

Newton Stewart and Minnigaff Local Place Plan Registration SUBMISSION STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Newton Stewart Initiative is leading a partnership project to deliver a Local Place Plan for Newton Stewart and Minnigaff. Our aim is to create a plan that represents the whole community. It is designed to guide our town's transformation for the next decade, from 2024-2034. The Place Plan initiative and the energetic engagement from the local community and community partners was catalysed by an invitation to apply for funding as part of D&G Council's Local Development Plan.

The players in developing the Place Plan were:

- The local community: over 1500 of the 4000 population
- A Steering Group of locals supported by Dumfries & Galloway Council, Cree Valley Area Development Trust, Cree Valley Community Council, Third Sector DG and Newton Stewart Initiative
- A Town Team sounding board of community representatives who helped guide the process.

AIM

This Statement aims to support our *Expression of Interest* to register our Place Plan for Newton Stewart and Minnigaff. The Place Plan and this statement has been prepared in accordance with:

- Government legislation: Town & Country Planning (Local Place Plans) (Scotland) Regulations 2021
- Scottish Government's Planning Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (LPP)
- Dumfries & Galloway Council's LPP Overview of Requirements.

LPP CONFIRMATION

To meet statutory requirements for Local Place Planning, this Statement confirms:

Governance

The submission is made by Newton Stewart Initiative on behalf of 3 key community partner organisations and local people in the town of Newton Stewart and Minnigaff. Newton Stewart Initiative is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, registered number SC029869. It is governed by a Board of Trustees. The submission is signed off by the Chair.

A written copy of Newton Stewart Initiatives constitution is included with the submission of this statement to demonstrate that it is a community-controlled body as defined by the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

Strategic Context

Newton Stewart and Minnigaff's Place Plan pays due regard to the National Planning Framework, Local Development Plan and Locality Plan. In preparing the Place Plan the following plans were taken into account:

National

- National Performance Framework
- National Planning Framework 4
- National Strategy for Economic Transformation
- Shaping Scotland's Economy: Inward Investment Plan
- Scotland's Social Enterprise Strategy & Action Plan
- National Strategy for Economic Transformation
- UK Government Levelling Up
- Scotland: A Trading Nation
- Infrastructure Investment Plan
- National Transport Strategy
- Scotland's Vision for Trade
- Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan
- Fair Work Nation
- Net Zero & Environmental Strategies
- Community Wealth Building
- Culture Strategy for Scotland
- National Town Centre Action Plan 2
- Town Centre First Principle
- Digital Strategy

Regional

SoSE Regional Economic Strategy Regional Skills & Investment Plan
 Dumfries & Galloway 5 Year Plan 2023-28 Local Outcomes Improvement Plan
 2017-2027 Poverty & Inequalities Strategy
 Regional Economic Partnership Vision 2031
 10,000 Voices

Local

Community Action Plan 2020
 Local Development Plan 2 2019

Engagement

Engagement drove and informed the Plan. We held conversations, meetings, focus groups and workshops with local people representing a broad demographic and met with key local partners and local, regional and national organisations and agencies:

- 3 community partners: Cree Valley Area Development Trust, Cree Valley Community Council, Newton Stewart Initiative
- Strategic partners: South of Scotland Enterprise, Dumfries & Galloway Council,
- Young people: Primary, secondary, young people, youth/community development, youth councillors,
- Diversity: Adult Resource Centre, NHS, Arts & Crafts groups, Wellbeing groups,
- Culture: Newton Stewart Museum, The Vault Arts Centre, Local Artists,
- Environment: Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere, Fisheries
- Learning: Douglas Ewart

Timetable for engagement.

February 2023	Drop-in session at McMillan Hall. Social media campaign launched on Facebook and via our website with online surveys.
March 2023	Drop-in at NSI Centre in the evening Session at Adult Resource Centre
April 2023	Presentation of initial results to over 30 groups in the area Steering group set up comprising of NSI, Cree Valley Area Development Trust and Cree Valley Community Council
June 2023	Launch of the place plan tool to identify main themes.

Aug 2023	Collation of themes and sharing them online and in person
Nov 2023	Listening and visioning events to create a collective vision for the town. 2 drops in, online survey and visit to Riverside Day Centre

Consultation

In line with Planning requirements, we carried out a month-long consultation in May 2024 on our Draft Place Plan. We notified all parties by direct mail in advance and alerted the public via the media and social media. In addition to Ward Officers and Elected Members, we notified: Cree Valley Community Council, Royal Burgh of Wigtown and District Community Council, Kirkcowan Community Council, The Royal Burgh of New Galloway and Kells Parish, Kirkmabreck Community Council, Barrhill Community Council and Gatehouse of Fleet Community Council

Development Proposals

Through engagement we first identified many issues and ideas for Newton Stewart and Minnigaff, then through online consultations narrowed these down to six priorities for change. During the month-long consultation, we invited local people to rank them. These are the ranked priorities:

1. Safety
2. Streets and spaces including derelict buildings and High Street Regeneration
3. Work and Local Economy
4. Play and recreation
5. Moving Around
6. Public Transport

Impact on the Local Development Plan

Current planning objectives aim to consolidate and enhance Newton Stewart's role as a district centre within the settlement hierarchy. It intends to encourage and support the improvement of the town centre, which was one of the main priorities to come out of the Local Place Plan.

Focusing business and industry development to the west of the settlement to accommodate employment opportunities fits alongside work and local economy being another priority highlighted within the Place Plan and something which would be of huge benefit to the local community.

Public transport and moving around were two of the top six themes to come out of the Place Plan.

An aspirational Place Plan

Within the Place Plan, we present a fresh vision for the town for the next decade. We ask the Council as the Planning Authority to take these ideas into consideration for future development of Newton Stewart and Minnigaff as part of the Local Development Plan.

The Place Plan and its Appendices lay out in high level detail the issues, ideas and solutions of local people. (All background evidence to support the Plan's assertions are available.) These ideas shaped the Plan and support our desire for change that might affect the Local Development Plan.

We intend to develop the ideas in more detail through feasibility studies. This work will be done in consultation with the local authority, planning authorities and appropriate government agencies.

Conclusion

The Place Plan has engaged almost **half** of the local community. It identifies **Six Priorities** for change and outlines local people's aspirations with background detail on other outstanding issues and many ideas and solutions.

The Place Planning process has already been a catalyst for change. There is an appetite for change within the community and fresh relationships have already sprung up.

The Plan points to changes in planning for the coming decade

The Place Plan will be used to apply for money from Borderlands when it is released for this area and we will use this to lever other funds. We aim to use the Place Plan to apply for funding in order to help reinvigorate the town.

Contacts

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