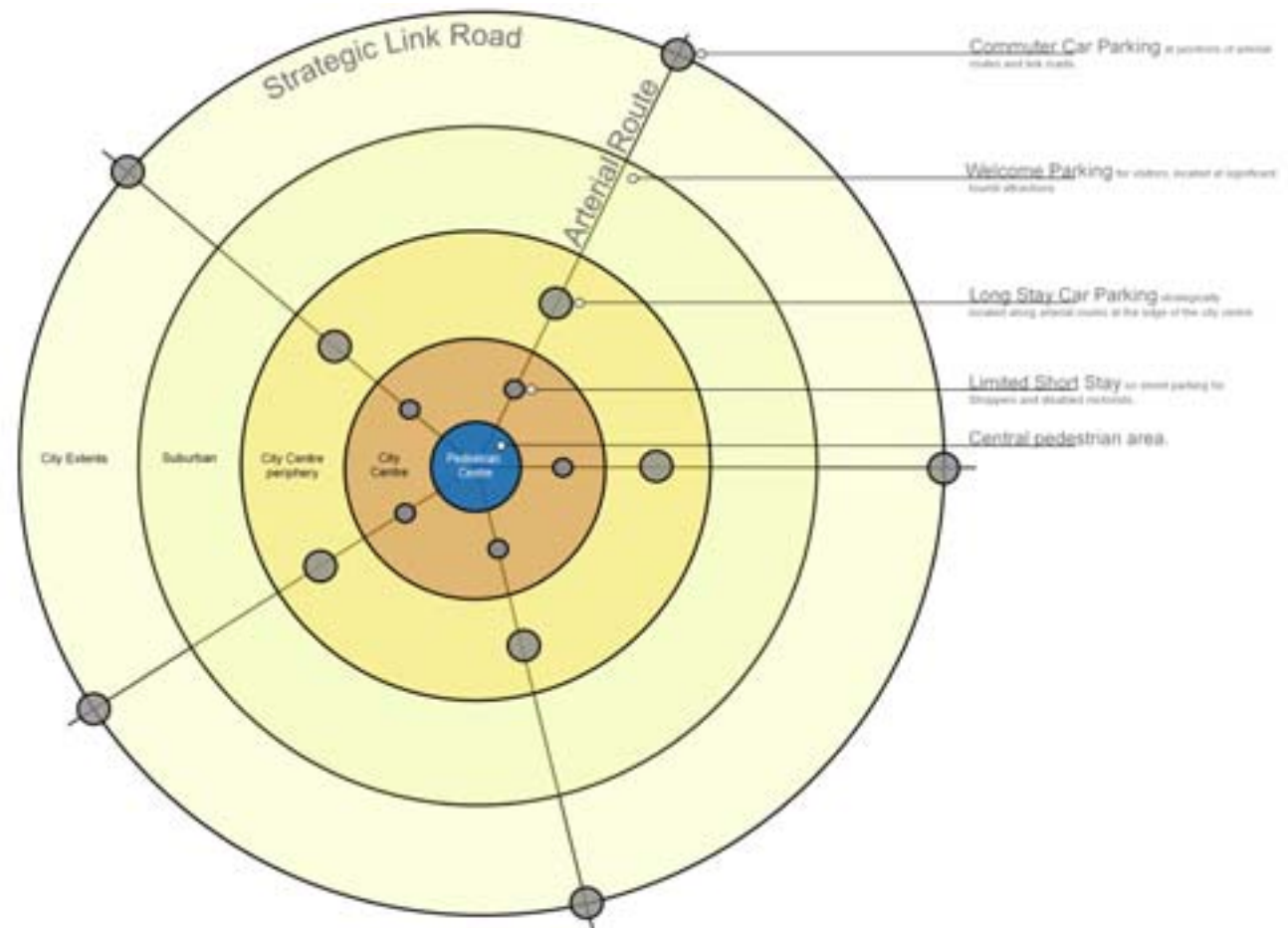
5.3 Parking Strategy

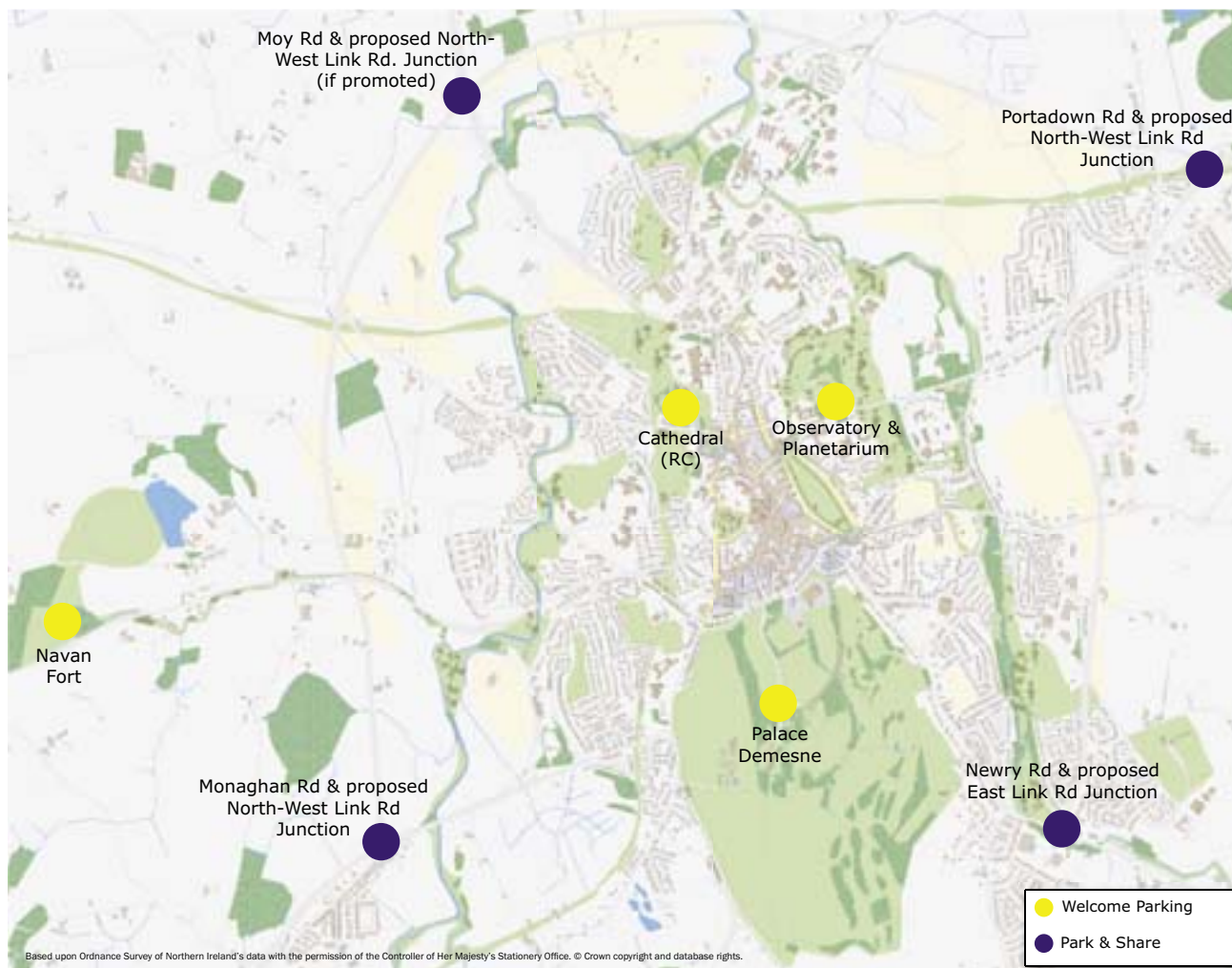
5.3.1 Concept

As discussed in “3.6 Movement & Parking: Pressure Points”, car parking in Armagh is an issue. As a result, the Masterplan proposes a Parking Strategy to ensure that in the short, medium and long term there is appropriate parking provision to sustain the vibrancy of Armagh and new developments, combined with a maintenance scheme ensuring spaces are used in a way that maximises the benefits to the City.

Park and Share facilities for commuters should be located at the junctions of arterial routes and link roads to maximise accessibility. Long-stay parking should be on arterial routes, at the edge of the City Centre. Short-stay parking, including on-street, works in the City Centre in limited amounts and when restricted to disabled users and shoppers, providing a quick turnover. Tourist car parking would also be provided at key attractions. These four elements of the car parking strategy combine to meet the needs of all visitors, shoppers and workers who access the City Centre.

Car parks will require infrastructural support and signage to facilitate appropriate vehicular and pedestrian access. Car parks would also reflect existing provision and identified shortfall, as well as DoE guidance for parking standards. For more detailed information on the Parking Strategy, see Appendix 4.





5.3.2 Welcome Parking

To better serve tourists coming to Armagh, tourist car parks would be provided at major tourist destinations: Observatory, Cathedral (RC), Navan Centre and the Palace. The purpose of these tourist car parks is to encourage cars and coaches to be left at one of these locations and for visitors to explore the City by foot or using dedicated modes of transport adding to the distinctive experience (e.g. horse and carriage, bicycles or Segways). Proposals would have to be costed with a tourism plan.

