



# Urban Villages Initiative Strategic Frameworks

Executive Summary



JULY 2016

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# INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

This document sets out what the Urban Villages Initiative is and the purpose of the Strategic Framework documents that have been developed for each Urban Village area. It provides a brief introduction to each place and presents a series of Strategic Actions built from a process of analysis and engagement. It concludes with a summary of the approach to delivery.

The Strategic Actions set out in this document are specific to each Urban Village area and these actions have been developed through a comprehensive process of information gathering, analysis and extensive engagement with a wide and diverse audience. They seek to build on what is working, highlighting opportunities for sustaining positive change. Each of the Strategic Actions sits within themes and will lead to the development of various projects and/or alignment with other projects.

This Executive Summary should not be used in isolation - please refer to the full Strategic Framework document for the particular Urban Villages area that you are interested in to fully understand the context of Strategic Actions and in-depth background to the Framework as a whole.

## WHAT IS THE URBAN VILLAGES INITIATIVE?

The Urban Villages Initiative is a key action within the Northern Ireland Executive's 'Together: Building a United Community' Strategy. It is designed to improve good relations outcomes and to help develop thriving places where there has previously been a history of deprivation and community tension.





## There are three inter-connected aims:

- to foster positive community identities
- to build community capacity
- to improve the physical environment.

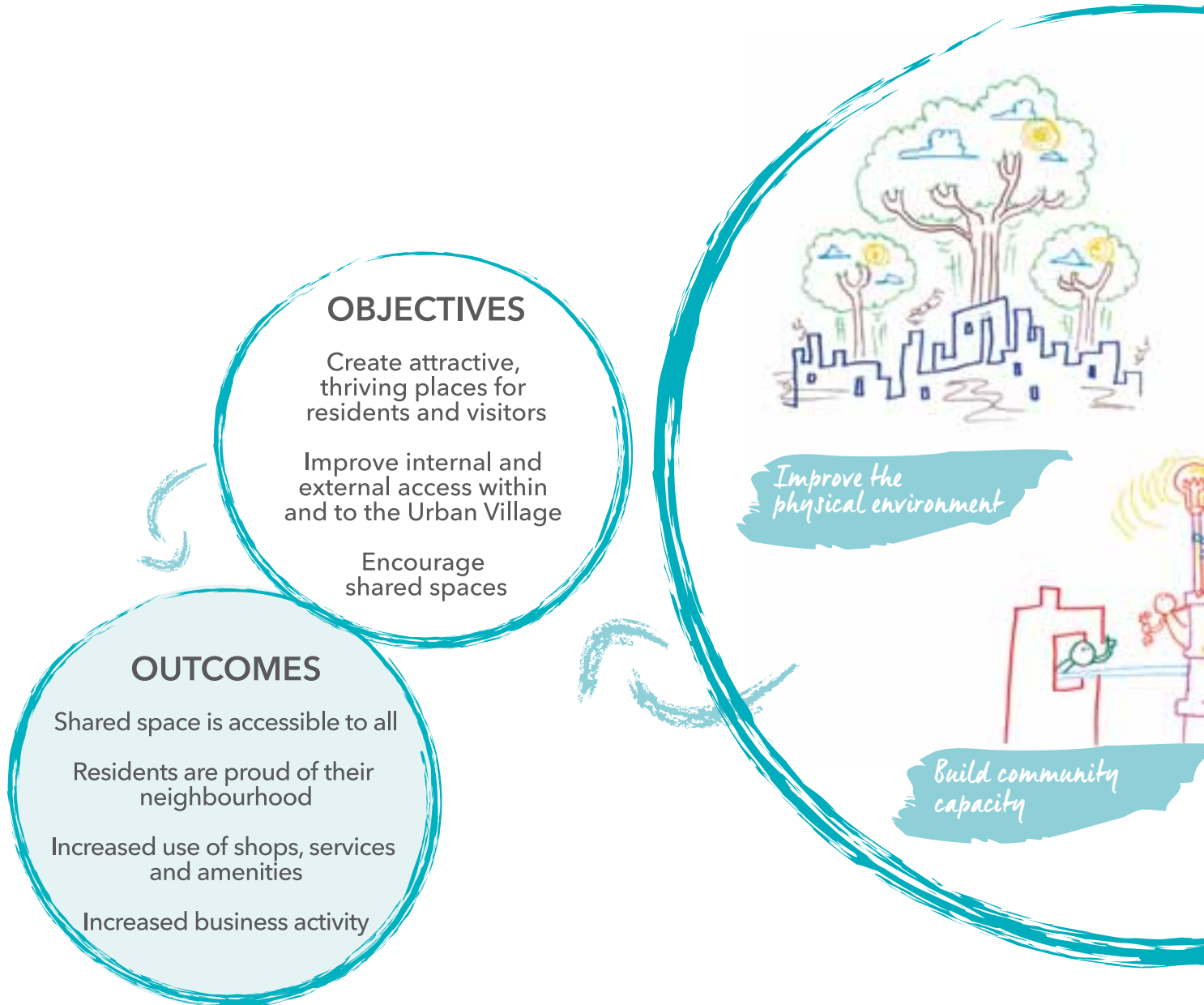
In working towards these aims, a key delivery mechanism will be aligning and influencing investment and finding better ways of 'doing more with what we've got'. The goal is to enable current and future investment to be targeted and delivered in more effective and sustainable ways. In practice this will mean:

