



LETTERSHANDONEY

Strategic Vision and Action Plan

Lettershandoney Strategic Vision and Action Plan has been produced on behalf of ARC north west by The Paul Hogarth Company.

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1. Introduction

The Strategic Vision and Action Plan referred to from herein as the 'Action Plan' is a comprehensive document which identifies a range of deliverable initiatives to facilitate economic, environmental, physical and social improvement to the village of Lettershandoney over the next 15 year period.

Commissioned by Omagh District Council on behalf of ARC north west and in conjunction with Derry City Council, Limavady Borough Council and Strabane District Council, the Action Plan was developed by The Paul Hogarth Company, and shaped by local stakeholders and the community. It has been part funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) through Axis 3 of the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 (NIRDP) under Measure 3.5 Village Renewal and Development.

1.1 Purpose of the Strategic Vision and Action Plan

The Action Plan for Lettershandoney provides a vision for the future development of the village. It provides a strategic framework that identifies a range of potential improvement schemes to address local need. A thorough process of research and analysis, including open consultation events, has informed the development of this plan. It therefore provides a central point of reference for all who may wish to invest in Lettershandoney whether the public sector, private sector or the community and voluntary sectors. By working towards the fulfilment of a common objective, the input of many parties can be coordinated to maximise the economic, environmental, physical and social benefits.

Like all action plans, this document should not be treated as a finite blueprint for development. Rather, it sets in place a series of principles and concepts that, if followed, will significantly benefit the village. Further development of each initiative will be necessary to establish a greater level of detail. For example, comprehensive consultation with landowners, necessary technical studies and, in some cases, planning applications and other statutory approvals.

The Action Plan was prepared during the harshest economic downturn to affect Northern Ireland in many years and therefore takes cognisance of the limited availability of funding in the short-term. However, all initiatives detailed within the Action Plan are positioned to maximise economic, environmental, physical and social benefits for Lettershandoney and the local community.

Phased delivery of the Action Plan must therefore remain a priority for the village to ensure its long-term social and economic sustainability.

1.2 Methodology

This Action Plan has been developed through a series of key stages, providing opportunities to consult and work with residents, Derry City Council and statutory bodies to ensure that the Action Plan appropriately reflects the needs of the village. The process undertaken to produce this Action Plan is outlined below.

Desktop research, site visit and spatial analysis

For the initial information gathering stage, site visits, a comprehensive photographic record, desktop research and a review of existing plans and initiatives was undertaken to establish a detailed village profile.

Initial public workshop and information gathering

To expand on the initial information gathering stage, an open public consultation workshop was held. This provided residents and stakeholders from various community sectors with an opportunity to identify the key strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for Lettershandoney.

Development of proposed key aims and initiatives

Guided by the community consultation workshop, a clear set of aims was established. These have determined the key economic, environmental, physical and social and initiatives that together form this Action Plan.

Presentation of draft initiatives

To ensure the key aims and initiatives were a true reflection of the needs for the village, a further meeting with the local stakeholders and wider community was arranged. This provided an opportunity to review the initiatives and give further comment.

Statutory consultation

Consultation was undertaken with Planning Service, Roads Service, Rivers Agency and Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) to ensure that proposals within the Action Plan complemented and took cognisance of existing plans, policies and initiatives.

Development of final document

In the context of the feedback that was provided, the final Action Plan was produced.

2. Lettershandoney Village Profile

2.1 Introduction

To establish the aims and subsequent initiatives for the Action Plan it is important to understand how the village functions and identify its qualities, needs and aspirations. Through the various methods of information gathering, including the public consultation process, a profile for Lettershandoney has been identified. This sets the context for the successful future development of the village.

2.2 Demographic

Statistical information, relating to population and demographic figures for Lettershandoney, has been reviewed from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

At the time of writing, the 2011 Census was being undertaken across Northern Ireland and as such the results from this most recent survey were not yet publicly available. Therefore, the Action Plan utilises NISRA information based on 2001 Census as the most accurate statistical data available for Lettershandoney.

Demographical statistics for Lettershandoney, based on 2001 Census are as follows:

- Total population: 506 persons;
- Total households: 153;

- 60.3% of the total households were owner occupied;
- 29% were aged under sixteen years;
- 8.9% were aged sixty years and over;
- 97.8% were from a Catholic Community Background;
- 0.8% were from a Protestant and other Christian Community Background;
- 1.4% had no stated religion;
- 2.5% had degree level education or higher;
- 11.6% were unemployed.

The statistics highlight that within the village there is a higher proportion of young people (29%) compared to the Northern Ireland (NI) average (23.6%). There is also a considerably lower proportion of elderly residents (8.9%) compared to the NI average (17.6%). The statistics also demonstrate high levels of unemployment (11.6%) compared to that of similar sized settlements across NI (3.3%). Furthermore, only 2.5% of the population possess degree level education or higher compared to the NI average (15.8%).

In addition to the statistical information from 2001 Census, Lettershandoney and District Development Group carried out a community audit in 2009. This report, highlighted that within the main residential area of the village, namely, Lettershandoney Estate, up to 50% of the potential workforce was unemployed.

The audit also highlighted that the area suffered from acute poverty, ill health, vandalism and alcohol / drug abuse, particularly among the young. These statistics demonstrate the importance for this Action Plan to develop initiatives which cater for the needs of the high proportion of young people while encouraging elderly residents to reside in the area.

The community audit also highlighted a lack of community facilities within the village, compounding feelings of community apathy, demoralisation and under achievement. In response, the Action Plan should look at providing opportunities to establish additional community facilities in the village to provide educational, sporting and employment opportunities and services.

2.3 Location

Lettershandoney is located six miles to the southeast of Derry/Londonderry within the Hollymount Electoral Ward. The village lies three miles east of Drumahoe, just over seven miles northwest of Claudy and four and a half miles south of Eglington. Lettershandoney is located within the commuter belt of Derry/Londonderry.



2.4 Evolution of Lettershandoney

The village name of Lettershandoney has ten recorded spellings, dating back as far as 1613 and is classified as a small village by NISRA. Lettershandoney village core comprises a series of housing executive estates, chiefly characterised by cul-de-sac development layouts.

The first houses, within the village, were built in the 1960's with additional houses constructed further north in the 1970's. More recently, a further thirty-eight private houses have been developed. These houses lie to the south of the village and front the Tirbracken Road. Planning approval for a further one hundred houses has been granted on land to the northwest of Lettershandoney Avenue.