5.3.3 Park & Share

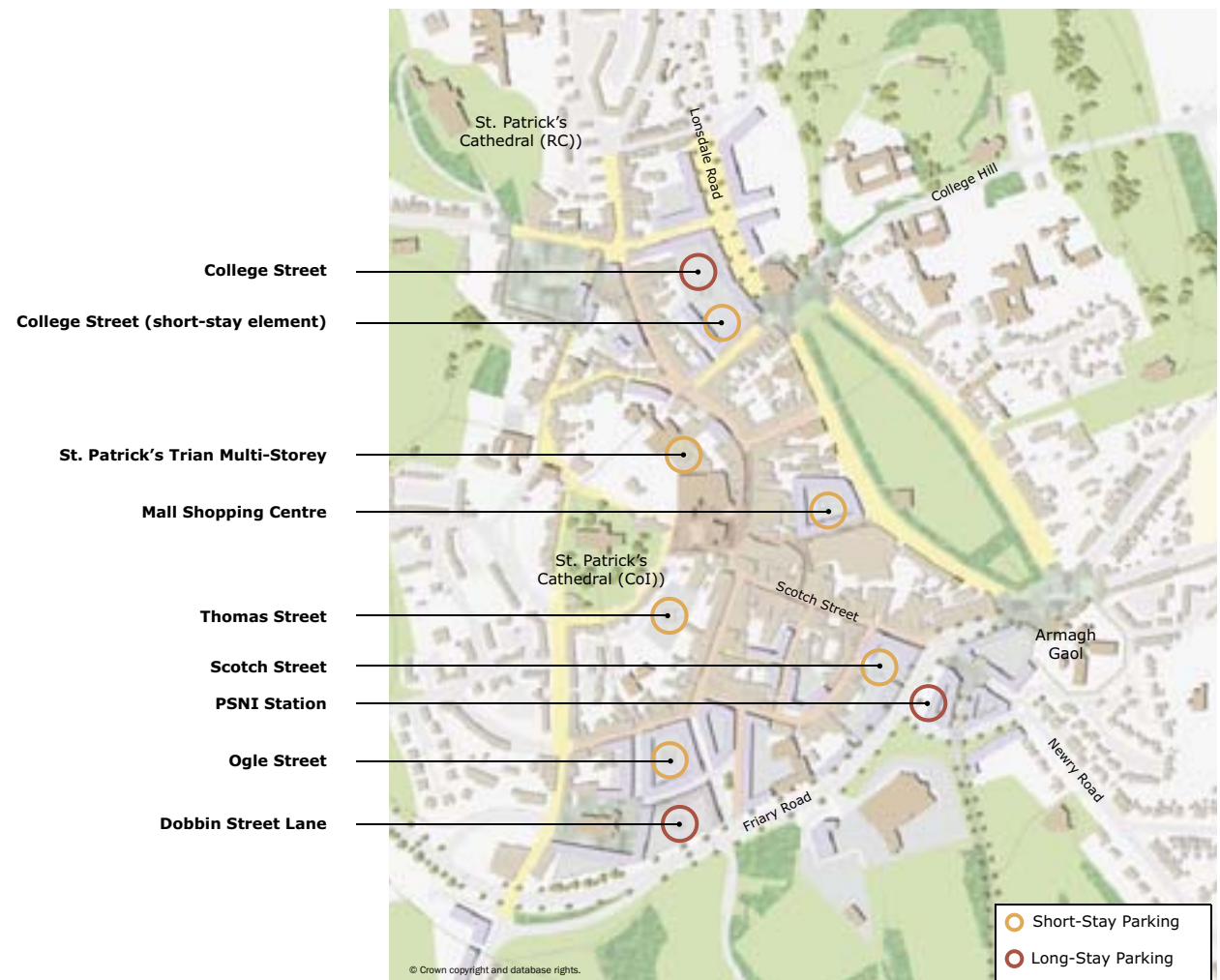
Park & Share facilities for commuters are proposed on the main radial routes into Armagh, the Portadown, Newry, Monaghan and Moy Roads. These Park & Share facilities are proposed at junctions of these roads with the proposed North & West Link Road and East Link Road. The facilities would accommodate those from Armagh travelling through to other urban areas and those who currently park all day in free City Centre car parks and share their onward journey.

5.3.4 Long-Stay Parking

Long-stay parking is proposed as multi-storey elements at College Street, Dobbin Street Lane and PSNI site (partially underground). Long-stay parking would be large, easily accessible car parks accommodated on the edge of the City Centre and accessed from the primary road network. Long-stay parking would have to take into account the needs of any new employment-based developments. Also, long-stay parking would reflect the benefits of the sustainable transport strategy of the Regional and Sub-Regional Transport Strategies, which may reduce further parking need.

5.3.5 Short-Stay Parking

Inclusive of on-street parking, short-stay parking is proposed at College Street, Thomas Street, Scotch Street and Ogle Street, which supplement existing town centre facilities. Short-stay parking would be controlled, most likely by charging but definitely constrained with regard to parking duration. In advance of the new long-stay car parks, a tariff and management structure would ensure some spaces are available throughout the day for short-term use. Also, short-stay parking would reflect the needs of new retail developments. For large developments parking should be located in-curtilage, while in small developments parking may be met by combining needs and addressing costs through commuted payments.





St. Patrick's
Cathedral (RC))

Planetarium &
Observatory

College Hill

Cathedral Road

Lonsdale Road

Dawson Street

Upper English Street

College Street

Abbey Street

Russell Street

The Mall West

The Mall East

Cathedral Close

Vicar's Hill

St. Patrick's
Cathedral (Col))

McCrum's Court

Key

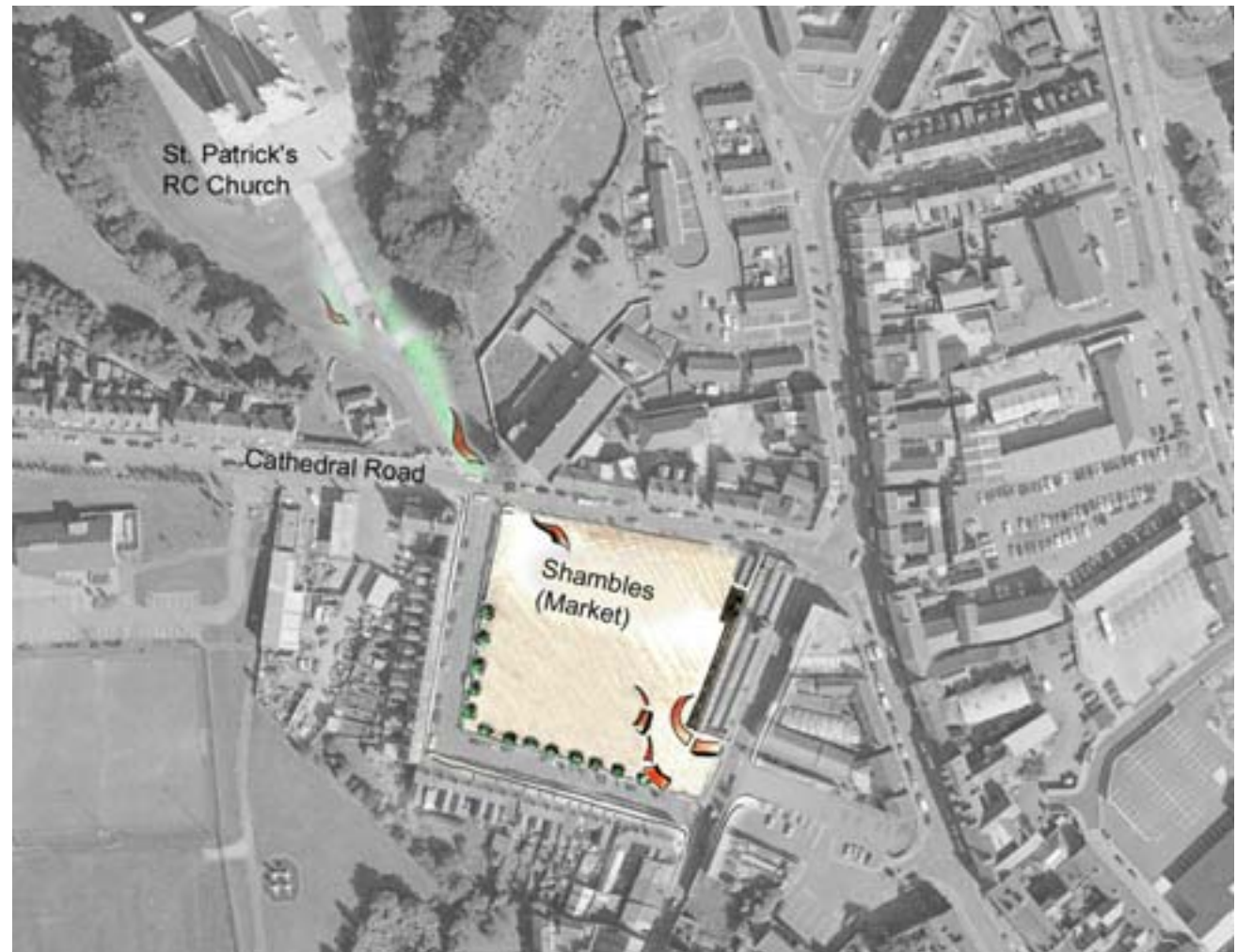
- Existing Built Form
- Proposed Development
- Potential Development Sites
- Open Green Space
- Existing EI works
- Proposed additional EI Works
- High Quality Public Realm
- Car Park
- Pedestrian

5.4 North City Centre

The Masterplan proposes site-specific development projects throughout Armagh City Centre, which in combination can comprehensively transform the City. These recommendations are intended as a guideline for development, though it is recognised that market conditions and trends may influence the particular use and size of developments.

The development projects in the northern area generally focus on sites which are currently vacant or derelict, the majority of which have a negative impact on the City in their present condition. For this reason, it is a priority that highly visible vacant and derelict sites are targeted for development.