- co-ordinating and aligning effort across Government Departments, local Councils and community organisations to deliver good relations outcomes
- identifying and building on what is working because sustainable change requires investment in social (people and communities) and in physical assets
- exploring ways of investing and trying new approaches which stimulate private investment and economic activity.

## OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

In order to focus effort and set a clear route to delivery, a set of objectives and outcomes will inform investment decisions and actions.

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### OBJECTIVES

- Build trust and relationships
- Enhance pride and confidence in Urban Village areas
- Create welcoming places where people feel safe and connected, regardless of religious or ethnic background

### OUTCOMES

- Improved relationships between and within communities
- Cultural diversity is celebrated
- A community where places and spaces are safe for all
- Increased sense of community belonging

### OBJECTIVES

- Encourage and support communities to express their views and influence what happens in their areas
- Enhance the capacity and confidence of communities to work and socialise within and outside their immediate neighbourhoods
- Enhance community capacity to participate in local and regional networks and recognise shared needs and priorities

### OUTCOMES

- Increased use of shared spaces and services
- Greater voice and influence
- Confident and enterprising community



*Faster positive community identities*

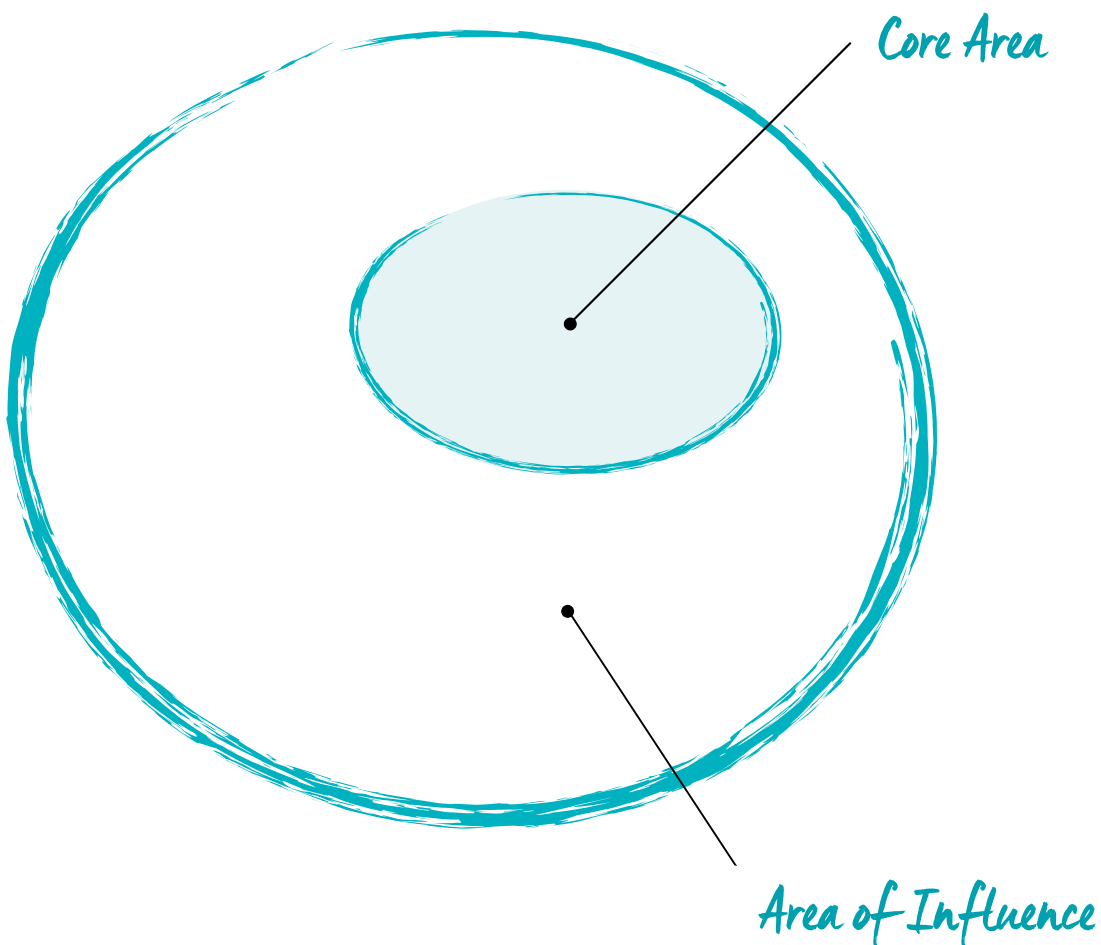


## PLACES

Delivery will be focussed on five 'core' areas in:

- Ardoyne and Greater Ballysillan (North Belfast)
- Bogside, Fountain and Bishop Street (Derry~Londonderry)
- Colin (West Belfast)
- EastSide (East Belfast)
- Sandy Row, Donegall Pass and the Markets (South Belfast)

The core area provides a focal point for action and investment. The concept of a wider area of influence, that is not sharply defined, acknowledges that thriving places require wider connection to both physical and social assets. Investment decisions and actions will be informed by the likely impact on core areas.





*The Strategic Frameworks are intended to provide a reference point for anyone involved in shaping investment decisions or identifying collaborative opportunities in each of the Urban Village areas.*