2.5 Natural Setting

Lettershandoney is situated on a valley floor, flanked by low rising hills to the west and east. The immediate surrounding landscape comprises of mainly wet bog land with pasture and some arable fields. Defined by Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) Lettershandoney village is located within the Loughermore Hills Landscape Character Area. The key characteristics of this landscape are:



- broad ridges with rounded summits and wide, relatively shallow valleys;
- homogeneous, large-scale mosaic of open moorland and conifer plantations on upper slopes and summits;
- more finely grained mosaic of scrubby woodland, rough pasture and peaty marsh within larger valleys;
- no buildings on upper ridges; a few scattered farms and cottages on the lower slopes bordering the valley pastures;
- broken stone walls form a partial network on lower slopes;
- peat cutting.

The conifer plantations of Loughermore Forest, on the upper slopes, form the dominant feature of this landscape. Within the valleys, patches of scrubby woodland and marsh can be identified with tracts of deciduous woodland evident.

Within the steep valley of the Burntollet River, the attractive Ness Wood and Ervey Wood Country Parks are located. The waterfall in Ness Wood is particularly popular with visitors. Transmission masts are prominent elements in the landscape where they occur on the ridgetop summits.

2.6 Approach Routes

Tirbracken Road runs along the south of the village and forms the main local link to Derry/Londonderry. The junction at Lettershandoney Avenue forms the main access link north into the village and represents the main spine from which residential estate are accessed. Gorticross Road connects the village westward with an alternate route to Eglinton in the north.

There are three approach routes into Lettershandoney. Thirty miles per hour (mph) signs mark the arrival into Lettershandoney with no other gateway signage evident to inform drivers of their entrance into the village.

2.7 Village Centre and Service Provision

Key services within the village include a small temporary shop unit, Mullabuoy Primary School, the Community House within which Lettershandoney and District Development Group operate and the Mullabuoy Community Centre. The nearby shop, petrol station and cafe located at the crossroads of Tirbracken Road and Tamnagerin Road provide local retail provision.



As these local services are dispersed throughout the settlement extents, they do not contribute to a consolidated village core. For all other facilities and services, local residents travel to nearby Derry/Londonderry.

Saint Mary's Church (RC) and Saint Mary's Gaelic Football Club are located, on Ervey Road, two and a half miles from the village.



2.8 Transport and Traffic

Due to the location of the village in relation to Tirbracken Road and Tamnagerin Road, Lettershandoney only receives local traffic. With traffic calming measures in place, traffic speed is not a concern of the community.

While a comprehensive footpath network is in place throughout the village, there are instances where this network could be improved. For example, better connectivity should be established between the village green and the Mullabuoy Centre where a designated footpath, adjacent to number's 1-8 Lettershandoney Avenue, would create a safer environment for pedestrians.

The village is serviced by Ulsterbus Service 152 and while a bus stop is located at the junction of Lettershandoney Avenue and Gorticross Road no formal bus shelter exists.

2.9 Key Buildings and Quality of Environment

Local residents raised concerns, during community consultation, about the future of Mullabuoy Primary School. These concerns centred around growing fears that the school may relocate some two and a half miles out of the village. Although, no official statutory plans exist to substantiate these fears, it is clear that such a proposal would have a major detrimental impact on village animation and community spirit.

At the time of writing, remedial works were being undertaken to the pre-fabricated unit, within which the Mullabuoy Centre operates. It is understood that this Community Centre is a valuable asset for the village, however due to its limited size and temporary nature, it is inadequate to cater for all community events and services.

Key open spaces, throughout the village, include a village green, a children's playground, a playing field with temporary changing facilities and a multi-use games area (MUGA).

Site analysis revealed instances of fly-tipping throughout the village, particularly evident on lands zoned for development. The village walkaround also highlighted areas which negatively impacted on the environmental quality and character of the village. Such areas included the temporary shop unit on Lettershandoney Avenue and the palisade fencing around Mullabuoy Primary School.



3. Consultation Process

3.1 Initial Consultation Workshop and Desktop Research

A consultation workshop involving community representatives and residents was held on 22 March 2011 at the Lettershandoney Community House. This workshop encouraged the community to articulate their views regarding the village's strengths, weaknesses and aspirations. A subsequent village walkaround, site analysis and review of applicable policies and strategies provided a comprehensive platform from which the key aims and initiatives have been developed.

In particular, the community acknowledged their desire to develop a new purpose built Community Centre, the need for environmental improvements at key locations and their aspirations to upgrade the quality of the children's playground.

3.2 Second Consultation Workshop

Following the establishment of the draft aims and initiatives, a second consultation meeting was held on 18 April 2011 at the Lettershandoney Community House. This was well attended by the local community and key stakeholders and provided a clear steer on the development of the Action Plan. During this meeting, particular emphasis was placed on identifying the key initiatives which would bring about the greatest benefit to the village.

3.3 Statutory Agencies

Following the establishment of the draft aims and initiatives meetings took place with:

- Department of Regional Development; Roads Service
- Department of the Environment; Planning Service and Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)
- Department of Agriculture and Rural Development; Rivers Agency.

Consideration was given to initiatives relevant to each statutory agency. Where applicable, comments have been reflected throughout the initiatives contained within section five. Additional comments from these meetings can be found within the Appendix section of this report.



	EXISTING SETTLEMENT LIMIT
	EXISTING BUILDINGS
	SIGNIFICANT BUILDINGS
	PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT
	KEY OPPORTUNITY SITES
	HIGH QUALITY PUBLIC SPACE
	KEY STREETS
	EXISTING ROADS
	GATEWAY
	PEDESTRIAN/CYCLE CONNECTIONS
	PROPOSED LANDSCAPING
	BOUNDARY IMPROVEMENTS
	STREET TREE PLANTING
	WATER
	AMENITY OPEN SPACE
	WOODLAND / VEGETATION
	PARKING

4. Key Aims and Village Plan

Following the consultation process, five overarching aims were developed which guide the specific initiatives and ensure that the village develops in accordance with a shared strategic vision. These aims are as follows:

To assist in the understanding of the proposed initiatives, the adjacent plan and legend sets out the initiatives relevant to the physical development of Lettershandoney.

1. Enhance Community Facilities and Services
2. Upgrade the Sense of Arrival into the Village
3. Improve the Environmental Quality within Lettershandoney
4. Enhance Movement and Transport Links Throughout the Village
5. Enhance and Protect the Village Character Through Future Development



5. Village Initiatives

The following village initiatives set out various projects which collectively create the Action Plan for Lettershandoney. This includes a number of short, medium and long-term measures to address the varying needs of the village.

As previously stressed, the aims and initiatives should not be viewed as a finite 'blueprint plan' but collectively contribute to the future vision for the village and contain a degree of flexibility in order to respond to changes in circumstances

5.1 Enhance Community Facilities and Services

The Lettershandoney Community House is located in a residential unit in the heart of the village. The building comprises a reception with associated kitchen and toilet facilities, a small office and a well equipped but limited teaching and boardroom space on the first floor. The properties size and layout limits its use, and the absence of a lift to the first floor has restricted disabled access.