The **Shambles Market** is a large site located on Cathedral Road with splendid views to St. Patrick's Cathedral (RC). It features a listed stone building, which along with expansive open space, performs an important market function. The Shambles also provides car parking at non-market times. Development of the Shambles Market is proposed to comprehensively upgrade the space, increasing activity in the area and underpinning the market's function. By working with traders, the market should seek to enhance its offering, as there is great potential to attract customers and tourists from further afield.





As part of this development, it is proposed that a very carefully designed extension be added to the existing building. This could serve a variety of functions, including an indoor events space, café and interpretative facilities for both Cathedrals.

The **Former City Hall** site has access to both Dawson Street and Upper English Street. This site will be home to the North/ South Ministerial Council, under construction at the time of writing. Through development, opportunities to provide a positive frontage onto both streets must be explored.

Several proposals focus on developing vacant or derelict sites to create well-integrated, high-quality frontages in the City Centre. These include the **Fire Station, Post Office, Seven Houses** and **former Dunnes Stores**. These important developments should include a mix of uses with retail on the ground floor and office or residential space above. Continued conservation of the building and interpretation of its history should be encouraged.

A potential extension of Cathedral Road to Lonsdale Road would allow traffic to more efficiently arrive at the proposed long-stay car park (see “5.3 Long-Stay Parking”) from Cathedral Road, Lonsdale Road and College Street.

In doing so, it would relieve some of the congestion at the junction of Upper English Street and College Street. Given this junction’s location on the historic core of Armagh, every effort should be made to reduce the impact of traffic congestion here. However, the benefits of this potential road extension would have to be weighed against the disadvantages of relocating the buildings on Upper English Street on the path of the road extension.

Another development is proposed for **College Street** which includes frontage onto College Street, Lonsdale Road and frontage onto the extension of Cathedral Road to Lonsdale Road. The new development would be sensitive to the existing listed hall building on College Street, which would be retained. The main uses proposed would be office and residential. The site necessary for this development includes the existing Bus Station. The Masterplan proposes to move the existing Bus Station into a larger facility adjacent to the existing site, fronting the northern side of the Cathedral Road extension. The College Street development would also contain a new, multi-storey car park, providing long-stay spaces for this part of the City and enhancing existing Park & Ride facilities associated with this Bus Station.





Across the road from this site is the **Southern Regional College Armagh Campus**. The buildings on this site are currently in relatively poor condition and likely to undergo redevelopment within the lifespan of this Masterplan. Should this occur, the opportunity must be taken for this building to contribute more positively to its surroundings, reflecting the important role it plays in the community. It is advocated that parking be located to the rear and active College uses front Lonsdale Road. These could include a library, restaurant, performance space and hairdressing salon, thus creating a lively point of interaction between the College and the public.

The **former City Hospital** is an important historic building located in the heart of historic Armagh. Potential exists for a number of different uses occurring at this location, benefiting from its location near both Cathedrals.

The **Mall West Shopping Centre** is Armagh's largest retail facility, containing a supermarket, several retail units and a multi-storey car park. Potential exists for this site to be more intensively developed, potentially by lowering parking underground and extending retail space above. Any such development must, however, seek to improve its relationship to the historic City Centre and the Mall. Traffic impact must also be given careful consideration.

Across Mall West, the **Cricket Club Pavilion** is the only building located on this open space. However, the functional 1970s design is of far lower quality than its surroundings. It therefore proposed that an architectural competition be launched to replace this facility with a much better alternative, contributing in a fitting manner to the Mall as a whole.

For more information on site-specific proposals, see appendix 5.





5.5 South City Centre

The projects on the south side of Armagh City Centre mainly focus on mitigating the negative effects caused by Friary Road, whilst maximising the development and regeneration value of this area. Accordingly, proposals are comprehensive, involving a major reshaping of infrastructure and the replacement of some existing buildings.

5.5.1 Scotch Street Junction

Friary Road, particularly at the junctions with Newry Road, Scotch Street and The Mall, was identified through analysis as a problem area. Heavy traffic flows converge on several traffic lights and complex junctions, creating a car dominated environment of static and slow moving traffic. Current arrangements have a number of side effects, including noise and air pollution and major safety concerns for pedestrians accessing Newry Road and the City Hotel. The negative impacts on this high profile location are further compounded by the presence of two prominent, yet highly unattractive groups of buildings at the Bridge House residential area and the heavily fortified PSNI station.

Traffic relief of around 25% in this area is anticipated to be achieved via the construction of both link roads over the next 5 to 15 year period. Further reduction should also be sought through a series of complementary measures across the city. As part of this process, a comprehensive redesign of this area is proposed, creating a safer, healthier and higher quality environment for all.





The schematic layout shown here is one of several possible solutions, all of which require further detailed development. This process must involve all key stakeholders in the area, including residents, PSNI, Roads Service and owners of the City Hotel and Armagh Gaol.

In this option, the Friary Road would be realigned through the existing car park at the corner of **Scotch Street**. This would simplify road geometry in the area, creating the opportunity for widened footpaths, improved pedestrian crossings and less congested traffic flow.

Relocating the **PSNI station** is also proposed, providing a state of the art facility elsewhere in this area or the wider city centre, that better serves modern policing requirements. The removal of this unsightly building would then enable the realignment of the Newry Road through this site, further simplifying layouts, overcoming steep slopes and relieving congestion on the Friary Road.

Such a configuration would then create sizeable areas of development land to the south. Together with the redevelopment of the **Bridge House** residential complex, this would enable the creation of high quality buildings and spaces in this area, with scope to relate to the adjacent **Armagh Gaol**, as well as the City Hotel.



Redevelopment of the area presents opportunities to extend and / or complement the **City Hotel**, underpinning its continued role as a leading hotel and conference facility.

All development in this area should be mixed use in nature, including residential, office and some limited retail uses. Importantly, it would also include a car park within or beneath the site, replacing public parking spaces and serving adjacent developments.

High quality public space would also be created, maintaining views to the City and providing a greatly improved environment for pedestrians. This would include restoration of the old carriage way, connecting pedestrians and cyclists from this location to the Armagh Palace and Demesne.

Comprehensive redevelopment of this area in partnership with the public and private sectors, can radically transform its environmental quality. The Masterplan advocates **further exploration** of this and other options to a greater level of detail, working in close consultation with all landowners and neighbours, to achieve a much needed transformation of this part of the City.



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5.5.2 Friary Road, Dobbin, Ogle & Irish Streets

The lands to the west of **Scotch and Dobbin Street** are currently dominated by surface car parks and vacant development sites. It is therefore proposed that this area be comprehensively developed in a coordinated manner, thus realising the full regeneration potential by creating a new, vibrant quarter of the City Centre.

As described in “5.2 Summary of City Centre”, a European-style square is proposed around **St. Malachy’s Church** to create a focal point for development in the area and a much improved setting to this building. Mixed use development would be constructed around the north, south and east sides of the church, offering retail, office and residential space, as well as parking facilities.

This mix of uses and active ground floor frontages would ensure the vibrancy of this space during all hours, with potential for outdoor seating in summer months.

Development should also seek to support the activities of the Church, including internal and external space for gathering and events.

North of this square would be the **Ogle Street** and Car Park development which would offer retail and residential space, along with some short-stay surface car parking (see “5.3 Short-Stay Parking”). East of St. Malachy’s Square would be a long-stay multi-storey car park (see “5.3 Long-Stay Parking”) with retail uses on the ground floor.

Along **Dobbin Street Lane**, developments including office and residential space are proposed. There is potential for these buildings to accommodate relocated public administration offices, for example the Council offices currently in the Palace.

Along Dobbin Street, redevelopment of the clinic site would take place, retaining existing uses and complementing them with retail. This development should create positive frontage onto Dobbin Street, Linenhall Street and Abbey Lane. Car parking would be relocated to the consolidated car parks mentioned in “5.3 Parking Strategy”. However, development would have to be sensitive to the listed houses along Dobbin Street, as well as the listed gatehouse and gateway arch.

For more information on site-specific proposals, see appendix 5.





