

Town Action Plan Bellshill



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Contents

Introduction	5	Movement & Active Travel	26
SECTION 1: The Scale of the Challenge and Key Trends	7	Built Heritage & Place	28
SECTION 2: Key Considerations for Bellshill	13	Transition to Net Zero	31
A High Street for Everyone.....	14	Other Considerations	32
A Vision for our Towns	15	SECTION 3: Bellshill Town Action Plan	33
The Vision for Bellshill	17	Town Action Plan Proposals	34
Town and Community Hubs	19	The Town Action Plan Proposals Map	35
Economic Prosperity & Stability	21	Strategic Alignment	36
Town Centre Living	23		





LIVE LEARN WORK INVEST VISIT

Introduction

This is North Lanarkshire. This is the place to **Live, Learn, Work, Invest** and **Visit**. This is our vision.

We have come a long way. One of the fastest growing economies in Scotland. The most ambitious council housebuilding programme in the country. Record levels of infrastructure investment and dozens of new schools. These are just a few examples.

The Plan for North Lanarkshire, approved in 2019, offered a clear way forward. It offered a shared ambition for inclusive growth and prosperity for all and we are delivering on that ambition.

We're making huge progress, with investment and development happening in all our towns and communities.

But what comes next? How do we deal with the undoubted challenges that remain, like unacceptably high levels of deprivation and child poverty, in-work poverty and areas of inequality across communities? How do we become the agents of change for towns and communities to ensure they have a sustainable future in the face of declining revenue budgets?

This vision for North Lanarkshire, as the place to Live, Learn, Work, Invest and Visit is reflected in the **Town Action Plan for Bellshill** which seeks to identify site specific proposals to deliver the concepts set out in the vision.

The Town Action Plans been divided into three sections as follows:

Section 1: The scale of the challenge facing North Lanarkshire and the key trends which are impacting on North Lanarkshire's Town Centres.

Section 2: The key issues and opportunities which have helped formulate proposals outlined in the Town Action Plan for Bellshill.

Section 3: The Town Action Plan Proposals.



Section 1: The Scale of the Challenge and Key Trends



Key Trends

The following highlights the potential impact of economic, demographic, technological and social trends on our towns.

RETAILING

Demand for UK retail space on our high street is now at its lowest since 2007, with a move toward online retail as well as prime mixed-use locations (such as Silverburn and Braehead) offering retail, leisure, entertainment and amenities, whilst serving vibrant night-time economies. Our town centres are highly vulnerable to weak footfall with a decline in retail sales across Scotland of 6.2% since 2021 alone (following year on year drops over the last decade).

The inevitable reality is that fewer physical stores will be present on the high streets of the future and that the role of those remaining stores will need to evolve. On its current trajectory, it is estimated that physical retail sales across our towns will fall by a further 35% over the next five years with a growing reliance on convenience and discount retailers paying lower rents. We will see consumers with lower disposable income and limited access to higher end retail. North Lanarkshire in particular will be highly susceptible to this trend where our towns are competing with bigger centres such as Glasgow and Edinburgh for footfall and retail spending.

Both large and small scale operators also continue to struggle to adapt to the growth in online shopping. UK consumers spend more online than any other European country – accounting for 18% of all retail sales. It is projected that 35% of sales within the next few years will be online..

Store-based profit margins have more than halved over the last decade as consecutive rises in business rates, the national living wage, the national minimum wage and relative occupancy costs spiral upwards.



LIVING

North Lanarkshire is home to over 341,000 people living in more than 154,000 homes. The Council is Scotland's largest local authority landlord, owning and managing more than 36,000 homes with a further 5,000 new affordable homes by 2035.

Forecasts predict that the number of households will rise by 1.5% (2,300) between now and 2028. However, the local development plan promotes sufficient land for more than 21,000 homes across North Lanarkshire.

Of our 154,000 homes, only circa. 1,500 - or just under 1% - are located within town centres with over half of these built before 1919 and likely to require significant future repair and maintenance. There is, however, significant opportunity for residential development to replace the contraction in retail. This is a key way of helping to develop footfall within our town centres and, in turn, creating a more viable (although reduced) retail and commercial offer.



POPULATION

North Lanarkshire is currently home to around 6.3% of Scotland's total population. However, the number of deaths has exceeded the number of births over the last three years although it is forecast that North Lanarkshire's total population will increase by 0.3% between 2018-28 due primarily as a result of net inward migration. In contrast, the population of Scotland over the same time period is anticipated to grow by 1.8%, demonstrating that North Lanarkshire is still failing in attracting people to come and live here.

It is well established that economic growth is closely linked to population growth. As such, to help make North Lanarkshire a more prosperous place, it is essential that we provide the right type of housing and environment that will make this a place where people already living in, or moving to or within Scotland, want to relocate.



DEMOGRAPHICS

Children and young people aged 0-15 make up almost one fifth of North Lanarkshire's population (18%) and this is forecast to decrease to almost 16% by 2028.

Almost two thirds (64%) of North Lanarkshire's population are of working age (16-64 year olds). This is forecast to continue to decline in the long-term.

The older adult population (aged 65+) accounts for 18% of North Lanarkshire's total population. This is expected to increase so that, by 2028, one in five (20%) of people living in North Lanarkshire will be aged 65+.

This demographic change will have an impact. Tax income is likely to fall because there will be fewer people of working age, and care responsibilities will increase. It is essential that towns are designed to ensure that people are able to live safely in their own homes for as long as possible, homes are adaptable and flexible and local services accessible.



CONNECTIVITY

We need to put transport and digital infrastructure in place to ensure residents can access employment and leisure as well as online opportunities and services.

