

# Wigtown and Bladnoch Local Place Plan

2024-2034

## Supporting Statement for Registration

### 1.0 Introduction

This Place Plan sets out an ambitious ten-year vision for Wigtown and Bladnoch. The community are excited about the opportunity to regenerate and grow Wigtown and Bladnoch into a vibrant, and resilient community over the next 10 years. Wigtown is also one of 5 towns in Dumfries and Galloway invited to be part of the Borderlands Place Plan programme which provided an incentive to prepare a place plan, as the town can apply for funding through the Borderlands Growth Deal.

The local place plan was initiated by the Royal Burgh and District of Wigtown Community Council. The Community Council secured funding to employ a consultant to work with a Town Team to support the development of the Local Place Plan. The amended scheme of establishment for the Community Council is included as an appendix of this statement.

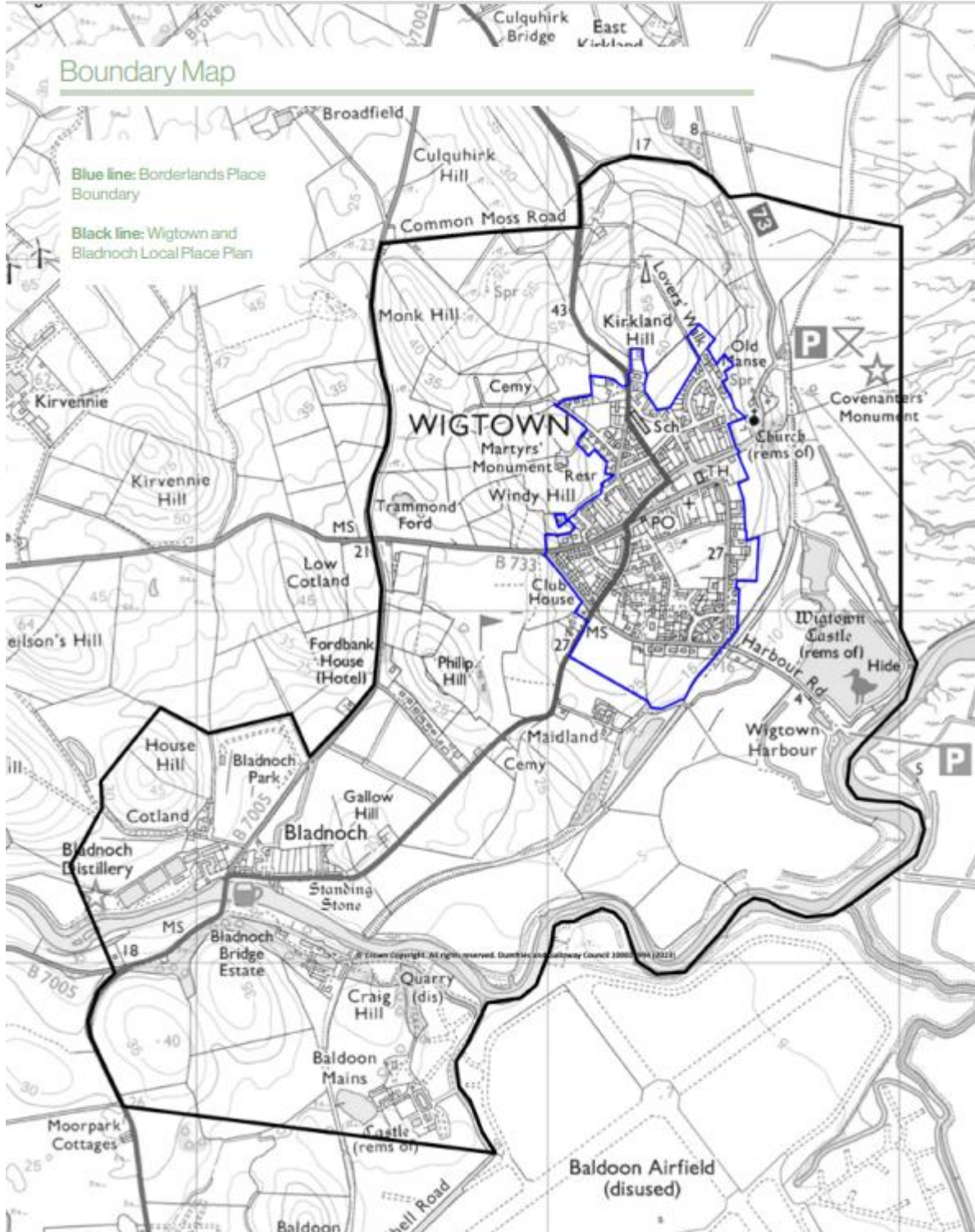
A Town Team was established to co-ordinate and drive the development of the Local Place Plan and with members are drawn from a wide range of businesses and local organisations across the community as follows:

Sandra McDowall (Convenor), Nicole Court (Deputy Convenor and Accommodation Business), Ada Montgomery (Community Council), Anne Barclay (Wigtown Book Festival), Carol Lochrie (Machars Action), Caroline Schofield (Wigtown Bowling Club), Cora Sharp (Wigtown Primary School), Gill Hay (The Market), Alison Adams and Shona Herries (Lightlands Park Initiative), Paul Tarling (Community Council), Pete Dobson (Wigtown & Bladnoch Community Initiative) Shaun Bythell (Association of Booksellers).

### 2.0 Our Local Place Plan Area

The area eligible for funding support through the Borderlands Growth Deal is outlined in blue on the map below. The community were asked what they would like to see as the Local Place Plan boundary and agreed to the boundary in black as it includes Bladnoch which is intricately linked to

Wigtown. The town of Wigtown and village of Bladnoch are located on the Machars peninsula in the west of Dumfries and Galloway.



### 3.0 Aim

This statement aims to support our *Expression of Interest* to register our Place Plan for Wigtown and Bladnoch. The Place Plan and this statement have been prepared in accordance with:

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

### 4.0 LPP Confirmation

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

#### Governance

This submission is made by the Royal Burgh and District of Wigtown Community Council on behalf of the Town Team and the Local Community. The submission is signed off by the Convenor. The amended scheme of establishment for the Community Council is included as an appendix of this statement.

#### Strategic Context

Wigtown and Bladnoch Local Place Plan pays due regard to National Planning Framework 4, Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan 2 and the Locality Plan. In preparing the Place Plan the following plans were taken into account:

##### National

- National Planning Framework 4
- National Strategy for Economic Transformation
- National Transport Strategy
- Community Wealth Building

##### Regional

- Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal
- Borderlands Place Programme Objectives

- South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy
- South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy Delivery Plan
- SWestrans Regional Transport Strategy 2023-2042

### **Local**

- Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan 2 October 2019
- Dumfries and Galloway Council Plan 2023-2028
- Dumfries and Galloway Local Outcomes Improvement Plan
- Dumfries and Galloway Tourism Strategy
- Dumfries and Galloway Active Travel Strategy 2 and Delivery Plan
- Dumfries and Galloway Housing Strategy
- Dumfries and Galloway Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy
- 10,000 Voices

### **Engagement**

Our Place Plan was developed using a variety of different community engagement mechanisms aimed at giving as many people as possible the opportunity to share their views. These included:

- A community survey which was completed by 128 individuals
- 4 Community engagement sessions
- Engagement with c. 150 young people and children in schools and the Kaos Café.
- Visits and telephone interviews with 20 local businesses.
- Public graffiti boards and maps around the town for people to write comments on.
- 8 facilitated town team thematic discussions.
- Fact finding missions to learn from what other communities have done.

Wigtown and Bladnoch have a population of 867 and so the best way of getting information out was to hand deliver it through each door. This was complemented by flyers and posters around the town and the use of the Machars Action Newsletter.