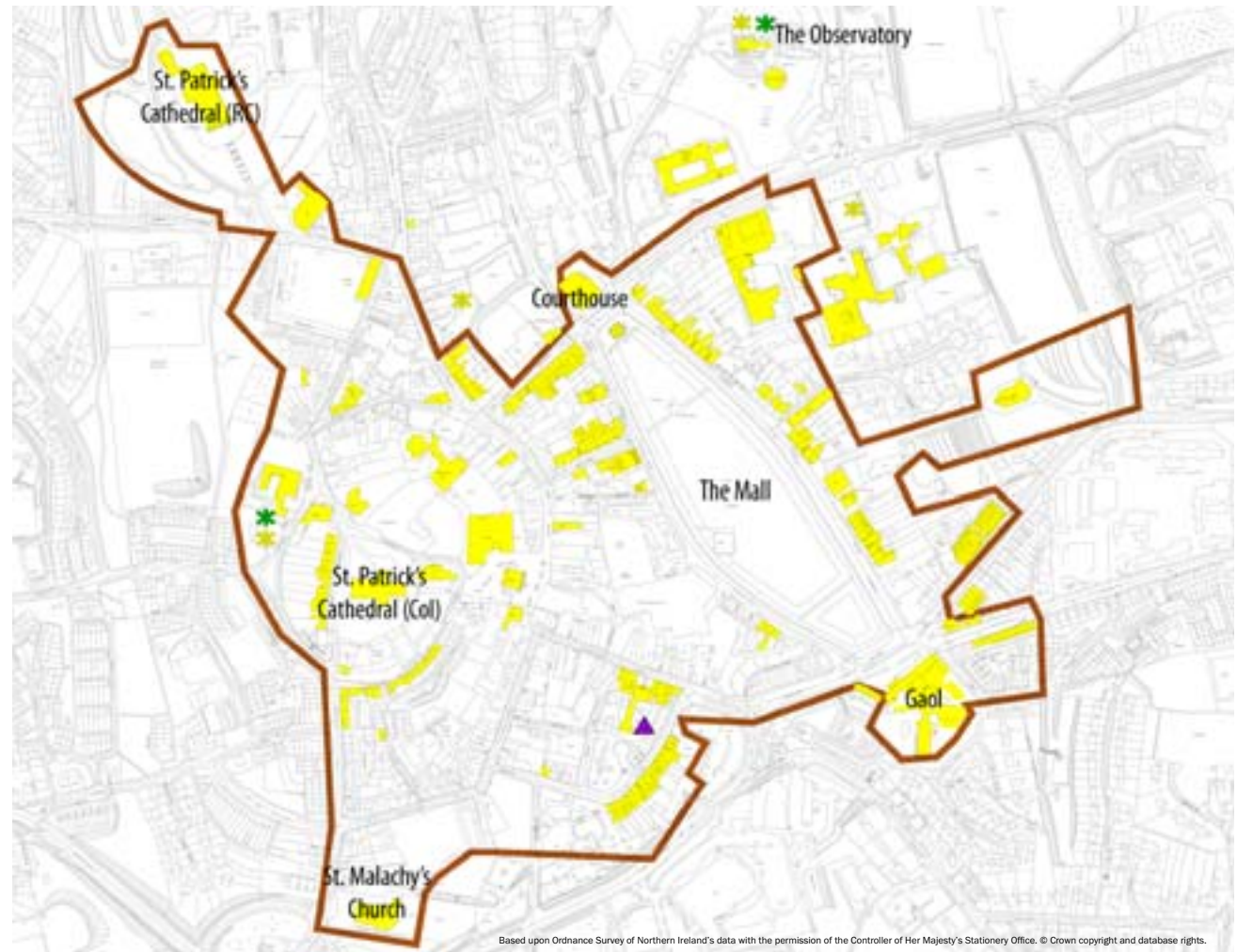


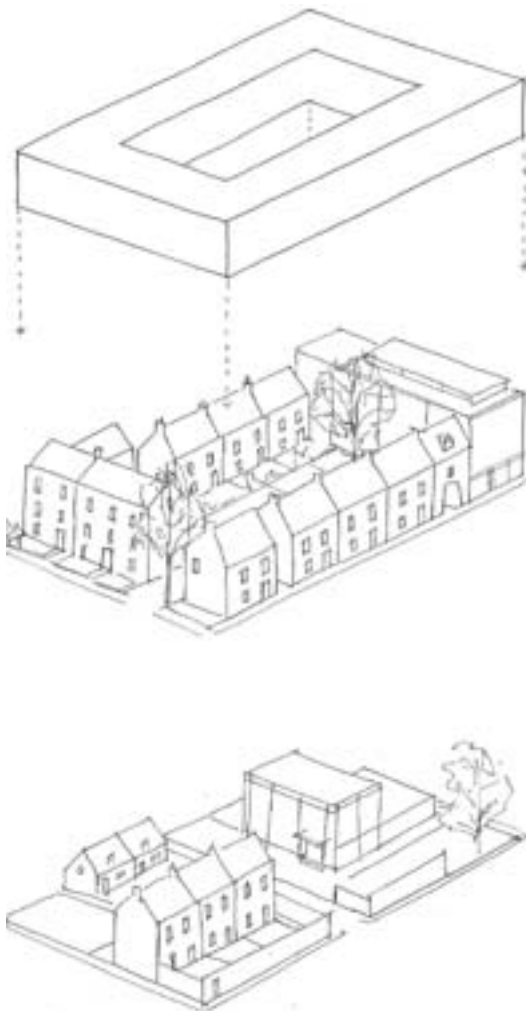


5.6 Design Guidance

As one of the most ancient and historic cities in Northern Ireland, Armagh's strong heritage and character must be protected and conserved. Thus, it is critical that new development fits into the existing historic streetscape and is sensitive to the multitude of listed buildings nearby. A Conservation Area is currently in place in the City Centre which controls development in and around it; nonetheless, the Masterplan suggests the following guidelines outlining the most important goals that new developments should achieve in order to be successfully integrated into Armagh's historic streetscape. These guidelines cover broader urban design goals and specific design details relating to individual buildings.

As a strategic Masterplan, developments are shown as urban blocks to define the broad scale and massing of proposed buildings. However, through development, these blocks must reflect the historic fabric of Armagh with a healthy variety and rhythm of plots appropriate to the streetscape. The Masterplan does not encourage pastiches or imitations of historic buildings to be built. Instead, the Masterplan advocates the construction of modern buildings of high-quality design that fit well within their historic surroundings.





Developments must make a contribution to the public realm and outdoor life of the city. Therefore, facades must be designed to be active, fronting directly onto public spaces and encouraging social interaction. Also, building design can facilitate surveillance and overlooking of public spaces, contributing to safer surroundings. Conversely, private space should be located to the rear of buildings, aiding security and allowing servicing to take place away from public spaces.

Developments must also be varied with regards to uses, tenures and forms in order to secure the diversity needed for a healthy City Centre. Ensuring diversity in these forms would also support the Masterplan's strategies for a strong evening economy and vibrant City Centre.

Connectivity and accessibility of pedestrian routes and spaces are also fundamental qualities that new development in Armagh must support. This includes the creation of streets, rather than roads, thus providing animated and safe routes for pedestrians. The accessibility of such areas to all members of the community is another critical component for Armagh.

In order to ensure that developments are long-lasting and sustainable, they must be designed with adaptability in mind. Building uses and spaces within buildings should be designed for change and flexibility.

The building's form and character must also be carefully considered. New buildings should not strike a discordant note in their size, shape, window or door proportions, facing materials and colour.

The traditional street pattern in Armagh, particularly that of the City Centre, is enclosed building frontages which create a strong urban character. Individual buildings generally have frontages between five and seven metres in width and are rarely more than three storeys high or less than one storey high. Pitched roofs are characteristic, generally with a pitch around 35 degrees. The exception to this rule occurs in more iconic buildings.

An integral part of the historic and architectural character of Armagh is its varied skyline dominated by the two Cathedrals. Therefore, roofs and upper levels in all new buildings should be designed to enhance rather than disrupt the traditional roofscape, so that the historic character, evident from distant views, is maintained.

Windows in traditional buildings within the City Centre tends towards larger openings on the lower floors and smaller on the upper floors. While in traditional buildings the retention or restoration of painted timber sash windows is preferred, in new buildings window proportions is more important than the detailed manufacture of the window itself.

Armagh has one of the finest collections of period doorcases of any town in Northern Ireland. In new buildings, it is important that a well designed point of arrival incorporating carefully considered disabled access is essential.

The traditional facing materials in Armagh are stone (pink conglomerate sandstone as in the Gaol, grey and buff limestone), painted cement render and red brick. Irrespective of material, it is the consideration of details such as sills, architraves, arches, strings and corbels that enriches the appearance of the built environment. Similar consideration, albeit in modern architectural language, should be a feature of all new buildings.

Shopfronts also need careful design consideration, with accurate restoration of historic designs. Modern shopfronts should adopt similar ingenuity in their design as their predecessors. Good design should be sleek and minimal and should sit comfortably alongside and enhance carefully restored traditional shopfronts. Awnings almost invariably enhance the appearance of a retail outlet and security shutters inevitably detract from the appearance of the streetscape. Unless a compelling case can be made to the contrary, shopfront security should be provided either by toughened glass or inboard perforated folding grilles.

Poorly conceived, shopfront and signed illumination can compete with amenity street lighting. Thoughtfully designed, low-key sign and window display illumination can serve to enliven and punctuate the streetscape at night time.

For full design guidance, see appendix 6.



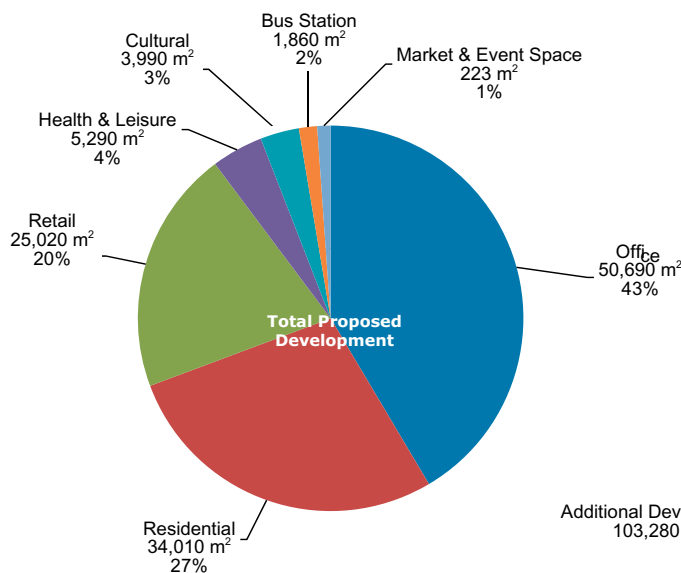


6 ACTION PLAN FOR DELIVERY

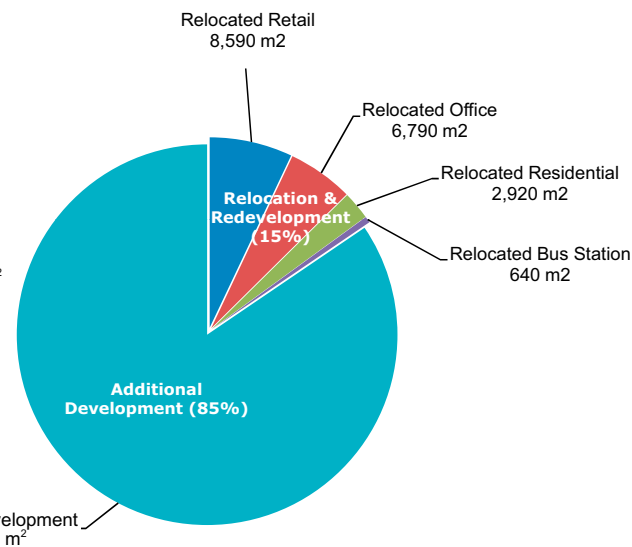
6.1 Development Overview

6.1.1 Introduction

The Armagh City Centre Masterplan proposes many ambitious and visionary projects, including mixed use development, public realm and transportation. The challenge for Armagh will be to bring all of these projects forward to delivery, so that the social, physical and economic benefits they offer can be fully realised. In this section, the impact and deliverability of these proposals is further detailed, set against recent capacity studies of Armagh. Individual projects are then collated to form an Action Plan for Delivery, providing a live tool with which delivery of the Armagh City Centre Masterplan will be managed.