13.2% of Scotland's motorway network is located in North Lanarkshire, a place which has excellent rail links to Glasgow and Edinburgh as well as three of Scotland's busiest passenger train stations (Motherwell, Croy and Airdrie).

While transport links in and out of North Lanarkshire are excellent, there are relatively poor transport connections within the local authority area. The development of the Pan Lanarkshire Orbital Transport Corridor linking the M80, M8 and M74 will in part address this issue, but the visions need to ensure that our towns are designed as accessible and well-connected places.

Road and rail use has grown significantly over recent years but the number of bus journeys has declined by approximately 23% which is significantly higher than the Scottish average of a 5% decline. Given that only

37% of households earning less than £10,000 can access a private car compared to 97% of those who earn more than £40,000, public transport is a key issue for the people of North Lanarkshire.

Whilst a national conversation about the shape of future public transport is required, particularly in terms of cost, ticketing, coverage and responsiveness, the Council needs to work with partners to identify local gaps and how they can be filled through, for example, community transportation and active travel. This was a key recommendation of the North Lanarkshire Fairness Commission and will be subject to discussion as part of the development of the emerging Local Transport Strategy for North Lanarkshire.

The ban on the sale of new petrol or diesel cars after 2030, and a requirement for them to be off the road by 2040, will also require significant investment in infrastructure to support a shift in how we fuel our private vehicles e.g. electric vehicle charging points within car park's and on streets and the development of EV Hubs (fast charge sites) along key transport corridors and within town centres.



DIGITAL ECONOMY

86% of UK households use the internet on a daily basis and it is anticipated that this use will continue to grow and drive demand for faster and better quality access.

It is clear that good quality internet access will be essential for future business development and will underpin many areas of employment.

Whilst 98% of homes have access to superfast broadband, the uptake of this is relatively low due to the cost of access. The Council has secured a digital partner, Commsworld, to take this investment further, expand opportunity for full-fibre and ultra-fast broadband and develop more affordable access for all. This will include delivery of these digital connections as part of the planned development and regeneration works across North Lanarkshire's town centres.

THE LOW CARBON AGENDA

A Scottish target of net zero for all greenhouse gas emissions has been set for 2045. However, in recognition of the importance of climate change, the council declared a climate emergency in 2019, committing it to reduce council carbon emissions to net zero by 2030.

In particular, new zero carbon policy and legislation will inform the way we design and build new housing, or refurbish existing housing stock, towards zero carbon. This includes:

- ensuring all new housing uses renewable or low carbon heating systems from 2024;
- ensuring all private rented housing achieve an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Rating of Band C or above by 2030;
- ensuring all socially rented housing achieve an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Rating of Band B or above by 2032; and
- developing an undertaking, where financially and technically viable, to ensure all housing is net zero carbon by 2045.



INFRASTRUCTURE

New development within our town centres could in part be constrained by existing infrastructure such as energy, water and sewerage.

There is a need for early engagement with utility providers to identify issues of capacity within existing networks to ensure that the infrastructure to support development within our town centres is available at the right time and the right cost.





Section 2: Key Considerations for Bellshill



A High Street for Everyone

A People Centred Approach

Our high streets offer a rich and authentic environment that for generations has been the backdrop to the ceremonies and memorable events of our community. Furthermore, the health of our town centre reflect the health of our wider community or society. An energised town centre that is open to all and where there is opportunity for improvement, will help enrich the lives of our residents. It is critical that we achieve a perception shift in our communities and stakeholders and reposition the High Street at the heart of the community. In doing so we are seeking to develop a better town centre where the requirements of all, regardless of age, ability or wealth, are accommodated.

The following section outlines the key issues and opportunities which have helped drive forward the development of the Town Action Plan for Bellshill. These key drivers have been identified from:

- the findings which were outlined in The Town Centre Visions and Town & Community Hub plans which were approved by Council in 2021 (as part of the Council's 'The Place: The Vision' strategy) following an extensive programme of public consultation;
- desktop research to assess the key challenges, issues and opportunities which need to be addressed or taken forward to help support the transformational change of Bellshill Town Centre;

- the public workshop and engagement work including Community Board briefings that has allowed the local community to contribute ideas for proposed actions and bring forward proposals for change.





A Vision for our Towns

Some of our town centres face difficulties. Built around a twentieth century model of primary retail, they have been challenged by the rise of online and out-of-town shopping.

How do towns survive as retail gradually moves away and how can the council reimagine our towns?

The answer is to reposition town centres as mixed-use spaces. Only by shifting the focus from retail-driven town centres to a broader mix of investment, and promoting town centre living, can our towns have a sustainable future.

The council can bring about this change by positioning local services in towns and communities. By doing so, local people can have direct access to services they need and staff can be closer to the communities they work in.

This is about more than niche retail, developing the evening economy or increasing leisure opportunities. These must be living towns, with a much stronger focus on newbuild housing and residential conversion and the repurposing and reuse of our existing buildings in order to help address the decline of the built environment.

Town Action Plan Bellshill

Crucially, the Town Visions join together with Town and Community Hubs and our Country Parks for the Future programmes to create a coherent, vibrant and sustainable future for North Lanarkshire.

The Town Visions highlight proposals for each town and how each town could function in the future. These recognise that one size does not fit all. Each of the towns in North Lanarkshire has its own challenges and opportunities and its own history and heritage.

A number of common themes have emerged in the development of these prospectuses. For example, there is a need for residential development which uses land no longer required for traditional retailing. Improving town centre access and active travel and examining the needs of an older population living longer, are also key considerations.

The council can't do this alone.