Despite these limitations, the Lettershandoney and District Development Group (LDDG) provides a variety of successful community based activities and events. These include, qualified social service advice, management of local and public council facilities, bulletin information, educational training and organised leisure activities.

With a full time Project Manager and part time volunteers, the Centre is perceived as a neutral venue and a positive asset for the community. However, existing limitations prevent LDDG from offering additional community services. Scope exists to improve the existing service provision and introduce new services to appropriately meet the needs of Lettershandoney's residents.

The following initiatives propose a series of projects, which collectively present a vision for the development of improved community services in the village.



5.1.1 Develop a new community centre

The Mullabuoy Centre, a temporary prefabricated unit, is located adjacent to the existing sports pitches at Lettershandoney Avenue. This facility is highly valued by residents of the village and the wider area, resulting in a high demand for its activities. It is important therefore, that activities at this Centre are both maintained and enhanced to support the community.

The Action Plan advocates that a feasibility study be undertaken to ascertain the most sustainable method of developing a new purpose built community centre, incorporating the functions of both the community house and the Mullabuoy Centre. This new Centre would ideally accommodate the following community provisions:

5.1.1.1 Indoor sports and recreation facilities

At present, the Mullabuoy Centre does not offer a robust solution for indoor sports and recreation activities, such as fitness clubs, dancing classes and local sports training facilities. Community consultation revealed that a successful children's kick-boxing class was suspended after the present centre was deemed unfit for purpose.

The development of a new community centre should include a hall to accommodate such activities for use by existing sports and leisure clubs which accommodate services for the young as well as the elderly. A purpose built facility would also encourage the potential establishment of new clubs and interest groups (see section 5.1.4).

5.1.1.2 Changing facilities

At present the changing facilities are also based within temporary units. New purpose built changing facilities should therefore be accommodated within the new community centre.

5.1.1.3 Outreach health clinic

Lettershandoney has no medical centre or doctor's surgery and as such there is a significant demand for outreach medical facilities within the village. NISRA statistics identify that Lettershandoney sits within a Super Output Area (SOA), where the number of older people is lower than the Northern Ireland average (12.8% compared with 17.6%), which may be related to the lack of health services available.

The Action Plan proposes that the new community centre includes provision for an outreach health clinic. This clinic should be well advertised and promoted within the local community to ensure its economic sustainability.

5.1.1.4 Showcase the local culture and history

Numerous artefacts and documented history exists in relation to the village. However, there is a concern that this rich history is not adequately portrayed within Lettershandoney. The new community centre should therefore include a suitable space to showcase the village's historical origins, providing existing and future generations with the opportunity to learn about and take pride in their area. Classes to promote Irish language and Ulster Scots could also be facilitated at the Centre.





5.1.2 Upgrade the multi use games area (MUGA)

The existing MUGA is of significant benefit to the younger residents within the community. This facility is open at all times, with the lighting and alarm system operated remotely, enabling the LDDG Project Manager to activate and control its hours of operation. Access to the facility can then be managed in accordance with agreeable times for local residents which also helps combat any anti-social behaviour.

At the time of writing, discussions were in progress to upgrade the MUGA surface to a 3G specification, which would enhance Lettershandoney's sporting profile and provide a valuable resource for youth groups within the wider community.



5.1.3 Upgrade the existing play park

The play park is considered a valuable asset to the area and is well used given its location immediately adjacent to the 'village green' and the Mullabuoy Primary School. Due to the regular use of the limited play equipment, the play park now appears worn and outdated.

At the time of writing, funding had been secured to upgrade this play park. Following the delivery of the new play park the Action Plan proposes that a review is undertaken to assess the potential introduction of further works to enhance this key space, this could include additional seating, attractive fencing and directional signage at strategic locations throughout the village.

5.1.4 Establish and support interest groups to raise village profile and pride

Through the development of the new sports provision associated with the proposed Community Centre (see 5.1.1) and the improvement works to the MUGA (see 5.1.2), the opportunity exists to establish additional sports clubs to make full use of the new facilities. This could be achieved through the development of additional clubs, taking particular care to attract women's groups and recreational provision for the elderly.

5.1.5 Review the potential to amalgamate the local primary school provision within Lettershandoney

The potential amalgamation of Mullabuoy Primary School with two other local primary schools on a site adjacent to Tamnaherin Chapel, raises concern for the population of Lettershandoney. The closure of Mullabuoy Primary School would undoubtedly have a negative impact on the community. Facilities at the existing school are deemed to be outdated, however capacity is high and expected to rise with the potential development of 100 additional houses. Residents value the Primary School as an outstanding asset and its relocation would result in an increased reliance on public transport.

The community should exercise their lobbying powers and a review should be undertaken by Derry City Council and the Department for Education and Learning to assess the feasibility of amalgamating the three schools in Lettershandoney. Redevelopment should take place on the existing school site and a section of the adjacent agricultural lands. Amalgamating the Primary School provision in Lettershandoney would ensure that this valuable asset is preserved and enhanced.

5.1.6 Explore the potential to develop a recycling centre within the village

For recycling needs the community has access to both a bottle bank and clothes bank centrally within the village. While these facilities are well utilised, their numbers are limited. Combined with the ongoing fly-tipping problem within the village, the community is keen to employ all necessary measures to help alleviate these issues. While a number of initiatives have been employed, such as educating young people and coordinating litter picking activities, these can only go so far in addressing this problem. The introduction of a purpose built household waste and recycling centre would provide the community with a full complement of recycling facilities to appropriately discard waste.

Although previous attempts to secure such a facility in the village have been unsuccessful, it is clear that the community demand for this service is still high. The Action Plan advocates that a new household waste and recycling centre be strategically located in or near to the village centre.