Percentage Breakdown by Land Use of
Total Proposed Development



Percentage Breakdown by Land Use
of **Redevelopment and Relocation**
of Existing Uses within Total
Development

6.1.2 Development Capacity

The Armagh City Centre Masterplan proposes a total of:

124,000 m² (1.3m ft²) of development,

of which:

85% is additional development to the city,

15% is the redevelopment or relocation of existing uses.

A percentage breakdown of proposed development is shown on the adjacent pie charts. Of Total Proposed Development, this equates to:

43% office

27% residential

20% retail & hospitality

10% other uses

To determine the sustainability of the quantum and mix of proposed development and to estimate its likely impact, the Masterplan was prepared in tandem with a process of testing against existing capacity studies for Armagh.

6.1.3 Development Capacity

Approximate Development Capacity was determined in consultation with relevant stakeholders and by cross referencing two key documents that currently inform an understanding of capacity for Armagh:

2008-2018 Business Landuse Survey
(Office and Retail Uses)

Regional Development Strategy (Adjusted)
(Residential Uses)

From the Business Landuse Survey, approximate calculations were made in response to the following statements:

"Employment in business and financial services could increase by 1,000 - 1,300 jobs over the period 2008 - 2018."

= 24,700 m² private office space capacity
(Assuming office employment of 1 person per 19 m²)

"Employment growth for the District Council jobs at 1,000 jobs."

= 19,000 m² public office space capacity.
(Assuming office employment of 1 person per 19 m²)

"Employment growth in the retail / distribution is projected at 250 - 300 workers."

= 5 - 6,000 m² of retail space capacity
(Assuming density of 1 person per 20 m² retail)

The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) for Northern Ireland identifies a housing need of 6,000 units for the Armagh City and District Council Area over the period of 1998 - 2018. The percentage breakdown of this across the district has yet to be determined in the absence of a new Area Plan. However, the Armagh City and District Council response to the Area Plan issues paper, advocates that 45% of the need should apply to Armagh City.

Using this figure, Armagh City has a capacity of 2700 units. At the time of writing, there are around 900 current planning applications for housing in Armagh. Subtracted from the RDS total, this indicates approximately **1800 units of residential capacity across the entire City of Armagh.**

The Armagh City Masterplan proposes increased levels of office and retail space in comparison to existing capacity studies. This reflects the likely impact of attracting increased investment to Armagh through the delivery of all Masterplan proposals. In relation to residential properties, the Masterplan proposes 420 units, 23% of the city's overall projected capacity. This reflects the existence of large sites suited to housing, such as at Mullinure and the former army barracks.

6.1.4 Employment Projections

Using assumptions made in response to the Business Landuse Survey, it is possible to estimate the potential number of new jobs created by the Armagh City Masterplan proposals.

Office: 2,457 new jobs
(Assuming office employment of 1 person per 19 m²)

Retail: 820 new jobs
(Assuming density of 1 person per 20 m² retail)

	Office gross area (m ²)	Retail gross area (m ²)	Residential no. of households
Projected Capacity	43,700	6,000	1,800
Proposed Quantity	46,700	16,400	420

Growth Figure Comparisons between Projected Capacities & Masterplan Proposals

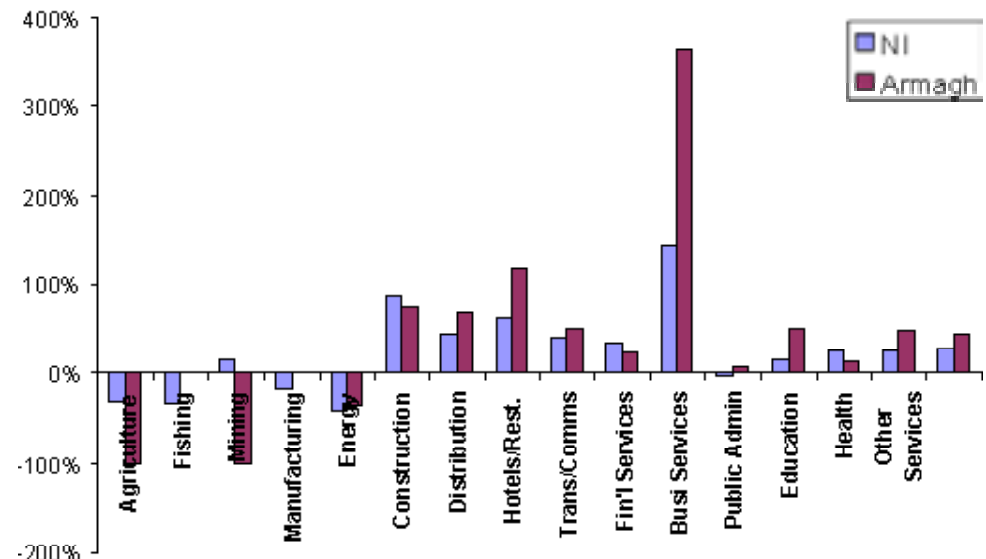
6.1.2 Key Growth Areas

The Financial and Business Services sectors have been identified as key growth sectors for Northern Ireland. These sectors include businesses such as Information Technology (IT) Software and Internet Design, IT Support, Data Management, Customer Services, Market Research, Marketing/ Advertising, Insurance, Mortgage Brokers and Accountants. Armagh is currently underdeveloped in these areas when compared to the NI average. As a result, there is considerable scope for employment growth in both sectors as services are forecast to grow in NI by 1-3% per year until 2015.

The adjacent graph shows employee job growth in NI and Armagh for 1995-2007, showing Armagh has had a growth of almost 400% in the Business Services sector compared to almost 200% for NI as a whole. Furthermore, there is existing evidence of companies in these sectors which have created jobs in NI, as shown by the adjacent table. However, it should be noted that adequate office accommodation is needed to support future growth.

In terms of retail, scope exists for further development linked with existing capacity, future population trends and growth in tourism. To be successful, the City must foster a unique offering, different than neighbouring retail towns such as Craigavon, Portadown and Newry. Building upon the rich heritage and tourism potential of the City, this should involve a rich shopping experience involving established independent stores and some multiple operators together, supported by high quality infrastructure and leisure/hospitality offerings.

Date	Company	Jobs created	Type of Job
Jan 2009	First Derivatives	142 jobs (Newry)	Support for trading and risk management for financial institutions
Nov 2008	Singularity	62 jobs (Belfast and Derry)	Computer Software
May 2008	Fujitsu Services	150 jobs (Belfast & Derry – 400 since mid 2007)	IT / Technical Support
May 2008	Firstsource	500 jobs (Derry)	Telecoms
Sep 2008	HCL	600 jobs (Armagh and Belfast)	IT solutions / Business processing
Jun 2004	BT	Approx. 200 jobs (Enniskillen)	Call Centre – Customer Email Processing Centre





6.2 Action Plan

Successful Masterplans must be about more than the creation of a Vision. They must also directly result in a process of initiating positive change, effectively turning Vision into reality. This requires proposals to be practical in nature, so that a delivery outcome can be foreseen, albeit with range of different options available depending on specific circumstances.

The Action Plan is therefore one of the most important components of this document, as it provides a 'live' framework by which Masterplan proposals can be taken forward over the projected time span of 15+ years.

Accordingly, the objectives discussed previously have been organised into a series of individual development projects, of which there are 80 in total. These are then tabulated into a matrix, so they can be set factors of Priority, Timeframe, Related Projects, Indicative Cost, Delivery Agents, Stakeholders and Actions.

Prioritisation of projects pertains to the regeneration value of specific proposals, particularly with regards to meeting the Aims and Objectives set out by the Masterplan. Short-term (s) projects are considered to have the most direct regenerative value to the City, as much as can be determined at this stage.

Timeframe of projects relates to the length of time associated with delivery due to the complexity of a project and in relation to its phasing and other proposed projects.

Related Projects are proposals that are directly connected to the specific proposal in question. Early consideration must therefore be given to how these relate to one another and potential opportunities to combine them.

Approximated Total Cost has been estimated based on the size and nature of projects as described by the Masterplan. These must only be viewed as indicative, as much further detailed design is required to arrive at more accurate figures.

Delivery Agents have been identified in relation to each project, determining which organisations from the public and private sectors are likely to be directly involved with delivery of the project. Of course, this subject will require further consultation and negotiation as each project proceeds.

Stakeholders are other organisations who must be involved and/or consulted in relation to the project. This varies greatly in type, including public sector agencies, the private sector and local residents.