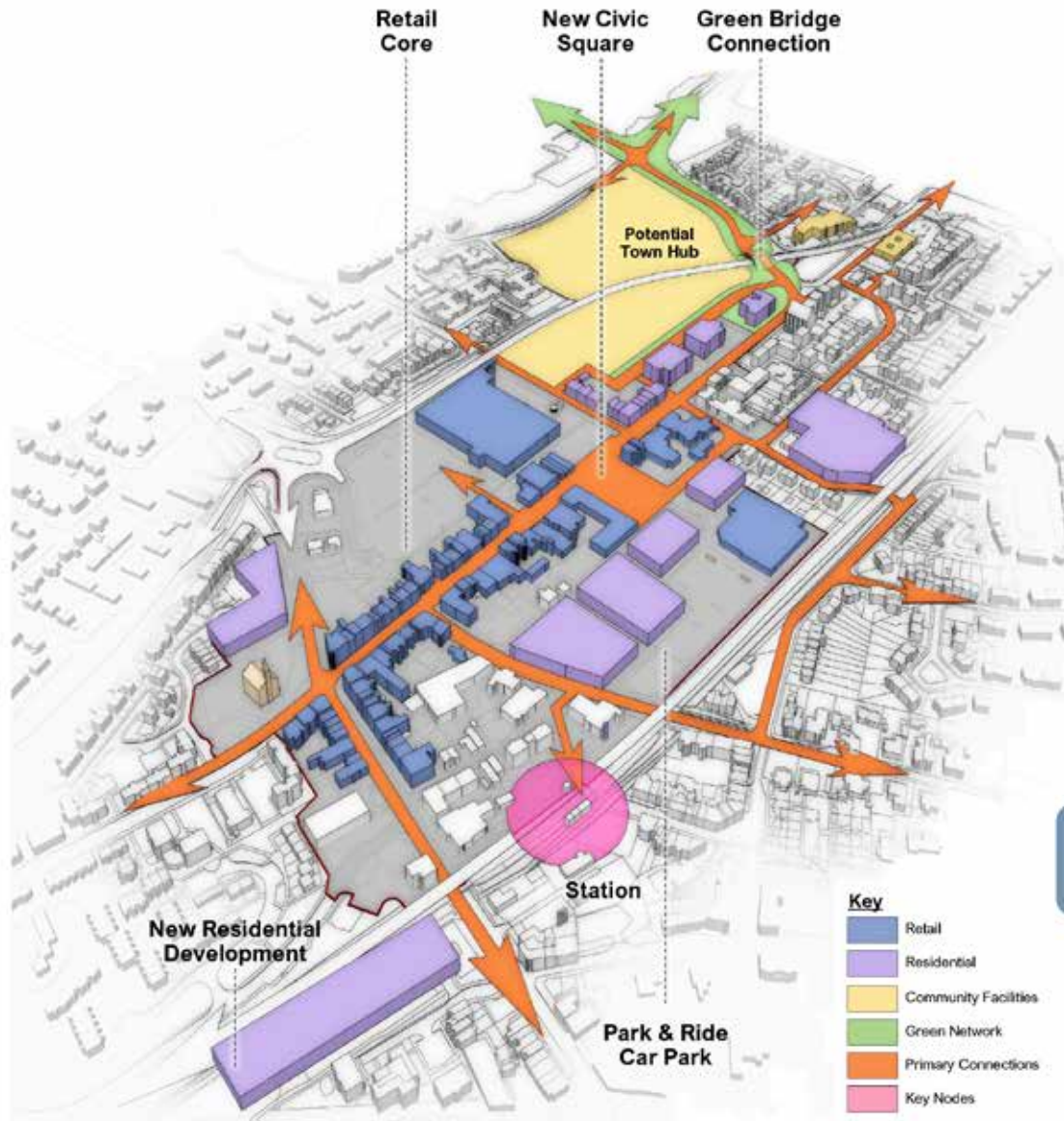
The Town Vision for Bellshill is just that: A Vision.

To become a reality, the vision needs to be shaped through extensive consultation and engagement with community planning partners, landowners, retailers, residents, councillors and other agencies (via the development of the Town Action Plan). The Vision should inform both public and private sector investment.

The Town Vision represents a long-term strategy for transformation over a 20 year period. It works alongside town centre projects that are planned for the short, medium and long-term including regeneration projects, the acquisition of prominent vacant and derelict buildings and sites, new council house construction and infrastructure and access developments.



The Vision for Bellshill



The Vision for Bellshill

Bellshill is one of Lanarkshire's best-connected towns. Connectivity has been identified a key 21st century driver for growth. High quality connections both physical and digital are increasingly recognized as essential requirements of commercially vibrant, low carbon sustainable places.

With its rail, road and active travel networks, Bellshill is a key investment location for commercial, residential and regional services. The investment in the new Town Hub to include new civic space and the improved visitor experience at Strathclyde Country Park will be transformational to Bellshill; its appeal and sense of place.

The outcomes for the community will be a centre which is more attractive, safer, easier to get around and offers wider choices meeting diverse and local needs. New homes, new jobs and better connections will drive additional demand for services and sustain a more vibrant and active town centre.

Bellshill's connections, street pattern and greenspace make for a town that can build resilience and adaption to climate change, strengthen community life and support health and wellbeing and low-carbon living. Sustainable and SMART urban systems (Waste/ Drainage/5G-Wifi/Transport) will with other facilities make Bellshill a place of choice.

Bellshill Opportunities

Town centres are facing a range of opportunities and challenges as community needs and the way we use our centres change. Bellshill needs to adapt and strengthen its role as an appealing and liveable centre based on quality of place, enterprise, community assets, heritage and low carbon living.