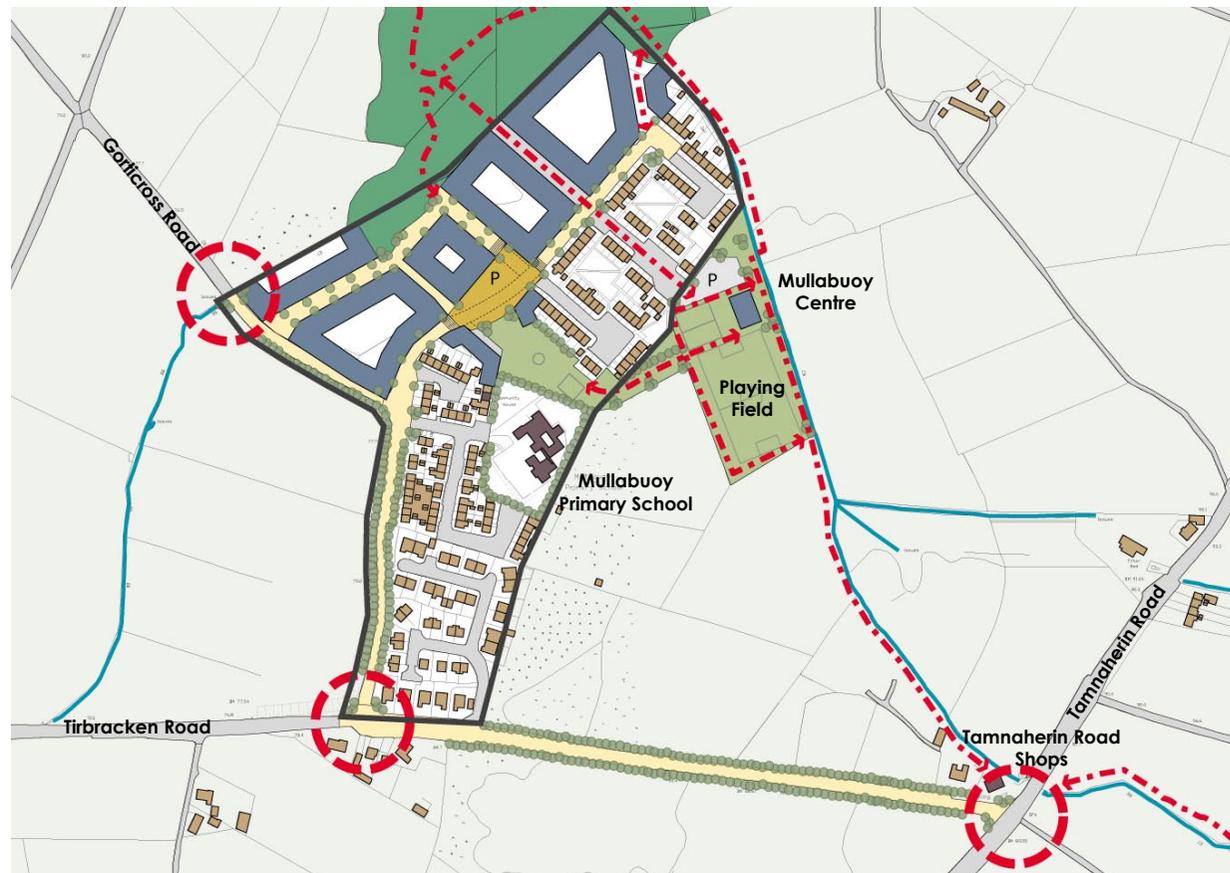
5.1.7 Establish a bus shelter in the village

As highlighted previously, the village is connected with Derry/Londonderry City Centre by Ulsterbus Service 152. While there is a bus stop in place at the junction of Gorticross Road and Lettershandoney Avenue, the community would aspire to see the introduction of a formal bus shelter in this location.



5.2 Upgrade the Sense of Arrival into the Village

The sense of arrival and first impressions of a village inform both residents and visitors of the character of place they are approaching. It is important for a village to consider this experience and make every effort to promote positive first impressions and a welcoming arrival. The following initiatives set out ways to enhance the existing sense of arrival into Lettershandoney.



5.2.1 Improve the environmental quality along approach routes

Approach routes and gateways are site specific interventions or spatial sequences which denote the point of arrival to a place. They can also help to define the village's boundaries as well as preparing users visually and mentally of their impending arrival.

The Action Plan advocates the introduction of environmental improvement works to three approach routes into Lettershandoney, as identified on the plan on page 22. Special design treatment should include landscaping, high quality surface materials, the installation of public art pieces and enhanced hedging and edging treatment.

Each of these treatments would help define the unique character of the area and reinforce the sense of arrival into Lettershandoney. In addition to this there are a number of site specific improvement works that should be undertaken to improve the environmental quality of these approach routes.



5.2.1.1 Tirbracken Road from Tamnaherin Road to Lettershandoney Avenue

Tirbracken Road is the main route used by residents to access the shop and post office, therefore treatment to upgrade fencing and hedging as well as foot and cycle paths should be implemented. Such improvement works would not only enhance the arrival experience but would also improve the setting for the attractive stone-built welcome signage at the junction with Lettershandoney Avenue.

The land immediately north of Tirbracken Road includes a large shed and a number of spoil heaps. Through consultation with the landowner and the developer, appropriate measures should be taken to remove or screen these unsightly elements from Tirbracken Road.

5.2.1.2 Lettershandoney Avenue from Tirbracken Road to Gorticross Road

Existing boundary treatment to the west of Lettershandoney Avenue is sparse and inconsistent. An upgrade of the footpath surface and boundary treatment, including new fencing and infill hedgerow planting, would greatly enhance the formality and environmental quality of this key route into the village.

A formal fence line with hedgerow planting and continuation of tree planting would also benefit residents living along Lettershandoney Avenue to the north of Gorticross Road. This would help deter fly-tipping and eliminate access for quad bikes to the temporarily vacant building lands.

5.2.1.3 Gorticross Road between identified gateway and Lettershandoney Avenue

Establishment of footpath facilities as well as upgrading fencing and hedgerows would greatly enhance the formality and attractiveness of this approach route. The upgrading of this section will become particularly relevant as the zoned residential land is developed.



5.2.2 Introduce and upgrade directional signage to the village

To guide visitors to a settlement, it is vital that the directional signage is well appointed at various key junctions around the village. Lettershandoney requires the establishment of quality directional signage at the junction of the main Belfast to Derry/Londonderry Road and Tamnaherin Road.

This signage must comply with Roads Service standards and as well as assisting visitors would also increase the profile of Lettershandoney within the surrounding area.

5.2.3 Establish signage at key gateways

Building upon the attractive welcome signage, already established by the community, at the gateway junction of Lettershandoney Avenue and Tirbracken Road, two additional gateway sites have been identified that would benefit from similar signage.

5.2.3.1 Tirbracken Road adjacent to Tamnaherin Road Shops

Appropriate welcome signage should be established at the Tirbracken Road, adjacent to Tamnaherin Road Shops. This signage would replace the standardised traffic engineered signs and should reflect established gateway signage. Roads Service recognise that signage of this nature can assist in reducing traffic speeds along approach routes.

This would be a welcomed addition, given the high number of pedestrians using the footpath along Tirbracken Road to the Tamnaherin Road Shops.

5.2.3.2 Gorticross Road

Similarly, welcome signage should also be established on Gorticross Road at the location identified on the adjacent plan.



5.2.4 Introduce directional signage throughout the village

In addition to gateway signage, scope also exists to improve directional signage to various destination points in and around the village. Bespoke, attractively designed and finished signs at key road side entrances and within the village centre would ensure that visitors feel welcomed and are aware of the key sites within the village.