Finally, Actions have been identified in relation to key projects, providing guidance on steps that need to be taken to bring about the delivery process.

This Action Plan must be regularly reviewed and updated through the course of the Masterplan's life span, so that opportunities that are unforeseen at the stage of writing can be factored in. This may include 'new' projects developed in line with the Masterplan principles, as well changes to existing proposals, determined by changed circumstances and/or further technical appraisal. Another key factor is the market conditions in which the Masterplan is delivered. Regular monitoring and review of the Action Plan must also take into account changes to the economic context of the Masterplan and how this impacts investment trends.

Responsibility for the management of the Action Plan for Delivery should fall to the Department for Social Development and Armagh City and District Council working in continued partnership with one another and key stakeholders. The plan would then be adopted by the new council under the terms of the Review of Public Administration.



Armagh City Centre Masterplan: ACTION PLAN

6.2.1 Development Projects

REFERENCE	PROJECT NAME		TIMEFRAME	RELATED PROJECTS	APPROX. TOTAL COST	DELIVERY AGENT	STAKEHOLDERS	ACTIONS
A1.	Shambles Market	H	I	B7, B17, B23	£2,880,000	ACDC, DSD, Priv	ACCM, NIEA, PS, Priv, RS	Working Progress
A2.	Former City Hall	H	I	B11	£3,586,000	ACDC, NSMC	DSD, NIEA, PS	Working Progress
A3.	Fire Station	H	S	B11, B17, B23, B24, C13	£746,000	ACDC, DSD, Priv	ACCM, DSD, PS	Obtain Position on Disposal
A4.	Post Office	H	S	B11	£1,975,000	ACDC, DSD, Priv	ACCM, PS	Determine Owners Intentions
A5.	College Street & Car Park (includes C5)	H	M	A6, A8, B13, C5, C13	£18,448,000	Priv	ACDC, ACCM, DSD, NIHE, PS, Trans	Determine Landownership and Initiate Forum
A6.	Seven Houses	H	S	A5, B13	£1,129,000	ACDC, DSD, Priv	ACCM, NIHE, PS	DSD Liasing with Developers
A7.	Former Dunnes Stores	H	S	B11	£1,205,000	Priv	ACDC, ACCM, DSD, PS	Determine Owners Intentions
A8.	Bus Station Relocation	M	L	A5, B12, C13	£4,897,000	ACDC, DSD, Priv, Trans	PS, RS	Consider Development Potential with Adjacent Sites
A9.	Armagh College	M	M	B12	£21,643,000	SRC	ACDC, DSD, DoEd, PS, SELB	Watching Brief
A10.	Former City Hospital	M	M	B16	£8,020,000	ACDC, DSD, Priv	ACF, NIEA, NITB, PS	Watching Brief
A11.	Mall West Shopping Centre Expansion	H	S	B15	-	DSD, Priv	ACDC, ACCM, DARD, PS, RS	Initiate Site Assembly Process
A12.	The Mall Cricket Club	M	M	B15	-	ACDC, DSD, Priv	NIEA	Consider Development Potential with Adjacent Sites
A13.	Ogle Street & Car Park (includes C3)	M	M	A14, A15, A16, B2, B10, B11, C3	£10,244,000	Priv	ACDC, ACCM, DSD, NIEA, PS	Determine Land Ownership. Initiate Forum with a view to prepare detailed Masterplan
A14.	St. Malachy's Square	M	M	A13, A15, B2, B10, C3	£5,400,000	ACDC, DSD, Priv, RCC	ACF, NIEA, PS, RS	Determine Land Ownership. Initiate Forum with a view to prepare detailed Masterplan
A15.	Dobbin Street Lane Car Park & Frontage (includes C6)	M	M	A13, A14, A16, B10, C6, C15	£7,083,000	ACDC, DSD, Priv	ACCM, PS, RS	Determine Land Ownership. Initiate Forum with a view to prepare detailed Masterplan
A16.	Dobbin Street Lane	M	M	A13, A15, B11, C6, C15	£10,696,000	ACDC, DSD, Priv	ACCM, INI, PS	Determine Land Ownership. Initiate Forum with a view to prepare detailed Masterplan
A17.	Dobbin Clinic	H	S	B11	£3,338,000	ACDC, DSD, Priv	ACCM, NIEA, PS, Res	Initiate Development Brief
A18.	Scotch Street & Car Park (includes C4)	M	M	A19, A20, B11, C4, C14	£44,350,000	ACDC, DSD, Priv, RS	ACCM, PS	Determine Land Ownership. Initiate Forum with a view to prepare detailed Masterplan
A19.	Friary Road Frontage	M	M	A18, C14, C15	£5,430,000	ACDC, DSD, Priv	PS, RS	Determine Land Ownership. Initiate Forum with a view to prepare detailed Masterplan
A20.	PSNI Station & Car Park (includes C7)	M	M	A21, A22, B6, C7, C14, C15	£18,480,000	ACDC, DSD, Priv, PSNI	PS, Res, RS	Determine Land Ownership. Initiate Forum with a view to prepare detailed Masterplan
A21.	Newry Road Frontage	M	M	A20, B6, C7, C14, C15	£4,124,000	Priv	ACDC, DSD, NIHE, PS	Determine Land Ownership. Initiate Forum with a view to prepare detailed Masterplan
A22.	Bridge House	M	M	A20, A23, B9, C7, C14, C15	£2,882,000	Priv	ACDC, DSD, NIHE, PS	Determine Land Ownership. Initiate Forum with a view to prepare detailed Masterplan
A23.	Gaol Regeneration	H	S	A22, B9, C7, C14, C15	-	ACDC, Priv	DSD, INI, NIEA, PS	Working Progress
A24.	City Hotel Office Complex	M	M	A19, A20, A21	-	Priv	ACDC, NIEA, PS	Watching Brief
A25.	Irish Street Development	M	L	B25	£4,554,000	Priv	ACDC, DSD, PS, Res	Watching Brief
A26.	Alexander Road Dairy	H	S	-	-	Priv	ACDC, DSD, PS, RS	Determine Owners Intentions
A27.	Loughall Road Mill	M	M	A28	-	Priv	ACDC, DSD, NIEA, PS	Watching Brief
A28.	St. Luke's Hospital	H	S	A27	-	ACDC, DHSSPS, DSD, Priv	NIEA, PS, RS, SHSSB	Develop Estates Strategy
A29.	Gough Barracks	M	M	-	-	ACDC, DSD, MoD, Priv	NIEA, PS, RS, PSNI	Watching Brief
A30.	Drumadd Barracks	M	M	-	-	ACDC, DSD, MoD, Priv	NIEA, PS, RS	Watching Brief

Action Plan last reviewed: 27-May-09

KEY

PRIORITY

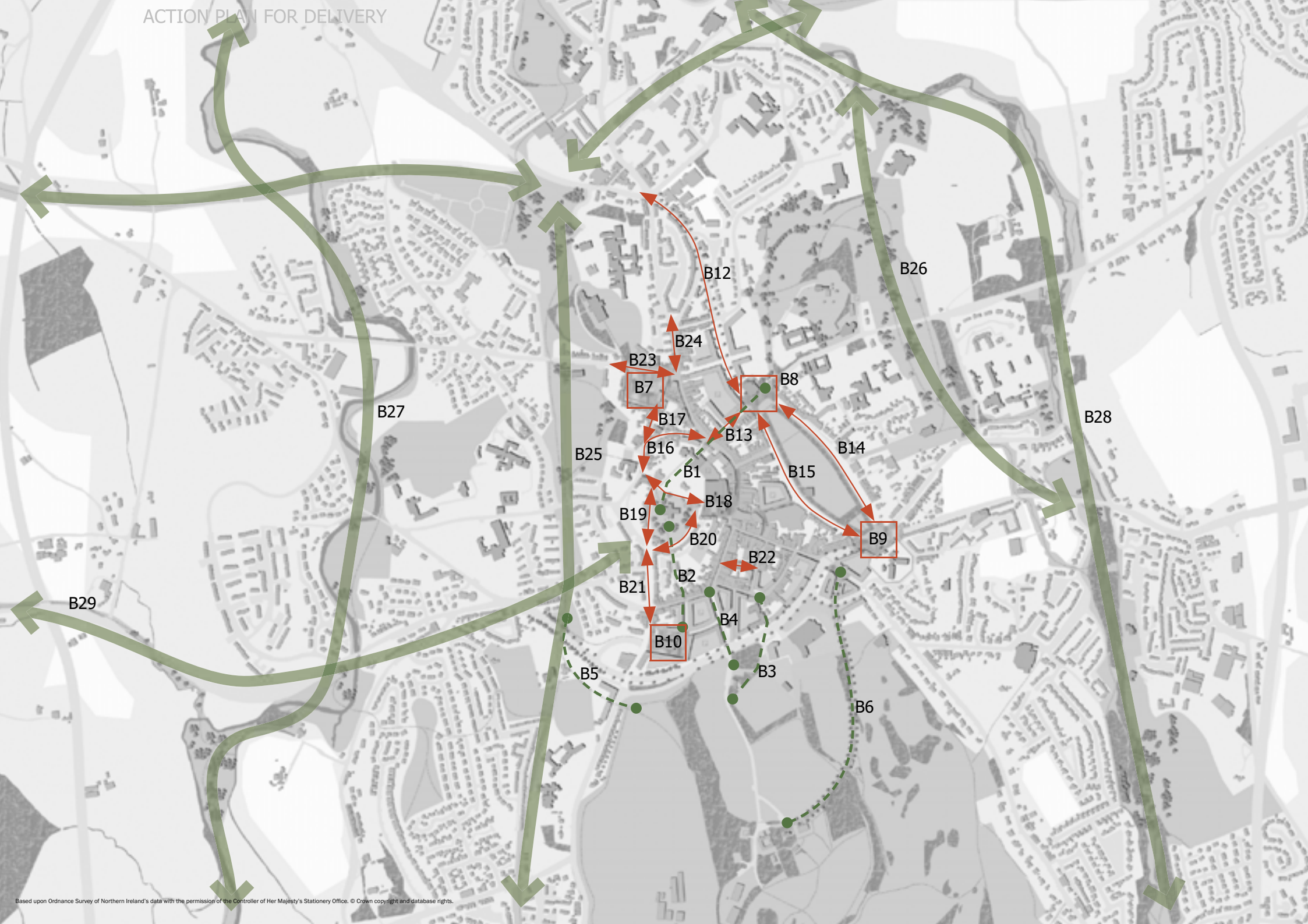
H= High, M= Medium, L= Low

TIMEFRAME

I= Immediate (1-2 yrs), S= Short (<5 years), M= Medium (5-10 yrs), L= Long (10-15+ yrs)