The core projects incorporated within the Bellshill Town Vision include:

- developing a new Town Hub for the delivery of public services including education, leisure and health uses;
- focusing investment in the town centre around the retail ccc coo Main Street
- the creation of new active travel routes to link the town centre to major community assets such as the Town Hub and Strathclyde Country Park.
- sustaining a sense of place by securing long term futures for heritage assets; and
- promoting lifestyle appeal based on town centre living adjacent to services and places of interest.



Town & Community Hubs

As part of the Council's ambition for North Lanarkshire, all schools constructed pre-1996 have been identified for improvement or replacement. So that they can be sustainable, we need to reduce the number of building assets across North Lanarkshire, working with communities and partners. As such, our town and community hubs will in some places, be merged, co-located or combined and integrated with other community and partnership assets. For example, there may be a single campus for 2-18 year olds where early learning, primary and secondary education is delivered alongside other council and community services.

Hubs will have a form and facilities based on the need of the local community. Zones which could be included are numerous and could be some or all of the following:



To design this model, we will use six guiding principles:

- **Inclusive, universal provision:** a hub must serve the whole community and offer universal provision of services as a default.
- **Sense of community ownership:** central to the model is learning and teaching, but the hub must be an asset for the whole community.
- **Maximum availability and usage:** hubs will operate from early in the morning until late in the evening. They must be multi-functional and must be able to be used throughout the day.
- **Designed with the community:** options for design should be shared as early as possible in the process so that people in communities have ownership.
- **Tailored, bespoke, representative:** each hub will be unique to ensure it meets specific community needs.
- **Maximise services on offer:** services available within the hub should complement rather than compete with services already serving the same community.



We envisage three types of hub:

Town hubs are likely to include primary and secondary education and an early years facility. Other services on offer in town hubs will be larger in scale, such as more comprehensive sport and leisure offerings, more significant outdoor sport provision and a wider range of services.

Community hubs are likely to include at least one learning establishment and may include other zones such as sport and leisure.

Small community hubs may exist in areas where there is no requirement for new education facilities but where there is a need to replace older facilities such as libraries, community centres or health facilities.

Bellshill Town Hub

Following a consultation the general public chose the Bellshill Academy Playing Fields north of Campbell Street as the preferred site for the development of the Town Hub for Bellshill. This site was selected as it has sufficient land to accommodate the footprint of the Town Hub campus and is adjacent to the town centre.

The Council is currently seeking to secure the funding to proceed with the design development of the Town Hub and the associated statutory public consultation around education provision. No formal decision has been taken as to which schools will be incorporated into the town hub campus.

Community Hubs

Community Hub's will be designed to be open and accessible to the whole community, with predominately school access during the day and the wider community able to access many areas within the hub outwith school hours.

The design of the recent Orbiston community Hub is seen as an exemplar for the development of future Community Hubs in terms of its energy efficiency, accessibility, quality of internal and external learning environments and play facilities.

The Council will continue to review the physical condition of its education estate to ensure they continue to meet the needs of the wider community.



Economic Prosperity & Stability

Retail

While the ambition for all of our town centres is to move towards a more mixed use offering to improve resilience and recognize the shift in how we use our town centres, the Council wants to retain and support the retail sector and assist its recovery from the double impacts of an economic downturn and the Covid Pandemic.

Research has shown that the independent retail sector is more resilient to change than larger national multiples and that these, in most cases local businesses, will prevail if sufficient infrastructure and interest is in place. We will therefore seek to support the retail sector in Bellshill by encouraging town centre owners

to refurbish larger vacant units into smaller units to provide space for entrepreneurs and established businesses to find the optimum premises for their business.

Funding constraints and legal issues do, however, constrain the level of support which the Council can provide. However, we are working with partners to identify potential funding streams to promote business investment and the regeneration of the key retail areas within Bellshill.

Commercial

The collapse in the demand for commercial premises such as offices in town centre locations echoes wider structural changes in the economy and the growth of digital connectivity. The impacts of the covid pandemic demonstrated the benefits and ease of remote working across the public and private sector and led to an exponential growth in homeworking with a resulting impact on footfall within the town centre.

This needs to be recognised in how we change the structure of Bellshill Town Centre and make best use of the vacant premises which occur as a result of lower demand and need for town centre office space. In addition, moving forward, the commercial space which remains also needs to be more accessible and energy efficient to compete with out-of-town locations (with consideration given to how we measure the scale of this challenge and take forward the repurposing of vacant office space).

Leisure & Hospitality

The leisure and hospitality sector is a key component of the move towards a more mixed-use town centre. The importance of 'Place' in terms of the public's perception of character and safety is very important in attracting people to use existing leisure and hospitality businesses. Ease of movement to and from the town centre will encourage people to access leisure activities and sustain and develop the night-time economy and footfall. In meeting this aim, the Town Action Plan for Bellshill aims to promote and sustain active travel routes and transport options to support access to town centre facilities and build footfall that will help the leisure and hospitality sectors in Bellshill to grow.



Town Centre Living



Exemplar urban infill residential flattened accommodation, Main St, Wishaw (former Anvil Block)

Town Centre Living

New Build



Image: Former Orr's Department Store

Encouraging more people to live in town centres is a key policy aspiration for the Council underpinning priorities around sustainability, net zero, inclusion and wellbeing. More people living in town centres means more support for local businesses. It means keeping bus routes active, a safer place thanks to passive policing and greater local interest in the town centre environment. These all make a town more attractive to people living here.