## PURPOSE OF STRATEGIC FRAMEWORKS

The Strategic Frameworks present findings from a creative process of analysis and reflection which involved individual members of the community, as well as representatives from community organisations and local and central government. They provide an analysis of place and are intended to provide a tool for informing action and investment.

Each Framework sets out the local context, explains the approach that was taken in each place and looks towards the future by setting out Strategic Actions which emerged through the process of engagement, evidence gathering and analysis.

The Strategic Actions presented are specific to each Urban Village area and the Strategic Frameworks expand on each action in a way that is intended to inform discussion about how to best deliver positive outcomes.

The Executive Office will take forward projects and programmes within its remit, and work with others to progress opportunities for shared delivery of outcomes, in keeping with the approach articulated in the draft Programme for Government Framework.

The Frameworks are intended to be used as working documents and not hard and fast plans – so that emerging opportunities can be identified and changing circumstances acknowledged.

The full Framework for each Urban Village area is available on the Executive Office website.

*A commitment to sustained consultation and engagement with all local stakeholders is made for all stages of delivery and as such the Frameworks are working documents which form the basis for ongoing discussion and delivery.*

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## METHODOLOGY

The process that informed the development of each Strategic Framework began with an in-depth analysis process involving desktop research, site appraisal and extensive stakeholder consultation.

The findings from each stage helped to ensure each Framework is specific to the place and its people. They seek to build on what is working and on continuing to progress positive change to bring about real transformation, whilst significantly improving the living environment.

Central to the methodology was engagement with the people who live, work and spend time in each place. This included 1-to-1 meetings, workshops, surveys, focus groups and public events. The following extracts from each of the Strategic Frameworks illustrate the numbers of different engagement activities in each area.

A range of issues were explored in more depth. These included, for example, the role of illumination and lighting in regeneration; children's play spaces; community gardens and allotments; and the role of business associations. This informed the findings and Strategic Actions in parallel with the valuable contributions and participation throughout the process.