ACRONYMS: DELIVERY AGENTS/ STAKEHOLDERS

ACDC	Armagh City & District Council
ACF	Armagh Churches Forum
ACCM	Armagh City Centre Management
Col	Church of Ireland
DARD	Department for Agriculture and Rural Development
DHSSPS	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
DoEd	Department of Education
DSD	Department for Social Development
INI	Invest Northern Ireland
NICS	Northern Ireland Court Service
NIEA	Northern Ireland Environment Agency
NIHE	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
NITB	Northern Ireland Tourist Board
NSMC	North South Ministerial Council
MoD	Ministry of Defence
Priv	Private Sector
PS	Planning Service
PSNI	Police Service Northern Ireland
RS	Roads Service
Res	Residents
Trans	Translink



Armagh City Centre Masterplan: ACTION PLAN

6.2.1 Public Realm

REFERENCE	PROJECT NAME		TIMEFRAME	RELATED PROJECTS	APPROX. TOTAL COST	DELIVERY AGENT	STAKEHOLDERS
B1.	Pedestrian Connection: Armagh Courthouse to Cathedral (Col)	M	M	A4, A5, A6, C5,	£1,316,000	ACDC, DSD, Col, RS	NIEA, PS, Res
B2.	Pedestrian Connection: St. Malachy's Square to Cathedral (Col)	M	M	A13, A14, B10, B11, B20	£1,311,000	ACDC, DSD, Col, Priv, RS	NIEA, PS, Res
B3.	Pedestrian Connection: Dobbin Clinic to Palace Demesne	M	M	A19, B11	£334,000	ACDC, DSD, RS	NIEA, PS, Res
B4.	Pedestrian Connection: Thomas St. to Palace Demesne	M	M	A13, A15, A16, B11	£800,000	ACDC, DSD, RS	NIEA, PS, Res
B5.	Pedestrian Connection: West Greenway to Palace Demesne	M	M	A25, B22	-	ACDC, DSD, RS	NIEA, PS, Res
B6.	Pedestrian Connection: Armagh Palace to the Gaol	M	M	A20, A21, A22, C14	-	ACDC, DSD, RS	NIEA, PS
B7.	Public Realm Scheme: Shambles Market	H	I	A1, B17, B21	£3,450,000	ACDC, DSD, Priv	ACCM, NIEA, PS, Res, RS
B8.	Public Realm Scheme: Armagh Courthouse	H	M	A5, B12, B14, B15	£2,220,000	ACDC, DSD, RS	NICS, NIEA, PS
B9.	Public Realm Scheme: Armagh Gaol	H	S	A22, A23, B14, B15	£2,700,000	ACDC, Priv, RS	DSD, INI, NIEA, PS
B10.	Public Realm Scheme: St. Malachy's Church	M	M	A13, A14, B2, B21	£1,380,000	ACDC, DSD, Priv, RCC	ACF, NIEA, PS, RS
B11.	Streets: Armagh City Centre Regeneration Scheme	H	I	A1-7, A13, A16-18	-	ACDC, DSD, RS	ACCM, NIEA, Priv, PS, Res
B12.	Streets: Lonsdale Road	M	M	A5, A8, A9, B8	£438,000	ACDC, DSD, RS	ACCM, NIEA, Priv, PS, Res
B13.	Streets: College Street	M	M	A5, A6	£153,000	ACDC, DSD, RS	ACCM, NIEA, Priv, PS, Res
B14.	Streets: The Mall East	M	M	B8, B9	£601,000	ACDC, DSD, RS	ACCM, NIEA, Priv, PS, Res
B15.	Streets: The Mall West	M	M	A11, A12, B8, B9	£550,000	ACDC, DSD, RS	ACCM, NIEA, Priv, PS, Res
B16.	Streets: Abbey Street	M	M	A4, A10, B17, B18, B19	£322,000	ACDC, DSD, RS	ACCM, NIEA, Priv, PS, Res
B17.	Streets: Dawson Street	M	M	A1, A2, A3, A10, B16, B18, B19, B23, B24	£91,000	ACDC, DSD, RS	ACCM, NIEA, Priv, PS, Res
B18.	Streets: Cathedral Close	M	M	B1, B16, B19	£105,000	ACDC, DSD, RS	ACCM, Col, NIEA, Priv, PS, Res
B19.	Streets: Vicar's Hill	M	M	B16, B18, B20, B21	£131,000	ACDC, DSD, RS	ACCM, NIEA, Priv, PS, Res
B20.	Streets: Castle Street	M	M	B19, B21	£193,000	ACDC, DSD, RS	ACCM, NIEA, Priv, PS, Res
B21.	Streets: Upper Irish Street	M	M	A14, A25, B20	£416,000	ACDC, DSD, RS	ACCM, NIEA, Priv, PS, Res
B22.	Streets: Abbey Lane	M	M	A14, A25, B20	£119,000	ACDC, DSD, RS	ACCM, NIEA, Priv, PS, Res
B23.	Streets: Lower English Street	M	M	A1, A3, B7, B17	£326,000	ACDC, DSD, RS	ACCM, NIEA, Priv, PS, Res
B24.	Streets: Cathedral Road	M	M	A1, A3, B7, B17	£179,000	ACDC, DSD, RS	ACCM, NIEA, Priv, PS, Res
B25.	Public Greenways: Western City Centre and Links	M	M	-	-	ACDC	NIEA, Priv, PS, RA, Res, Sus
B26.	Public Greenways: Eastern City Centre and Links	M	M	-	-	ACDC	NIEA, Priv, PS, RA, Res, Sus
B27.	Public Greenways: Callan River and Links	M	M	-	-	ACDC	NIEA, Priv, PS, RA, Res, Sus
B28.	Public Greenways: Ballynahone River and Links	M	M	-	-	ACDC	NIEA, Priv, PS, RA, Res, Sus
B29.	Public Greenways: Navan Fort Greenway and Links	M	M	-	-	ACDC	NIEA, Priv, PS, RA, Res, Sus

Action Plan last reviewed: 27-May-09

KEY PRIORITY

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ACRONYMS: DELIVERY AGENTS/ STAKEHOLDERS

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INI	Invest Northern Ireland
NICS	Northern Ireland Court Service
NIEA	Northern Ireland Environment Agency
NIHE	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
NITB	Northern Ireland Tourist Board
NSMC	North South Ministerial Council
MoD	Ministry of Defence
Priv	Private Sector
PS	Planning Service
PSNI	Police Service Northern Ireland
RS	Roads Service
Res	Residents
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Armagh City Centre Masterplan: ACTION PLAN

6.2.3 Transport

REFERENCE	PROJECT NAME		TIMEFRAME	RELATED PROJECTS	APPROX. TOTAL COST	DELIVERY AGENT	STAKEHOLDERS
C1.	Parking Strategy	H	I	-	-	ACDC, DSD, RS	ACCM, Priv
C2.	Car Parking - Short Stay: Thomas Street	H	S	B11, B20	£276,000	ACDC, DSD, RS, Priv	PS, Res
C3.	Car Parking - Short Stay: (A14) Ogle Street	H	S	A13, A14, A15, A16, B2, B10, B11, C3	Total Dev. £10,244,000	Priv	ACDC, ACCM, DSD, NIEA, PS
C4.	Car Parking - Short Stay: (A19) Scotch Street	M	M	A18, A19, A20, B11, C4, C14	Total Dev. £44,350,000	ACDC, DSD, Priv, RS	ACCM, PS
C5.	Car Parking - Long Stay: (A5) College Street	H	S	A5, A6, A8, B13, C5, C13	Total Dev. £18,448,000	Priv	ACDC, ACCM, DSD, NIHE, PS, Trans
C6.	Car Parking - Long Stay: (A16) Dobbin Street Lane	M	M	A13-16, B10, C6, C15	Total Dev. £7,083,000	ACDC, Priv	ACCM, PS, RS
C7.	Car Parking - Long Stay: (A21) PSNI Station	M	M	A21, A22, B6, C7, C14, C15	Total Dev. £18,480,000	ACDC, Priv, PSNI	PS, Res, RS
C8.	Car Parking - Tourist: Observatory	M	M	-	-	ACDC, RS, Priv	NITB, PS, RCC, Res
C9.	Car Parking - Tourist: Cathedral (RC)	M	M	-	-	ACDC, RS, Priv	NITB, PS, RCC, Res
C10.	Car Parking - Tourist: Navan Centre	M	M	-	-	ACDC, RS, Priv	NITB, PS, RCC, Res
C11.	Car Parking - Tourist: Palace	M	M	-	-	ACDC, RS, Priv	NITB, PS, RCC, Res
C12.	Car Parking - Park & Share Facilities	H	S	-	-	ACDC, RS	PS, Priv
C13.	Road Infrastructure Scheme: Cathedral Rd. & Lonsdale Rd. Connection	M	M	A3, A5, A8, B11, B12	£302,000	Priv	ACDC, DSD, PS, Res, RS
C14.	Road Infrastructure Scheme: Scotch Street Junction	M	M	A18-22, B6, B9, B11, C4, C7	£2,425,000	Priv	ACDC, DSD, PS, Res, RS
C15.	Road Infrastructure Scheme: Friary Road	M	M	A14-16, A18-23, B3-5, B9, C4, C7, C14	£2,133,000	ACDC, DSD, Priv	PS, Res, RS
C16.	Road Infrastructure Scheme: North and West Link Road	M	M	-	-	RS	ACDC, NIEA, Priv, PS, Res
C17.	Road Infrastructure Scheme: East Link Road	M	M	-	-	Priv	ACDC, NIEA, Priv, PS, Res