Admittedly, developers looking to offer housing options within town centres find that they are typically more expensive, riskier, and take longer than other housebuilding options. Town centre projects also tend to be smaller, providing less financial return. However, the Council is of the view that the overall gains outweigh risks and costs if we take into account the wider societal benefits such as improved wellbeing and a reduction in carbon footprint. Key to helping to deliver this is identifying how the Council de-risks and enables such development through, for example, providing development support (e.g. via the Council's Invest in North Lanarkshire's Programme of Work) or promoting development opportunity through agreeing up front to buy 'off-the-shelf' housing being proposed by the private sector in order to guarantee sales.

This type of model has been used to promote private sector housing investment elsewhere across North Lanarkshire and has proved successful. As such, it is very much viewed as a potential model which could be used to support the delivery of town centre living across the local authority area and its towns.

The Council are seeking to promote new flatted residential development on the site of the former Money Advice Centre and Registry Office on Motherwell Road in support of its Town Centre Living agenda.

However, the Council also work closely with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to bring forward new affordable housing within town centres through the provision of Housing Grant. Nevertheless, quite often, the level of Housing Grant is not sufficient to meet the higher costs associated with smaller town centre developments. As such, the Council has previously supported RSL's to address this 'cost-gap' by providing funding through programmes such as the Council's 'Placed Based Investment Programme' and this is still very much seen as another possible route for helping to enable the development of new build housing within Town Centres.

Lastly, the Council hopes that by taking a leading role in the delivery of town centre living, we can make the case that there is a latent demand for good quality town centre housing and encourage the private sector to invest. Development by the private sector is particularly important to ensuring that both tenure and design diversity, over time, can improve the townscape and character of the town centre.

Refurbishment

The Council is actively seeking to replace redundant properties within the town centre with residential development to ensure that we respond to issues of vacancy and dereliction. It also recognises that, in many cases, the refurbishment of existing buildings within the town, rather than demolition and replacement, can not only reduce the carbon footprint of development but also retain the character of the townscape and help preserve a centre's unique 'sense of place'.

The Council has identified a number of existing properties within Bellshill Town Centre that are in need of refurbishment due to long-term vacancy or neglect. Where the building design contributes to the townscape we will endeavour to retain and refurbish the building towards a mixed use, with retail on the ground floor and residential uses on the upper floors (within the retail core area) and exclusively residential outwith the core retail areas.

As already stated, we would hope that the private sector will take the lead in reinvesting in its own stock and we will aim to work closely with them in order to support this.

Heritage Refurbishment

The communities' perception of 'Place' is informed by the quality of the public realm and key heritage buildings. Bellshill Town Centre has a number of heritage properties which are functionally obsolete but of good quality and whose external appearance contributes to the character and history of the town.

Key heritage buildings within the town centre include Bellshill Academy, St Andrews Parish Church, the former Health Centre at 258 Main Street and the former bank at 207 Main Street. These buildings make a significant contribution to the townscape. Bellshill as a place would be architecturally poorer if these were not refurbished and subsequently fell into disrepair. Where the Council do not own heritage buildings, we will support the owners in their endeavours to secure a future for these buildings by assisting in sourcing external grants and funding.

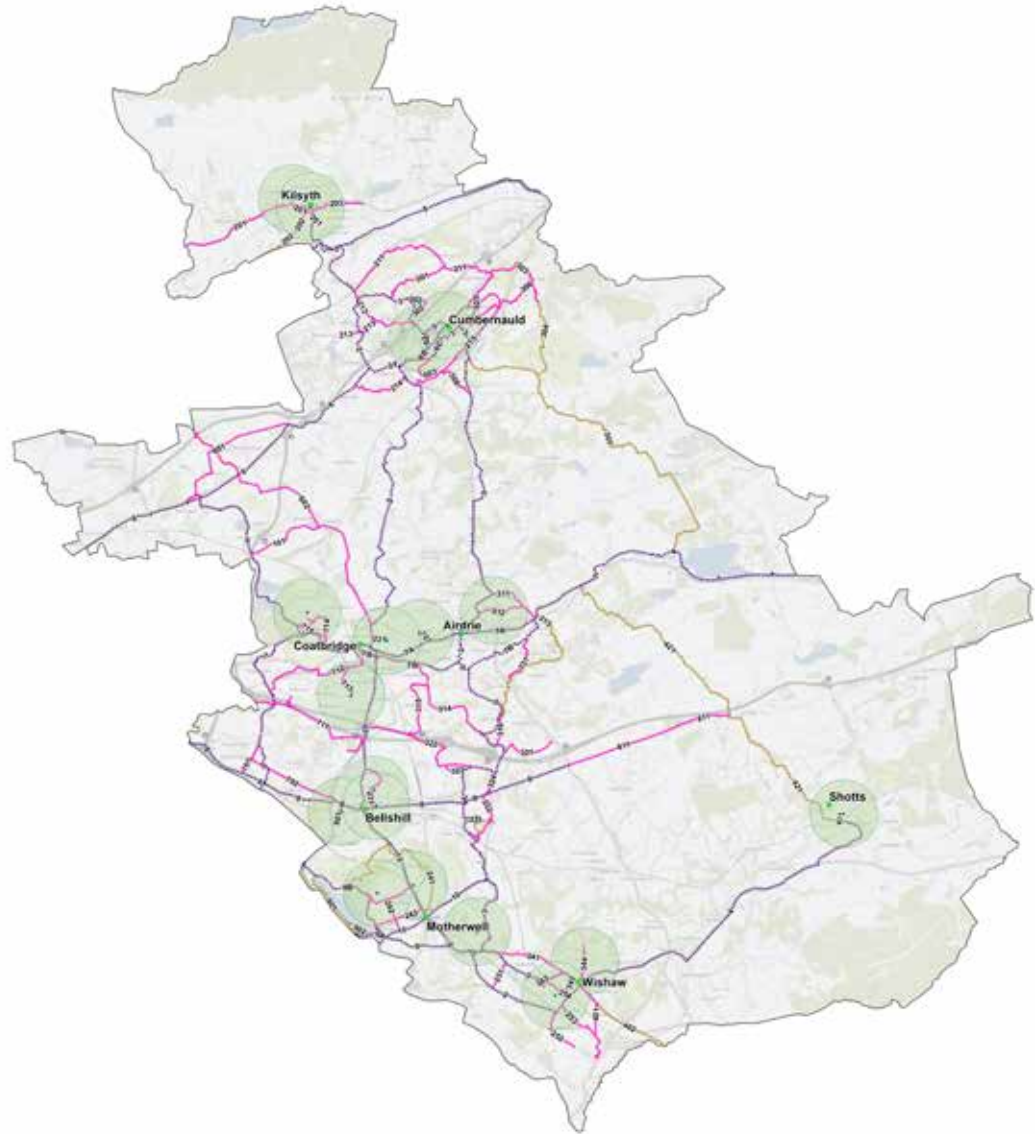
As such, we would encourage the owners of listed buildings who are considering the future of their building(s) to approach the Council to discuss ways in which the properties can contribute to the vision of a mixed-use town centre. The Council has recent experience of working with organisations such as