A combination of finger posts and interpretive signs and panels will highlight the proposed network of walking routes within Lettershandoney (see section 5.4) and key destination sites such as Mullabuoy School, the Community House and the sports pitches



5.3 Improve the Environmental Quality within Lettershandoney

The overall physical appearance of a village directly affects the value placed on it by residents and visitors alike. In order to ensure Lettershandoney is seen as an attractive and positive place to live, work and visit, the environment should be evaluated and enhanced where necessary. The initiatives set out below outline key environmental improvement works proposed to increase the attractiveness of Lettershandoney.

5.3.1 Upgrade existing boundary treatment

As identified within the analysis section of this report, there are at present many instances of low quality boundary treatment in and around the centre of Lettershandoney. Existing boundaries include a mixture of palisade, paladin, concrete posts and wire, hoop top railings, agricultural livestock fencing and low quality hedges. This inappropriate boundary treatment has a negative influence on the village character and may contribute to the excessive fly-tipping and misuse of vacant land in particular locations.

A review of all boundary treatment should be carried out in consultation with landowners to develop a consistent treatment for the village. This review should seek to address security issues and enhance the visual appearance and environmental quality throughout the village.

It is envisaged that boundary treatment where possible should be removed and if required should predominantly comprise of hedging, street tree planting and appropriate fencing. In addition, the following key sites have been identified for particular improvement works.

5.3.1.1 Security fence along school boundary

While the palisade security fencing around Mullabuoy Primary School has been effective in securing the school site, its physical appearance is considered inappropriate within a village setting. The Action Plan advocates that this fencing is replaced with a paladin boundary treatment as demonstrated at the gateway to the School.

Paladin fencing is equally as secure as palisade, however the lightweight fencing panels have a reduced visual impact. It is considered that this treatment would significantly improve the character of this area and in turn improve public perceptions of the village.

5.3.1.2 Retaining wall along Lettershandoney Avenue

Opposite the Gorticross Road junction, parking bays are flanked by an unsightly retaining wall, which has been subject to repeated attacks of graffiti. As a preventative measure, the use of low maintenance climbing plants, would not only soften the large expanse of wall but would also provide seasonal colour and interest at this location.





5.3.2 Develop a high quality village square

The Action Plan advocates the development of public realm improvements to the central section of Lettershandoney adjacent to the 'village green'. Branded as the village Square, the introduction of this space would enable a formal 'village centre' to be established.

While modest in size, a new usable space within the centre of the village would enable residents of Lettershandoney to hold small events and meet socially. These could include local cultural and seasonal events such as the Christmas Tree light switch-on. Retail provision, to replace the existing temporary facility, could also be incorporated as part of the new development fronting on to this public space.

Subject to agreement with Roads Service, local residents and businesses, vehicular movement through the village square could be restricted or limited at particular times of the year to cater for village events. It is also envisaged that this space would benefit from adjacent mixed use development with active frontage providing passive surveillance and an increased sense of safety and security (see section 5.5.2).

With regard to the character and finish of this space, it is advocated that high quality surface materials are proposed throughout with appropriate street tree planting. These improvement works would also provide the opportunity to review the quality of lighting and street furniture within this area.

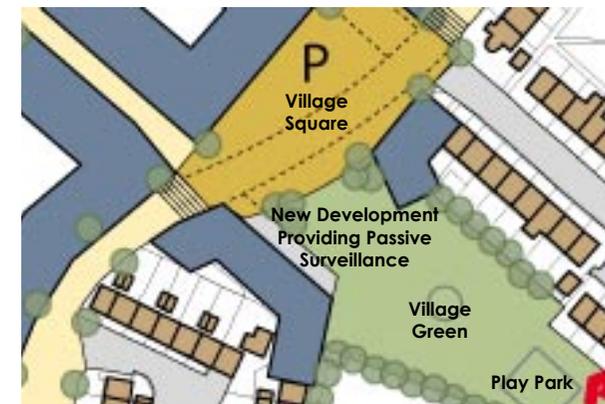
Consideration should be given to bespoke street furniture designs that contribute to the village's overall character and identity.

Building on LDDG's efforts to engage residents in cross community cohesive activities, an event space would be vital to continue and develop this good practice within the community and its hinterland.



5.3.3 Ensure high quality visual and pedestrian connections between the proposed village square and village green

Through redevelopment associated with the new village square, opportunities exist to improve connectivity between these two public spaces, while ensuring that new development fronts onto both spaces.





5.3.4 Carry out environmental improvement works to the village green

Drawing on local demand and the successful community initiative to develop a village green, the Action Plan proposes the installation of feature lighting to the existing public art piece, as well as public realm lighting to the overall space. This would not only enhance the quality of the sculpture but also improve safety and security in the area after dark.

The village green is situated close to the children's playground. These two key public spaces are dissected by a footpath with a boundary fence on either side. The Action Plan proposes that as the playground is upgraded (see section 5.1.3) a gated, 1.2m high, hoop top railing is installed around the park to protect it from dog fouling.

The separation of these two spaces should be minimised to emphasise connectivity and establish one large, attractive public space. Ownership delineation can be established through subtle surface treatment while the removal of barriers will encourage use of the entire space.

5.3.5 Enhance corner plots throughout residential areas

Many of the residential developments throughout Lettershandoney include a series of 'corner plots', square parcels of amenity land typically associated with the gable ends of two residential terraces. As the community in the surrounding houses have in part taken ownership of these spaces, a number of different treatments are evident, with no overarching unifying theme or character. A few plots have been purchased and amalgamated with adjacent houses. These plots have been utilised as additional paved areas or in some cases as house extensions, while others have been cordoned off with railings and attractively planted with grass, bulbs and trees.

A strategic overview of these spaces should be undertaken to inform an appropriate method of collectively enhancing these plots for the betterment of the village. Environmental improvement works including planting with seating and sculptural elements could be one such initiative. Varying bulb and tree species should be selected for each street or cul-de-sac to strengthen its identity.





5.4 Enhance Movement and Transport Links Throughout the Village

Transport links are vital to maintain viable connection between the village and its hinterland. Bus routes should be regular and convenient for commuting as well as servicing the needs of the elderly and school children. Walking and cycling should also be encouraged to promote healthy lifestyles. The following initiatives identify projects which once delivered, will enhance the provision of these services in Lettershandoney.

5.4.1 Establish links to the national cycle network

Lettershandoney is situated relatively close to the twenty-three mile, circular, Faughan Valley Cycleway (Route 2), which skirts around the east of Slievebuck. This route takes in the attractive Ness Wood and Ballygroll Ancient Monuments.



To improve the cycling provision in and around Lettershandoney, it would be vital to review these linking routes and where feasible introduce cycle lanes and signage as well as information leaflets to promote their use.