### **Consultation**

In line with Planning requirements, we conducted a month-long consultation in June 2024. We notified Elected Members and the following Community Councils of the consultation:

- Castle Kennedy Community Council
- Isle of Whithorn Community Council
- Kirkcowan Community Council
- Kirkmabreck Community Council
- New Luce Community Council
- Old Luce Community Council
- Port William Community Council
- Sorbie Community Council
- Cree Valley Community Council

## Development Proposals

Our place plan has five investment themes that emerged through the engagement:

- **A Revitalised Town Centre:** Maintain and raise the standard of the physical environment of our unique town centre and make a place for events and activities that attract more visitors to spend time and money in the area.
- **Better connected Transport:** Improve Transport Provision and create active travel routes to provide better access to services, jobs, training as well as to make it easier for visitors to get here.
- **Better Homes for All:** Maintain and increase the number of people living in Wigtown and Bladnoch by addressing local housing needs, creating warm efficient homes, and encouraging people to raise their families here.
- **A Green and Natural Place:** Value and safeguard our natural environment and green spaces, creating growing places in the town, build resistance to climate change and improve access to the countryside.
- **A Growing Economy:** Build a strong and sustainable and growing economy that supports local businesses to grow, creates new jobs, learning and training opportunities, increasing community participation and benefits across the community.

The need to address carbon reduction, health and wellbeing are common threads through all our investment themes.

**Our investment priorities:**

- Repurposing the County Buildings
- Physical Regeneration of the Town Centre
- New housing
- Warm homes, training, and jobs
- Natural and green Spaces
- Growing places
- Recreational spaces
- Transforming tourism
- Grow businesses, jobs, and training opportunities.

**Impact of the Development Plan**

Current planning objectives for Wigtown aim to consolidate the town's role as a district centre in the settlement hierarchy. They recognise the:

- need for housing,
- the importance of supporting established business and industry and opportunities for economic, tourism and cultural development,
- the importance of good design to respect the historic and landscape characteristics of the town, and
- the need to protect the environmental and archaeologically important area to the east of the town.

Our local place plan covers both Wigtown and Bladnoch, building upon the current planning objectives and reflecting our community's vision and ideas for delivering positive change. These aspirations and ideas are presented in the Place Plan at a high level.

A number of our priorities are at an early stage with the need for further work such as feasibility studies, site assessment and business cases.

We ask that Dumfries and Galloway Council as the Planning Authority takes our local place plan into consideration in the development of LPD3.

**An Aspirational Place Plan**

Our Place Plan is Wigtown and Bladnoch's vision for the future. It addresses some of the gaps in the life of our community and builds on the infrastructure we already have. It makes more of the outdoors, acknowledges the need for community transport,

alternative energy, local housing and much more. The proposed changes will allow Wigtown to continue to flourish by attracting more tourists, creating more jobs, and instilling an even greater pride in what we have to offer.

We intend to develop our investment priorities by undertaking feasibility studies for the projects and developing business cases in line with the Borderlands Town Investment Plan process.

We recognise that as a we need to work in partnership, and we are therefore establishing a development trust in the form of a SCIO to support the various interests in our community in the delivery of the plan. In addition, we would look to work in partnership with the public, private and third sector organisations to deliver our place plan.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

Our Place Plan was developed through engagement with our community. Local people are aware of the benefits of being Scotland's Book Town and consider themselves fortunate to live here. The Plan has a vision, and five key investment themes build upon this legacy and reflects the challenges, ideas, opportunities, and solutions local people identified.

The Place Plan gives a clear direction and focus on the future of Wigtown and Bladnoch and provides a catalyst for change.

Having a Place Plan for Wigtown and Bladnoch will help support the application for £3 million from the Borderlands Growth Deal. It will also enable us to lever and secure other funding sources for those projects not eligible for Borderlands funding.