Action Plan last reviewed: 27-May-09

KEY

PRIORITY

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ACRONYMS: DELIVERY AGENTS/ STAKEHOLDERS

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DEd	Department of Education
DSD	Department for Social Development
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NITB	Northern Ireland Tourist Board
NSMC	North South Ministerial Council
MoD	Ministry of Defence
Priv	Private Sector
PS	Planning Service
PSNI	Police Service Northern Ireland
RS	Roads Service
Res	Residents
Trans	Translink

6.2.4 Strategies

D1.	Transport Strategy	H	I	-	-	RS	ACDC, DSD
D2.	Frontage Improvement Strategy	H	I	-	-	ACDC, DSD	ACCM, NIEA, NIHE, Priv
D3.	LOTS / WOTS Strategy	H	M	-	-	ACDC, DSD	ACCM, NIEA, NIHE, Priv
D4.	Signage & Interpretation Strategy	M	M	-	-	ACDC, ACCM, NITB	DSD, Priv
D5.	City Investment Strategy	H	I	-	-	ACDC, INI	ACCM, Priv
D6.	Evening Economy Strategy	H	I	-	-	ACDC, ACCM	DSD, INI, NITB, Priv
D7.	Marketing / Branding Strategy	H	I	-	-	ACDC, Priv	DSD, NIEA, NIHE
D8.	Sport & Leisure Strategy	M	M	-	-	ACDC	-
D9.	Palace Demesne Development & Management Plan	H	I	-	-	ACDC	DSD, NIEA
D10.	Gateway & Approach Roads Strategy	M	M	-	-	ACDC, DSD, RS	NITB
D11.	Potential City Expansion Areas (a-j)	L	L	-	-	ACDC, PS	DSD, INI, NIEA, Priv

	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME
SHORT-TERM DELIVERABLES		
<i>A. Development Projects</i>		
A1. Shambles Market	H	I
A2. Former City Hall	H	I
A3. Fire Station	H	S
A4. Post Office	H	S
A5. College Street & Car Park (includes C5)	H	S
A6. Seven Houses	H	S
A7. Former Dunnes Stores	H	S
A9. Bus Station	H	S
A11. Mall West Shopping Centre Expansion	H	S
A17. Dobbin Clinic	H	S
A23. Gaol Regeneration	H	S
A26. Alexander Road Dairy	H	S
A28. St Lukes Hospital	H	S
B7. Public Realm Scheme: Shambles Market	H	I
B9. Public Realm Scheme: Armagh Gaol	H	S
B11. Streets: Armagh City Centre Regeneration Scheme	H	I
C1. Parking Strategy	H	I
C2. Car Parking- Short Stay: Thomas Street	H	S
C3. Car Parking- Short Stay: (A14) Ogle Street	H	S
C5. Car Parking- Long Stay: (A5) College Street	H	S
C12. Park & Share Facilities	H	S
D1. Transport Strategy	H	I
D2. Frontage Improvement Strategy	H	I
D5. City Investment Strategy	H	I
D6. Evening Economy Strategy	H	I
D7. Marketing and Branding Strategy	H	I
D8. Palace Demesne Development & Management Plan	H	I

6.3 Short Term Deliverables

Short Term Deliverables are high priority projects with either an immediate (1-2 years) or short (less than 5 years) timeframe as identified by the Action Plan. Due to this status, these projects have particular importance to the overall regeneration and development of the City. They should therefore be undertaken by delivery agents and associated stakeholders over the first years of the Masterplan delivery process.

Several proposals included within this bracket have already been initiated at the time of writing, including the Armagh City Centre Regeneration Scheme, Armagh Gaol and the Palace Demesne Management Strategy. These projects and others will underpin the process of realising the Vision illustrated by this Masterplan and should be taken forward with continued cognisance of its principles. Other projects, however, have yet to begin and will require the rapid establishment of consultation between potential agents and stakeholders to establish feasibility and appropriate mechanisms for delivery.

6.4 Delivery Mechanisms

Establishing viable mechanisms for the delivery of projects will be a key process in realising the Vision set out by this Masterplan. Proposals have been made throughout Armagh and the City Centre, including land in private and public ownership. Often, achieving the comprehensive development solutions advocated by this Masterplan involves areas requiring simultaneous development that are under more than one land ownership. This necessitates different parties working together in partnership for the process of land acquisition to take place.

With regards to privately owned land, this process will take place through negotiation or the disposal of interests via the open market. Complex projects involving multiple ownerships, however, must establish a strategically coordinated approach to fully realise regenerative and indeed, commercial benefits. In such instances, focussed Masterplans or Development Plans for specific areas are to be encouraged, taking the principles outlined in this document to a further level of detail. Consultation with key public sector agencies from the outset will be an important element of this process.

Publicly owned land, including car parks, road space and government buildings, often holds the key to unlocking the regeneration potential in areas of the City. In such circumstances, the disposal of sites must be carefully considered so that the regenerative return is fully maximised.

An effective means is through the production of Development Briefs. Based on the principles of this Masterplan, they enable sites to be released to the market on a competitive basis but with clear conditions based on the type and style of development to be taken forward. Undertaken correctly, this gives a degree of control over the project with regards to maximising its regenerative impact, without stifling commercial viability of the project.

Another important mechanism for delivery of the Masterplan will be Planning Gain, or Development Gain as it is also known. This involves Planning Conditions being agreed through the permission process, so that infrastructure or community benefits can be delivered as part of the overall development. A common example is the implementation or modification of transport infrastructure, funded by private sector developers. Such works enable benefits to be gained by both the developer in question, but also the wider local area.

Potential exists for the creative use of this process to deliver proposals contained within the Masterplan that will bring benefits to the City as a whole. However, there is a need to be mindful of current market conditions and project viability and a need to ensure planning gain requirements are balanced with financial viability.

Potential also exists to adopt a process of forward funding, enabling infrastructure projects to be taken forward by the public sector, prior to engagement with the private sector. This model used effectively by organisations such as English Partnerships, can succeed in unlocking development potential as a catalyst for further regeneration.

Should instances occur where land in private ownership cannot be made available for development through negotiation or disposal, the use of compulsory purchase powers must be considered. This mechanism involves the public sector acquisition of sites so that they can be released for development. Most commonly used to resolve issues of prominent dereliction or to consolidate access and maintenance arrangements, these powers are held by the Department for Social Development, though seen as a last resort once all other delivery options have been explored. For a more detailed account of this process, refer to Appendix 7.



7 CONCLUSIONS

The Armagh City Centre Masterplan establishes a bold Vision for the future of this important City. It has illustrated how the many assets of Armagh can be harnessed to bring about substantial social, physical and economic benefits. In doing so, the Vision of a safe, lively and attractive place in which to live, work and visit can be actively pursued. To realise this Vision, a series of 5 Aims were established:

1. Enhance the quality of life for Armagh's residents

This will be achieved through the creation of a high quality City environment that provides the setting for new employment, commerce, residential, retail, leisure and recreational opportunities. Connections between the City Centre and its residents will be strengthened through new streets, spaces and greenways, encouraging healthier lifestyles of walking and cycling. Safety of the City's streets and spaces will be greatly influenced by increased activity levels of the City Centre.

2. Maintain and enhance Armagh's historic character and identity

The Masterplan actively promotes the preservation and re-use of many of Armagh's historic buildings and the maintenance of its characteristic urban form. Existing buildings and transport arrangements will be enhanced to contribute more positively to the City and new development will be guided by design principles unique to the City of Armagh.

3. Develop a sustainable economy based on existing strengths

The Masterplan encourages pro-active pursuit of investment in the City to realise a sustainable economic future. This includes ensuring that regional linkages are provided, capitalising more fully on the City's heritage through tourism, providing first-class facilities for businesses to locate and welcoming more people to live in the heart of this historic City.

4. Develop Armagh as a leading tourism destination

The growth of a diverse, lively and attractive City Centre, combined with targeted improvements to tourist destinations, must form the basis for Armagh's revitalisation as an excellent place to stay and visit.

5. Develop a sustainable transport network

Implementation of strategic transport measures, improvements to public transport facilities, rationalisation of road layouts and parking provision and the creation of high quality, walkable spaces will all play a part in realising a sustainable transport network for the city.

The task is now to bring about the delivery of this ambitious Masterplan, realising the many benefits that it has to offer the City of Armagh and its people. Commitment to the principles as outlined, the formation of genuine partnerships and perseverance in the face of inevitable challenges will be critical to this process. The historic Armagh of fine buildings, streets and spaces that we enjoy today was shaped over centuries by the collective efforts of many. Now, an opportunity is presented to this generation to make its contribution, further shaping the City for a long and prosperous future ahead.