Bicycle parking stands should also be introduced as part of the street furniture suite incorporated into the village square.



5.4.2 Improve evening bus services to Derry/Londonderry

Daytime Ulsterbus Service 152 runs eight regular trips to Derry/Londonderry from Lettershandoney, which terminate at 18.17. There are eight return services back from Derry/Londonderry to Lettershandoney, with the last service leaving Derry/Londonderry at 17.40.

To encourage residents to take up evening work in the city, or to attend medical, educational or leisure facilities, the introduction of a later service would be beneficial to the village. Consultation with Translink should be initiated to assess the feasibility of additional services being introduced.

5.4.3 Upgrade link between the Mullabuoy Centre and the village green

Further to the proposed redevelopment of the Mullabuoy Centre (see section 1.1), works should be undertaken to establish a formal pedestrian link between this important community facility and the village green. This link currently follows an informal route which runs to the side of private residential properties.



5.4.4 Create a shared pedestrian and cycle path along Tirbracken Road

High volumes of pedestrians use the route between the village centre and the Tamnaherin Road Shops at the junction of Tirbracken Road and Tamnaherin Road. This busy pedestrian route would benefit from widening to allow a shared pedestrian and cycle path, with appropriate lighting to improve safety.



5.4.5 Create walking links to adjacent woodland

Beyond the proposed development site to the north of the village there is a cluster of woodland distinct to this area. Scope exists to establish a wildlife and nature trail for the benefit of the local school and residents. Interpretation boards should be established to inform and instill community pride in this delicate environment.



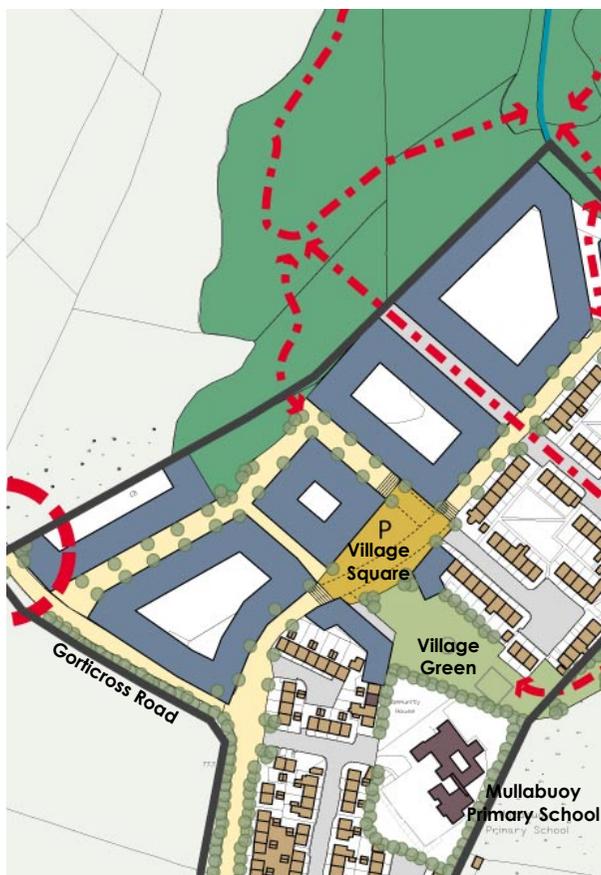
5.4.6 Establish a riverside walk to Tamnaherin Road shops

Given the high demand for safe pedestrian connections to the Tamnaherin Road Shops, the Action Plan supports the implementation of a riverside walk extending from the Mullabuoy Centre to this retail area. This walkway would provide an attractive, circular walking route for residents, free from traffic and encouraging positive connections with the rural environment.

It would also be possible to extend this off road walking route from the Tamnaherin Road Shops east towards the Old Cross Graveyard and adjacent Pub, offering attractive views back across the valley.



5.5 Enhance and Protect the Village Character Through Future Development



Lettershandoney is situated in a rich rural environment in prime commuting distance to Derry/Londonderry with the potential to be a destination for those in the City looking for an affordable place to live. With a wealth of history and community initiatives, Lettershandoney village has recently attracted a local developer to deliver thirty-eight homes at Oeghill Park, fronting Tirbracken Road.

A further one hundred homes are planned on the large site to the north-west of Lettershandoney Avenue. The future development of this prominent site would significantly benefit the local community and would greatly enhance the village character.

5.5.1 Ensure active frontage onto streets and public spaces

The development of this prominent site would have obvious benefits to the village. In the short term, a sign board advertising future development for this site would provide a vision and encouragement to prospective buyers.

As this site develops, it is essential that new development fronts onto streets and public spaces, to ensure passive surveillance and create safe streets and spaces. Alongside the obvious housing demand, further opportunities exist for additional health, retail, leisure, and education uses. This will ensure a strong village heart is formed and help instill community pride and encourage future investment.

5.5.2 Develop mixed tenure housing

With an increasing elderly population in the village, there is a local demand for housing which caters for this age group. In addition, demand exists for disabled, single occupancy and family housing. In order to meet this demand, any new housing scheme must provide mixed tenure housing, incorporating both affordable and social housing elements.

Following the LDDG Audit 2009 it was clear that high proportions of residents (79%) have lived in the village for over twenty-five years. Therefore the provision for elderly, single occupancy and family housing will only increase over time.

5.5.3 Explore the potential to develop new frontage overlooking the village green

As noted in 5.3.3 opportunities to connect the village square and village green, through sensitive redevelopment, will create new frontage overlooking the village green. This will enhance the environmental quality and perception of safety throughout this important public space.



5.5.3 Relocate sewage pumping station

Opportunities should be explored to relocate the sewage pumping station, situated within the zoned land to the north west of Lettershandoney Avenue. Relocation of this infrastructure to a more suitable site, outside the village, would provide additional development space within the zoned lands.

Delivery of this initiative should be co-ordinated and facilitated by Northern Ireland Water and the local developer.



Ness Country Park
Ness Wood

Caring for the Environment NIEA

6. Action Plan

Having identified the range of aims and initiatives for Lettershandoney, it is important to identify how they are prioritised. Potential implementation of proposals will require the input of various organisations and individuals from the public, private and community sectors. Only through joined up thinking and partnership working will it be possible to realise the shared vision for Lettershandoney.

At the time of writing, while Northern Ireland is slowly beginning to recover from a global economic recession, there are still spending cutbacks in both the public and private sectors. Consequently, funding for capital projects in the short-term will be limited.

It is, therefore, even more important to ensure that any available funding is targeted so that Lettershandoney achieves the maximum economic, environmental, physical and social benefit from each initiative. It will also be important to identify a variety of sources of funding, relevant to the specific initiative proposed.