Historic Environment Scotland, external funders such as the National Heritage Lottery Fund and delivery partners to help take forward the regeneration of such properties.



Images: The top two images are exemplars of modern residential flatted development, the bottom two images are sketch proposals for the replacement for the Anvill Block on Main Street.

Movement & Active Travel



Key

- Key Towns
- Proposed Hub Sites
- Proposed Hub Sites 1km Boundary

Proposed Routes

- Strategic Active Travel Network
- Local Neighbourhood Active Travel Network
- Connecting Active Travel Network
- National Cycle Network
- North Lanarkshire Council Area



Movement & Active Travel

Prioritising Sustainable Transport

Walking and wheeling



Cycling



Public Transport



Taxis & Shared transport



Private Car



Public Transport

Town centres are hubs for transport interchanges with Bellshill having strong rail network and bus service links the construction of improved bus and taxi access and improved park and ride provision.

It is essential that Bellshill Town Centre builds on this strength, with the Council working with Scotrail and Strathclyde Passenger Transport to ensure good and co-ordinated public transport connectivity to this interchange, potential 'SMART' ticketing and well-maintained park and ride facilities.

The public have identified the frequency of bus services as an issue which needs to be addressed. As bus services are privately owned businesses the Council has no direct control over the bus service in terms of routes or frequency of services, however, we have regular engagement with the bus companies and the Strathclyde Passenger Transport to seek to improve services.

Active Travel

Active travel (walking, wheeling and cycling) has many environmental benefits, as well as improved health and wellbeing, and is a core part of rebalancing the transport modes within our town centres. The town centre as a focus for active travel activity needs to be driven by connecting the town to facilities and services as well as the surrounding area.

In particular, Bellshill Town Centre needs to act as a key spoke for the town's active travel routes, connecting people with facilities and locations such as, Strathclyde

Country Park (including the Bellshill Cycle Gateway and Pump Track) and local business locations.

Lastly, the Council has recently installed a modular Active Travel Hub at the Bellshill Cycle Gateway in Strathclyde Country Park and are actively looking to develop a further hub within the town centre (location still to be identified) that will help improve access to and from the Train Station as well as enhance links to the Cycle Hub and facilities within the park.



Built Heritage & Place



Built Heritage & Place

Built Heritage

North Lanarkshire's towns have character and are distinctive in form and heritage, the town centres are a reminder of a positive and defining economic past (coal, iron, steel, mills, quarrying) with many notable buildings.

The vision for Bellshill seeks to build on the distinctive character and quality of place using this legacy to reinforce urban form and repurpose heritage buildings for new uses.

The Council also work with the private sector and partners such as RSL's to support the delivery of housing projects (including for heritage projects with successful partnership development previously supported for key historic town centre buildings such as for the Carnegie Library in Coatbridge and Bromknoll Church in Airdrie.

To replicate such activity in Bellshill, as part of the delivery of the Bellshill Town Action Plan, the Council will identify other key vacant or underused heritage properties in the town centre and work with owners and partners to identify and help secure funding for the repurposing of such buildings for housing, community or other viable uses.

Place

When we speak of place we are talking about the character and quality of the townscape which is a key asset of our towns and comprises all publicly

accessible space (streets, squares and greenspace) for people to come together and engage as a community.

We are seeking to promote Bellshill as a more inclusive place, promoting longer dwell-time and increased town centre footfall. Public use of town centres and increased activity supports civic presence and improved security. Actively used, thriving public space is both safer, and more welcoming, than unused space.

In helping to improve space within our town centres, and in direct response to the requirement's of Scotland's National Planning Framework 4, the Council is currently preparing an Open Space Audit in support of an Open Spaces Strategy for North Lanarkshire.

This strategy will assess existing open space and green networks and help guide how we manage and meet the need for open space in town centres such as Bellshill. As such, future reviews of the Action Plan will give cognisance to the findings of this emerging strategy and help guide how we shape our open space going forward.

However, the Vision for Bellshill Town Centre already identifies a need for improved 'gateways' to the town centre, improving the aesthetical quality of streetscape and creating 'place quality'.





Transition to Net Zero

Carbon Reduction

Town Centres have a key role in supporting a sustainable future and contributing to the essential adaptation necessary to address climate change and our commitment to net zero. Place shaping can help contribute to climate change targets through the repurposing of buildings; developing 20-minute neighbourhoods, reducing the need to travel and supporting flood mitigation.