ARDOYNE & GREATER BALLYSILLAN  
**NORTH BELFAST**



BOGSIDE, FOUNTAIN AND BISHOP STREET  
DERRY~LONDONDERRY



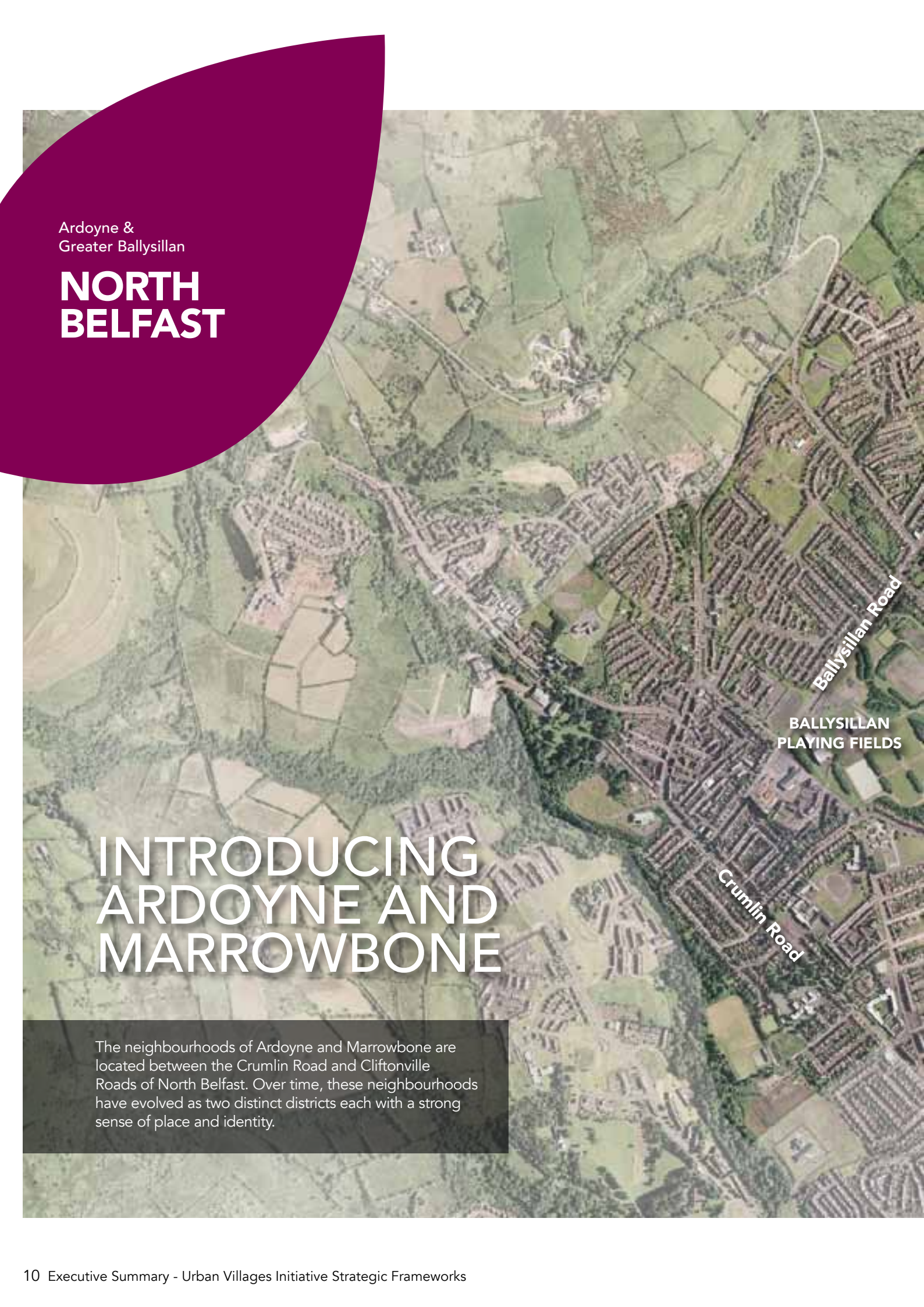
COLIN  
WEST BELFAST



THE URBAN VILLAGES INITIATIVE IN EASTSIDE  
EAST BELFAST



SANDY ROW, DONEGALL PASS AND THE MARKETS  
SOUTH BELFAST



Ardoyne &  
Greater Ballysillan

# NORTH BELFAST

## INTRODUCING ARDOYNE AND MARROWBONE

The neighbourhoods of Ardoyne and Marrowbone are located between the Crumlin Road and Cliftonville Roads of North Belfast. Over time, these neighbourhoods have evolved as two distinct districts each with a strong sense of place and identity.

Ballysillan Road

BALLYSILLAN  
PLAYING FIELDS

Crumlin Road



# INTRODUCING GREATER BALLYSILLAN

CARR'S  
GLEN

Greater Ballysillan describes a large area of North Belfast that stretches from the Forth River and Crumlin Road in the east to Cavehill Road in the west. It is comprised of several neighbourhoods of which Ballysillan is considered one.