As the basis for managing this process, the Action Plan tabulates each potential initiative. In addition it identifies the priority of each initiative, based on demand and the likely impact it will have on the village. This priority will be defined as short, medium and long-term. Short-term projects will refer to those that the community would like to see progressed within one to five calendar years. Medium-term refers to any initiative which could be taken forward and realised within five to ten years, while long-term aspirations will be delivered over the next ten to fifteen years.

While these timeframes indicate the agreed prioritisation of projects set out within the Action Plan, it will be essential to consider the time-restraints associated with specific funding streams, particularly those with imminent deadlines. The Action Plan table also identifies the stakeholders whose involvement in the relevant initiative would be necessary.

It is important to note that the following Action Plan table should be used as a live document to ensure progress is monitored regularly and updated accordingly. Invariably, new initiatives and opportunities will arise, and these should be assessed against the key aims identified and added to the Action Plan table where appropriate. It will be the responsibility of Lettershandoney and District Development Group to undertake this regular review, evaluate progress and identify which projects future resources should focus upon.

			Regeneration Initiative	Initiate Discussions	Timeframe for Delivery	Potential Partners	Stakeholders / Potential Funders
1. Enhance Community Facilities and Services	1.1 Develop a new community centre	1.1.1	Indoor sports and recreation facilities	S	S	DCC, SNI	DCC, LDDG, PS, RDP, SNI
		1.1.2	Changing facilities	M	M	DCC, SNI	DCC, LDDG, PS, RDP, SNI
		1.1.3	Outreach health clinic	S	M	WHSCT	DCC, LDDG, WHSCT
		1.1.4	Showcase the local culture and history	S	S	LDDG	DCC, LDDG, NITB, Priv
	1.2	Upgrade the multi use games area (MUGA)	S	S	DCC, SNI	DCC, LDDG, PS, SNI	
	1.3	Upgrade the existing play park	S	S	DCC, LDDG	DCC, LDDG, RDP	
	1.4	Establish and support interest groups to raise village profile and pride	S	S	DCC, LDDG	DCC, LDDG	
	1.5	Review the potential to amalgamate the local primary school provision within Lettershandoney	S	M	DCC, WELB	DCC, LDDG, WELB	
	1.6	Explore the potential to develop a recycling centre within the village	M	M	DCC	DCC, LDDG, Priv, PS, RS	
	1.7	Establish a bus shelter in the village	S	S	Tran	DCC, LDDG, Tran, RS	
2. Upgrade the Sense of Arrival into the Village	2.1 Improve the environmental quality along approach routes	2.1.1	Tirbracken Road from Tamnaherin Road to Lettershandoney Avenue	S	S	DCC, RS	DCC, LDDG, Priv, RDP, RS
		2.1.2	Lettershandoney Avenue from Tirbracken Road to Gorticross Road	M	M	DCC, RS	DCC, LDDG, Priv, RDP, RS
		2.1.3	Gorticross Road between identified gateway and Lettershandoney Avenue	M	M	DCC, RS	DCC, LDDG, Priv, RDP, RS
	2.2	Introduce and upgrade directional signage to the village	S	S	RS	DCC, LDDG, Priv, PS, RDP, RS	
	2.3 Establish signage at key gateways	2.3.1	Tirbracken Road adjacent to Tamnaherin Road Shops	S	S	DCC	AC, DCC, LDDG, PS, RDP, RS
		2.3.2	Gorticross Road	M	M	DCC	AC, DCC, LDDG, PS, RDP, RS
	2.4	Introduce directional signage throughout the village	S	S	DCC	DCC, LDDG, PS, RDP, RS	

Regeneration Initiative			Initiate Discussions	Timeframe for Delivery	Potential Partners	Stakeholders / Potential Funders
3. Improve the Environmental Quality within Lettershandoney	3.1 Upgrade existing boundary treatment	3.1.1 Security fence along School boundary	S	S	WELB	DCC, LDDG, NIEA, PSNI, RDP, WELB
		3.1.2 Retaining wall along Lettershandoney Avenue	S	S	DCC, NIHE	DCC, LDDG, NIHE, Priv, PS, RDP, RS
	3.2	Develop a high quality village square	M	M	DCC, RS	AC, DCC, LDDG, NIHE, Priv, RDP, RS
	3.3	Ensure high quality visual and pedestrian connections between the proposed village square and village green	M	M	DCC, NIHE, RS	DCC, LDDG, NIHE, Priv, PS, PSNI, RDP, RS
	3.4	Carry out environmental improvement works to the village green	S	S	DCC, NIHE	AC, DCC, LDDG, NIHE, PS, PSNI, RDP
	3.5	Enhance corner plots throughout residential areas	S	S	NIHE	DCC, LDDG, NIHE, Priv, PS, RDP, RS
4. Enhance Movement and Transport Links throughout the Village	4.1	Establish links to the national cycle network	M	M	RS, Sus	DCC, HTH, LDDG, NITB, RS, Sus
	4.2	Improve evening bus services to Derry/Londonderry	S	M	Tran	DCC, LDDG, Tran
	4.3	Upgrade link between the Mullabuoy Centre and the village green	S	M	DCC, NIHE	DCC, LDDG, NIHE, Priv, PS, PSNI, RDP, RS
	4.4	Create a shared pedestrian and cyclepath along Tirbracken Road	S	S	RS, Sus	DCC, HTH, LDDG, RS, Sus
	4.5	Create walking links to adjacent woodland	M	M	DCC, HTH, CAAN	DCC, HTH, LDDG, NIEA, NITB, Priv, CAAN
	4.6	Establish a riverside walk to Tamnaherin Road Shops	M	M	DCC, HTH, CAAN	DCC, HTH, LDDG, NITB, Priv, RA, CAAN
5. Enhance and Protect the Village Character Through Future Development	5.1	Ensure active frontage onto streets and public spaces	S	M	NIHE, Priv	DCC, LDDG, NIHE, PS, RS
	5.2	Develop mixed tenure, affordable housing	M	L	NIHE, Priv	DCC, LDDG, NIHE, Priv, PS
	5.3	Explore the potential to develop new frontage overlooking the village green	M	L	NIHE, Priv	DCC, LDDG, NIHE, PS, RS
	5.4	Relocate pumping station	M	L	NIW	DCC, LDDG, NIEA, NIW

Timeframe
S= Short (1- 5 yrs)
M = Medium (5 - 10 yrs)
L = Long (10 - 15 yrs)

Delivery Agents, Funders and Stakeholders:
AC Arts Council of Northern Ireland
CAAN Countryside Access and Activities Network
DCC Derry City Council
HTH Highway to Health
LDDG Lettershandoney and District Development Group

NIEA Northern Ireland Environment Agency
NIHE Northern Ireland Housing Executive
NITB Northern Ireland Tourist Board
NIW Northern Ireland Water
Priv Private Sector
PS Planning Service

PSNI Police Service Northern Ireland
RA Rivers Agency
RDP Rural Development Programme
RS Roads Service
WELB Western Education and Library Board
WHSC Western Health and Social Care Trust

SNI Sport Northern Ireland
Sus Sustrans
Tran Translink

7. Conclusion

The Strategic Vision and Action Plan for the village of Lettershandoney sets out an ambitious plan for the future, representative of the hopes and aspirations of its residents. While some of its projects are significant in scale, others are much smaller but of no lesser importance. By capitalising more fully on the village's rural setting and strong community spirit, Lettershandoney has significant potential to enhance itself for the existing and future residents. The future of Lettershandoney lies in the hands of many and key to the success of this Action Plan will be a collaborative approach to ensure it's delivery.