Key measures within the vision for supporting carbon reduction in Bellshill will include:

- property upgrading, retrofit and re-purposing (making these more energy efficient);
- developing active travel infrastructure;
- greening activity;
- extending EV Charging infrastructure; and
- planning for compact urban centres and accessible services.

The carbon cost of demolishing existing buildings and then developing new buildings is also in most cases higher than the carbon cost of refurbishment and adaption of buildings to new uses. In recognition of this, the Council will support private owners to refurbish rather than demolish existing buildings, with works to make them more energy efficient and extending their viable use. This both reduces our collective carbon footprint and retains the heritage and character of the town.

Green Blue Infrastructure

Planning needs to support local measures to minimise the impact of intense rainfall events and to mitigate flood risk while also designing flood resilient places. Area wide measures may include, for example, green corridors for storm water flows linked to new habitat management measures and our active travel networks.

The Council is also currently working with Scottish Water to develop a pilot study on a vacant and derelict land site in Motherwell. This study is focusing on ways to manage surface water infrastructure so that additional pressures are not placed upon the existing combined sewer network within our town centres.

EV Charging Infrastructure

The Scottish Government's requirement to phase out the need for petrol and diesel vehicles by 2030 will impact on our centres with charging and fast charging points becoming part of the urban fabric.

From 5 June 2023, the regulations also requires electric vehicle charging to be installed for new buildings and those subject to major renovation. This includes one EV charge point socket to be provided for all new housing and flats and in 10% of parking spaces for non-domestic buildings where these have 10 car parking spaces or more.

Added to this, in order to encourage and enable the use of our towns, the Council needs to take forward the installation of EV charging points within our town centres for general public use. At the moment, work is ongoing through the Glasgow City Region team on behalf of all local authorities with a view to engaging a provider to install and operate our EV charging going forward. The intention would be for the provider to agree proposed sites with the Council and install and manage the EV charging provision on the Councils behalf.

As part of the delivery of Bellshill Town Action Plan, the Council will also investigate the suitability of our public car parks and facilities for EV Charging and their capacity to meet future demand and need for EV charging within our town centres.

Other Considerations

Finance & External Funding

It has been well publicised that over the next three years, North Lanarkshire Council (along with other public services across Scotland) face significant budget cuts. As such, investment made through the Town Action Plan has to ensure that ongoing future revenue or operational costs associated with any works is minimal and, where possible, additional revenue generated through, for example, increased rents or business rates.

Moreover, to reduce the burden on the Council's available capital, the Council will look to fund such works by alternative means through: promoting and seeking private sector investment; use of North

Lanarkshire's Housing Revenue Account; and sourcing funding through Scottish Government Programmes (such as the Place Based Investment Programme and Regeneration Capital Grant Fund Programme), the

UK Government (with funding recently received for Cumbernauld and Coatbridge Town Centres through their Levelling Up Fund and Town Fund programmes respectively) or other funders (such as the National Heritage Lottery Fund).

Community Wealth Building

The Town Action Plan for Bellshill has been developed in consultation with local communities to help identify the key actions which we want to take forward to help improve and regenerate Bellshill Town Centre. However, in order to drive and sustain real change, it is critical that local communities buy in to and take ownership of these plans.

Community Wealth Building is designed to harness the economic leverage of local 'anchor' organisations to tackle long-term systematic challenges within local communities and help to change the way we manage and provide local services through, for example, community-owned assets, a focus on local supply chains and local job creation – key goals which need to be embedded as part of the delivery of the Action Plan.

Communications Plan

It has been identified that the Action Plan affects four key stakeholder groups:

- local communities and residents living in the town centre (with the viability of the centre dependent upon being able to attract local people to use the town and sustain local spend);
- local businesses and shops (with retailers particularly interested in opportunities which may be brought forward through the plan, how change will affect their business and how works may disturb trade);
- potential visitors to Bellshill and people who live outwith Bellshill but work within the town centre (both of whom will contribute to spend and the local economy); and
- the council and other public bodies (who will lead on and contribute to the delivery of the plan).

Raising awareness of our plans for Bellshill is essential to keeping these stakeholders engaged in the process of transforming the town centre and securing their buy in to the works being proposed. To ensure these groups are fully informed, a detailed Communications Plan will be developed for Bellshill Town Centre to make sure proposals are shared and stakeholders kept updated on progress made.

As part of this Communications Plan, the Council aim to host a bespoke 'Town's Page' for each of the main towns across North Lanarkshire on its website. This will incorporate news and information for each town including copies of the Town Visions and Action Plans and progress being made on the delivery of Action Plan proposals.

Section 3: Bellshill Town Action Plan



Town Action Plan Proposals

Project	Proposal	Timescales*
Economic Prosperity & Stability		
Town Centre Audit & Demand Analysis – Vacant Office Space	Undertake an Audit and Demand Analysis for vacant office space within Bellshill Town Centre to help develop a strategy for the repurposing of this space.	Short-term
Town Centre Living		
Former Registry Office and Money Advice Office Motherwell Road	The Council will undertake design development works to deliver flatted residential development on Motherwell Road.	Short-term
Buy-Backs	Continuation of the Council's 'buy-back' scheme to offer affordable housing within Bellshill Town Centre.	Ongoing
Movement & Active Travel		
Active Travel Study	The development of a design and costing study, aligned to North Lanarkshire's Active Travel Strategy, to map out potential Active Travel Networks across Bellshill Town Centre. This will focus on identifying 'gaps' within the existing and planned network. At the same time, work will also undertake to source external funding to support the delivery of this infrastructure.	Short-term
Active Travel Works	Take forward planned investment in Bellshill's Active Travel Network to include new routes from/to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Braidhurst Industrial Estate to Bellshill 	
Built Heritage & Place		
Heritage Buildings	Identify key heritage buildings within town centre that are vacant, underused or in poor condition and enter/continue discussion with owners to identify route for safeguarding, improving or repurposing properties. This will include helping to source funding for these regeneration initiatives.	Medium-term