2

MARROWBONE  
MILLENNIUM  
PARK

ARDOYNE  
SHOPS &  
LIBRARY

## STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Ardoyne & Marrowbone, NORTH BELFAST

### COHESION



- *Communicating a place to be proud of*
- *Focussed training opportunities*
- *Learning and sharing our positive story*
- *Listening and collaborating with our young people*
- *Creating positive places*

### CONNECTION



- *Promoting further collaboration and sharing*
- *Linking to local and wider employment*
- *Improving access to surrounding sport and leisure facilities*
- *Stronger physical and mental corridors*
- *Address the challenges of interfaces*

### BEACONS

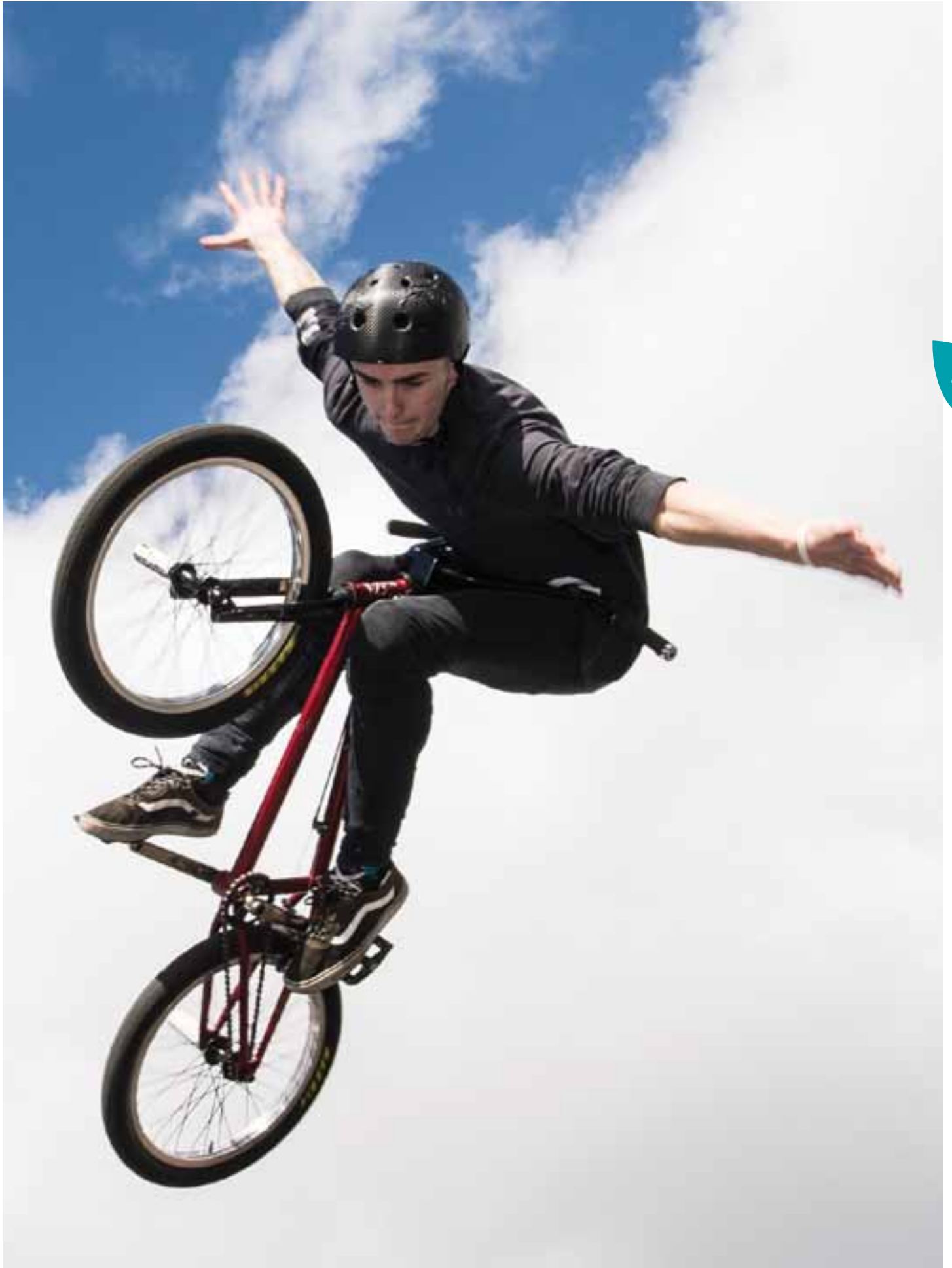


- *Places to meet, share information and opportunities*
- *Beautiful landmark buildings and places*
- *Inspiring local people*