8. Appendix

Statutory Consultation Meeting Notes

		Regeneration Initiative		Comments
1. Enhance Community Facilities and Services	1.1 Develop a new community centre	1.1.1	Indoor sports and recreation facilities	RS: N/A PS: N/A NIEA: N/A RA: N/A
		1.1.2	Changing facilities	RS: N/A PS: N/A NIEA: N/A RA: N/A
		1.1.3	Outreach health clinic	RS: N/A PS: N/A NIEA: N/A RA: N/A
		1.1.4	Showcase the local culture and history	RS: N/A PS: N/A NIEA: A wooden statue was found in Lettershandoney, embedded in peat in 1978. This statue dates back to the 16/17th century and is now in Derry Museum. Reference to this could be included in the museum. RA: N/A
	1.2	Upgrade the multi-use games area (MUGA)	RS: N/A PS: N/A NIEA: N/A RA: N/A	
	1.3	Upgrade the existing play park	RS: N/A PS: N/A NIEA: N/A RA: N/A	
	1.4	Establish and support interest groups to raise village profile and pride	RS: N/A PS: N/A NIEA: N/A RA: N/A	
	1.5	Review the potential to amalgamate the local primary school provision within Lettershandoney	RS: N/A PS: N/A NIEA: N/A RA: N/A	
	1.6	Explore the potential to develop a recycling centre within the village	RS: N/A PS: N/A NIEA: N/A RA: N/A	
	1.7	Establish a bus shelter in the village	RS: Ensure works are to RS adoptable standards. PS: N/A NIEA: N/A RA: N/A	

Regeneration Initiative				Comments	
2. Upgrade the Sense of Arrival into the Village	2.1 Improve the environmental quality along approach routes	2.1.1	Tirbracken Road from Tamnaherin Road to Lettershandoney Avenue	RS: N/A PS: N/A NIEA: N/A RA: N/A	
		2.1.2	Lettershandoney Avenue from Tirbracken Road to Gorticross Road		
		2.1.3	Gorticross Road between identified gateway and Lettershandoney Avenue		
		2.2	Introduce and upgrade directional signage to the village		RS: RS will take a look at the direction signage to Lettershandoney, should there be a noticeable 'gap' they will re-order the signs for fitting. PS: N/A NIEA: N/A RA: N/A
	2.3 Establish signage at key gateways	2.3.1	Tirbracken Road adjacent to Tamnaherin Road Shops		RS: It will be important to ensure appropriate locations for signage are found which do not impact site lines. TAS approval would be required. PS: N/A NIEA: N/A RA: N/A
		2.3.2	Gorticross Road		
		2.4	Introduce directional signage throughout the village		RS: RS would not typically introduce directional signage for sites within a village such as the primary school. Such signage would need to be developed as pedestrian signage by the Council. However, if a site such as the school receives a high number of visitors, for example the site is used for evening classes, the school can apply to RS for the introduction of such signage. PS: N/A NIEA: N/A RA: N/A

RS = Roads Service
PS = Planning Service
NIEA = Northern Ireland Environment Agency
RA = Rivers Agency

		Regeneration Initiative		Comments
3. Improve the Environmental Quality within Lettershandoney	3.1 Upgrade existing boundary treatment	3.1.1	Security fence along school boundary	RS: N/A PS: N/A NIEA: N/A RA: N/A
		3.1.2	Retaining wall along Lettershandoney Avenue	
		3.2	Develop a high quality village square	RS: RS would review this design through the planning process. The introduction of a change in the surfacing to the carriage way and the introduction of 'pedestrian friendly' design would need to be reviewed, but as this is not a through road it could be a preferable solution. PS: N/A NIEA: N/A RA: N/A
		3.3	Ensure high quality visual and pedestrian connections between the proposed village square and village green	RS: N/A PS: N/A NIEA: N/A RA: N/A
		3.4	Carry out environmental improvement works to the village green	
		3.5	Enhance corner plots throughout residential areas	RS: Ensure the design does not impact surrounding roads. PS: N/A NIEA: N/A RA: N/A
4. Enhance Movement and Transport Links throughout the Village		4.1	Establish links to the national cycle network	RS: Work with Sustrans would be required. PS: N/A NIEA: N/A RA: N/A
		4.2	Improve evening bus services to Derry/Londonderry	RS: N/A PS: N/A NIEA: N/A RA: N/A
		4.3	Upgrade link between the Mullabuoy Centre and the village green	
		4.4	Create a shared pedestrian and cyclepath along Tirbracken Road	RS: Work with Sustrans would be required. PS: N/A NIEA: N/A RA: N/A
		4.5	Create walking links to adjacent woodland	RS: N/A PS: N/A NIEA: N/A RA: N/A
		4.6	Establish a riverside walk to Tamnaherin Road Shops	RS: N/A PS: N/A NIEA: N/A RA: Flood Plains area associated with this river and therefore any works undertaken need to be considerate of this. Any proposed works and development of existing works within a designated flood plain, may require a flood risk assessment and potential mitigation measures as part of the development.

Regeneration Initiative			Comments
5. Enhance and Protect the Village Character Through Future Development	5.1	Ensure active frontage onto streets and public spaces	RS: N/A PS: N/A NIEA: N/A RA: N/A
	5.2	Develop mixed tenure, affordable housing	RS: The development of large scale housing would require a traffic Impact Assessment. At this point it could be possible to look for planning gain to give something to the community. PS: N/A NIEA: N/A RA: N/A
	5.3	Explore the potential to develop new frontage overlooking the village green	RS: N/A PS: N/A NIEA: N/A RA: N/A
	5.4	Relocate pumping station	RS: N/A PS: N/A NIEA: N/A RA: N/A

RS = Roads Service
PS = Planning Service
NIEA = Northern Ireland Environment Agency
RA = Rivers Agency

LETTERSHANDONEY Strategic Vision and Action Plan
August 2011

the **paulhogarth** company