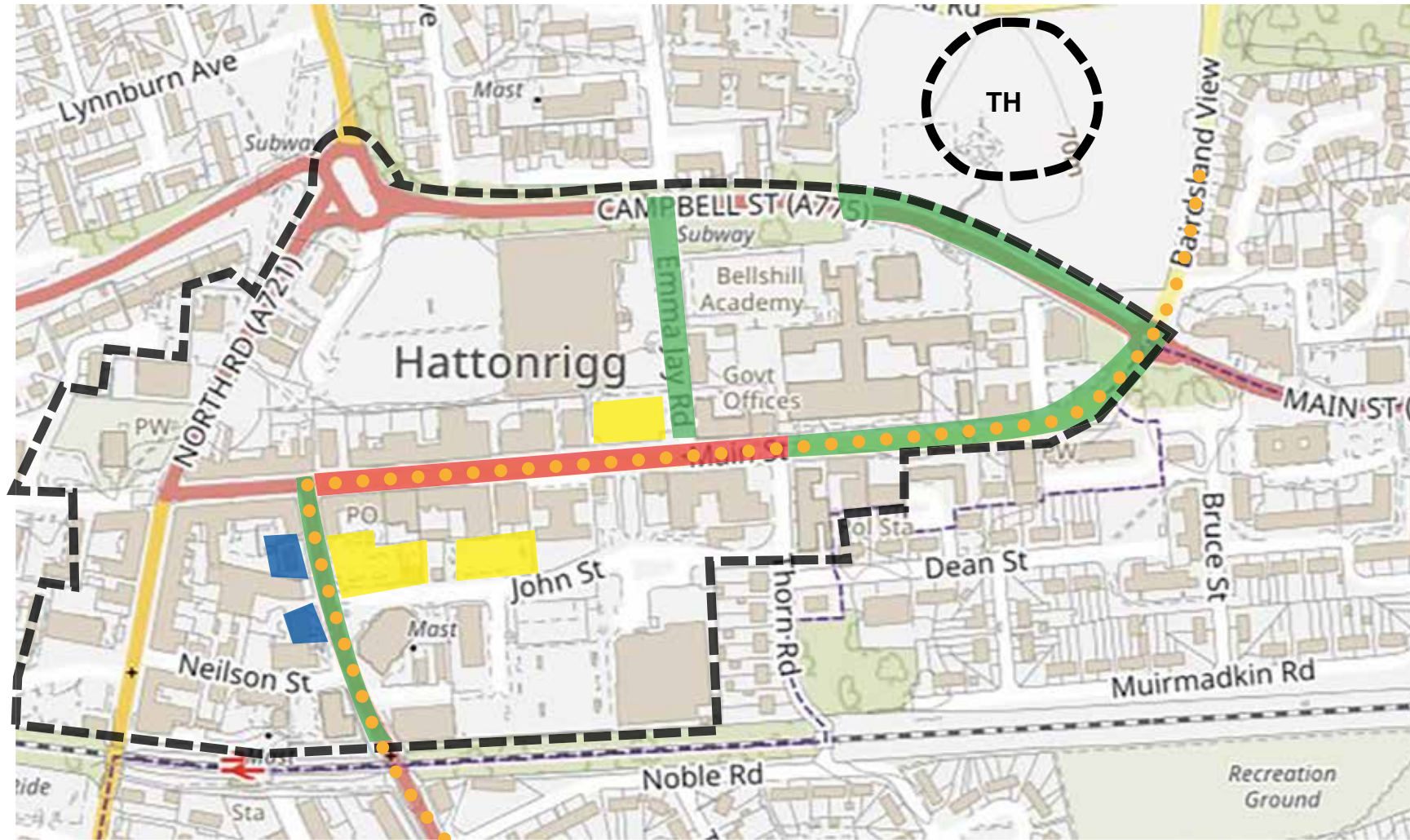
Project	Proposal	Timescales*
Various Locations	Undertake feasibility works to assess viability and costs for the development of town gateway features.	Short-term
Transition to Net Zero		
EV Charging	Site Investigations of NLC's carparks across Bellshill Town Centre to assess suitability/infrastructure needs for EV Charging Installation as part of the delivery proposals currently being developed through Glasgow City Region.	Long-term
Town & Community Hubs		
Bellshill Town Hub	The development of Bellshill Town Hub on the site of the Bellshill Academy Playing Fields north of Campbell Street..	Long-term

*Short-term: 1-3 Years

*Medium-term: 3-7 years

*Long-term: 7+ years

The Action Plan Proposals Map



- Core Retail Area
- Area of Change
- Potential New Public Sector Housing
- Public Car Parks
- Town Centre Boundary
- (TH) Town Hub
- Potential Active Travel Route

Strategic Alignment

The Town Action Plan for Bellshill is aligned with The Plan for North Lanarkshire and other key strategies, policies and plans.

Together this strategic policy framework ensures that work is aligned with our priorities and enables the required resources and working practices needed to facilitate delivery of the shared

Bellshill Town Action Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis, not only to ensure that it remains aligned to any new or emerging strategies developed by the Council and its partners, but also to make sure that any new opportunities can be incorporated within the plan proposals and any new issues arising within the town centre addressed.



Notes

Notes



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