### TRANSFORMATION



- *Making places feel and be safer*
- *Less litter and graffiti, more parks and trees*
- *Welcoming points of arrival*
- *Greater health and well-being*
- *First class education*
- *A mix of good new homes*



## STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Greater Ballysillan  
NORTH BELFAST

2

### COHESION



- *Getting ready*
- *Sharing information, working together*
- *Promoting Greater Ballysillan*
- *Generational projects*
- *Forging cohesive communities*



### BEACONS

- *Neighbourhood centres and parks*
- *New Ballysillan Park*
- *Revitalised leisure provision*
- *Carr's Glen and activity centre*

### TRANSFORMATION



- *Targeting dereliction*
- *Meanwhile uses*
- *Street development*
- *Centre of creativity*
- *Schools collaboration and sharing*
- *New and upgraded housing*

### CONNECTION



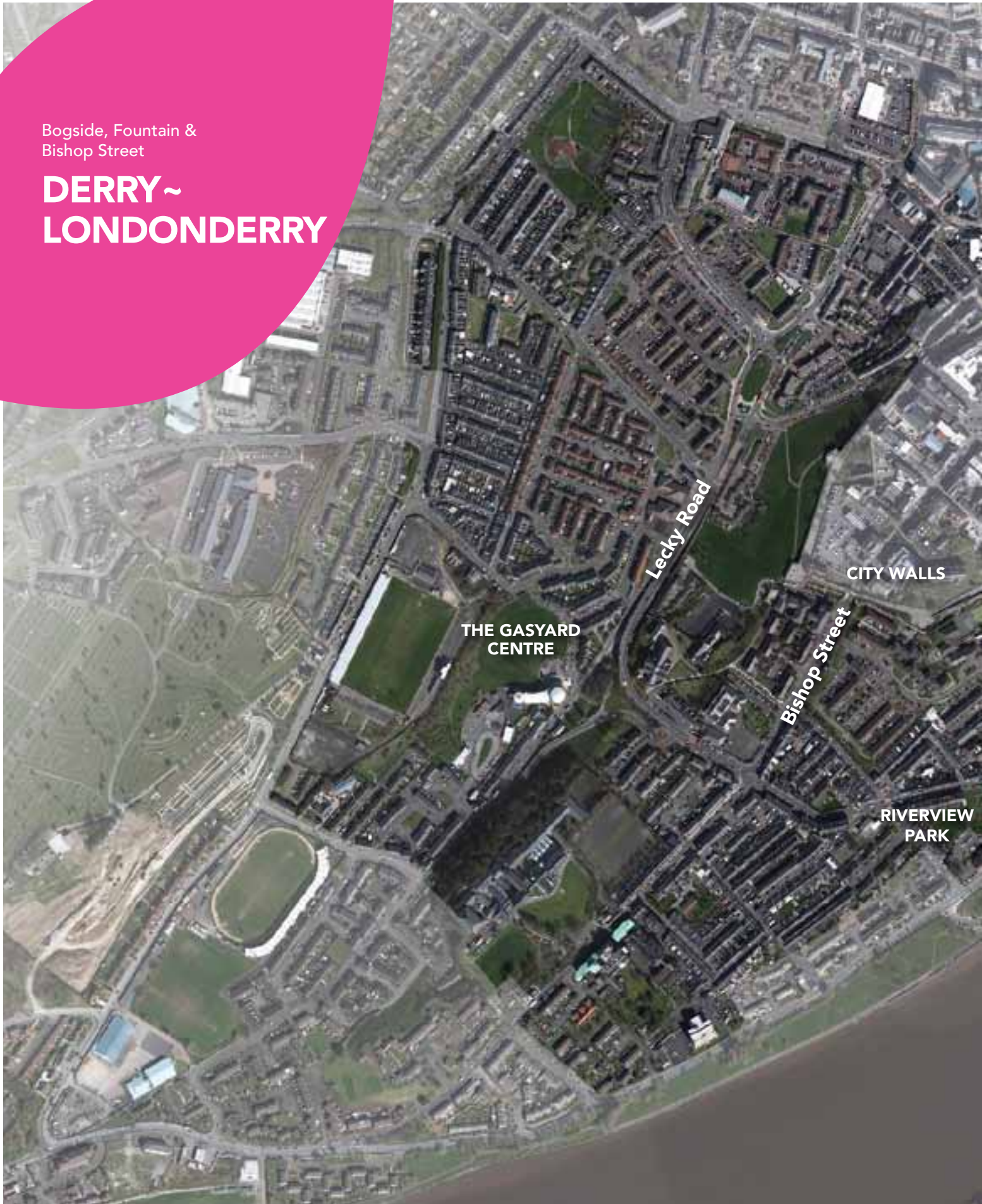
- *River Greenways*
- *Business incubation centre*
- *Coordinated sports programme*
- *Signage strategy*
- *Address the challenges of interfaces*





Bogside, Fountain &  
Bishop Street

# DERRY ~ LONDONDERRY



An aerial photograph of Derry, Ireland, showing the city's layout and the River Foyle. A yellow rectangular highlight is placed over the central urban area, indicating the core area of the project. The River Foyle flows through the city, and the city walls are visible on the left side. The text 'Wapping Lane' is visible in the bottom left corner of the image.

# INTRODUCING BOGSIDE, FOUNTAIN & BISHOP STREET

The core area encompasses the Fountain, Bogside and Bishop Street areas. Located just beyond Derry's historic walls, these are unique and distinctive places that reflect their strong cultural identities.

Panoramic views from the city walls take in the relatively low lying Bogside area to the west. Its tight knit hilly terraced streets run uphill from Lecky Road to Lonemoor Road. Similarly at Bishop Street these frame views towards a majestic River Foyle.

The Fountain is discrete and contained, bounded by the walled city on the north, Bishop Street (interface) on the northwest, and Carlisle Road and Abercorn Road on the southeast.

## STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Bogside, Fountain  
& Bishop Street  
DERRY~  
LONDONDERRY

### TRANSFORM PLACES

- Tackle dereliction and vacancy
- Create a well designed, sustainable and thriving place
- Maximise connections
- Create effective shared space
- Address the challenges of interfaces

### HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- Encourage participation in sport and physical activity
- Support and sustain positive lifestyle choices
- Collaborate to tackle social isolation

### CELEBRATE AND PROMOTE CULTURAL DIVERSITY

- Promote and develop a programme of festivals, events and cultural activity
- Celebrate and foster cultural diversity
- Encourage partnerships with local, national and international organisations

### BUILD A MORE RESILIENT AND SELF-SUFFICIENT COMMUNITY

- Develop and promote social enterprise and entrepreneurship
- Improve and increase allotments community gardens and growing

### ENTERPRISING COMMUNITIES

- Connect and collaborate
- Increase education, training and employment opportunities

### MOTIVATE, SUPPORT AND INSPIRE OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

- Encourage youth engagement opportunities
- Support multi-discipline activity
- Increase support for lifelong learning

### MAXIMISE TOURISM OFFERING

- Unlock latent tourism offer
- Creatively re-use/ conserve physical assets
- Increase the spin-off benefits of existing tourism



Colin

# WEST BELFAST

POLEGLASS

LAGMORE

# INTRODUCING COLIN



Colin is located between the city centres of Belfast and Lisburn on the slopes of a mountain. Considered as a suburb of West Belfast and part of Dunmurry, it consists of four large residential neighbourhoods to either side of the Stewartstown Road.

*Twinbrook* - the first neighbourhood constructed here on flat lands to the east of the Stewartstown Road

*Kilwee* - a smaller neighbourhood focussed along the Old Golf Course Road

*Lagmore* - the newest area of Colin, reaching up from the Stewartstown Road to Mount Eagles

*Poleglass* - a large residential neighbourhood to the west of the Stewartstown Road

## STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Colin  
WEST BELFAST

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### BUILDING THE HEART

- *Community hub*
- *Civic spaces*
- *Attracting commerce*



### CONNECTING COLIN

- *Transport network*
- *Digital infrastructure*
- *Linking skills and employment opportunities*
- *Safer routes and gateways*

### POSITIVE SPACES



- *Youthful spaces*
- *Meanwhile uses*
- *Colin's Glens*
- *Housing design and density*



### OUR PEOPLE OUR FUTURE

- *Building on our strengths*
- *Youth engagement and understanding*
- *Educational excellence*
- *Colin events*
- *Safer neighbourhoods*
- *Together we are Colin*



### HEALTHY COLIN

- *Promoting walking and cycling*
- *Access to health and fitness*
- *Mental health and well-being*
- *Growing spaces*
- *Activating Colin*





Urban Villages Initiative  
in EastSide

# EAST BELFAST

TITANIC  
QUARTER RAILWAY  
STATION

BRIDGE  
END

Newtownards Road



# INTRODUCING EASTSIDE

The core area of the Urban Villages Initiative in EastSide is a one mile stretch of the Newtownards Road, between Bridge End and Grampian Avenue.

To those who know the Newtownards Road, it is a special place. It is a lifeblood for the communities who live along its length and an artery for the city, linking Belfast deep into Ards and Down.

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**HOLYWOOD  
ARCHES**

## STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Urban Villages Initiative in EastSide EAST BELFAST

### HEALTHY LIFESTYLES & WELLBEING

- Nurture community growing
- Plant Newtownards Road
- Encourage healthy and resilient communities
- Optimise the local green spaces including the Connswater Community Greenway

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### COMMUNITY COHESION & UNDERSTANDING

- Develop and promote positive cultural identities
- Sustain generational cross and intra community programmes
- Address the challenges of interfaces

### ARTS, CREATIVITY AND LEARNING

- Instigate positive arts and murals programmes
- Growth strategy for arts and proactive management
- Raise aspirations through enhanced learning opportunities

### TRANSFORMATION OF PLACES & SPACES

- Transform vacant and derelict spaces
- Revitalise existing and introduce new civic spaces
- Continue public realm enhancements
- Refurbish and light key buildings and spaces
- Live and work above the shops
- Improve all frontages
- Redevelop low density areas

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Support local tourism opportunities
- Relocate activating uses to Newtownards Road
- Develop, support and promote local business and facilities
- Promote place identity brand
- Meet employer needs with skills
- Modernise commercial units

### CONNECTIVITY

- Increase mobility
- Connect north, west, rail and air



Sandy Row, Donegall Pass  
& the Markets

# SOUTH BELFAST





# INTRODUCING SANDY ROW DONEGALL PASS & THE MARKETS

The core area is made up of three distinct neighbourhoods - Sandy Row, Donegall Pass and the Markets. Situated on the edge of the city centre yet separated by roads and dereliction / vacant sites. The railway severs the area from the surrounding areas to the south, east and west although this puts four train stations within easy reach.

## STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Sandy Row,  
Donegall Pass  
& the Markets  
SOUTH BELFAST

6

### TRANSFORM NEIGHBOURHOODS

- Enhance and upgrade the area
- Address vacancy and dereliction
- Improve and increase green open spaces, linking them together
- Improve lighting
- Address imbalance of traffic and parking impacts on communities

### ENTERPRISING COMMUNITIES

- Support local business, entrepreneurship and social enterprise ventures
- Improve access to employment opportunities
- Attract and influence investment
- Harness tourism and heritage opportunities

### CONNECTIVITY (PEOPLE & PLACE)

- Improve access to facilities, services and activities for children and youth
- Maximise connections to city centre, proposed Transport Hub and River Lagan
- Harness community voice to influence and respond to opportunities

### COMMUNITY WELLBEING

- Improve health, happiness and well-being
- Build trust and relationships





# SUPPORTING DELIVERY

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## STRATEGIC CONNECTIONS

The Urban Villages Initiative is a headline action within the Executive's 'Together: Building a United Community' Strategy. This importance is reflected in the way that it is structured and delivered. It is led by the Executive Office with the support of senior representatives from other government departments alongside Derry City and Strabane District Council, and Belfast City Council.

The Strategic Frameworks are also intended to be useful points of reference for anyone with an interest in the Urban Village areas and a means for identifying opportunities to collaborate around shared Programme for Government outcomes and indicators.

## ROUTES TO DELIVERY

Although coordinated by the Executive Office, and overseen by Junior Ministers, capital and revenue investments made directly through the Urban Villages Initiative will be led and managed by organisations that best suit the particular project or programme. This means that work on parks, public realm projects and other physical interventions is likely to be led by Councils, the Department for Communities, NI Housing Executive or the Department for Infrastructure.

Support will be provided to projects and programmes in keeping with the good relations outcomes of the Urban Villages Initiative. We will draw from the most appropriate delivery partners including central and local government and community and voluntary groups.

Activity more focussed on community capacity building, cultural innovation and positive identities will be delivered by community and voluntary groups to maximise local networks and connections or through central or local government.

This Executive Summary should not be used in isolation - please refer to the full Strategic Framework document for the particular Urban Villages area that you are interested in to fully understand the context of Strategic Actions and in-depth background to the Framework as a whole.

For further information or to see each Strategic Framework in detail, please visit the Together: Building a United Community section of the Executive Office website which can be accessed at:

**[www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk](http://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk)**



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**Executive Office**  
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