A VISION FOR LANARK 2020–30
A Strategy for Greener Prosperity from our Sustainable Heritage

CMC Associates Ltd.
May 2020
The adoption of the New Lanark World Heritage Site Management Plan for 2019-2023, and the successful establishment of Discover Lanark – the company responsible for the Lanark Business Improvement District in 2019 – has focussed debate in Lanark on the importance of heritage-led regeneration. Both the New Lanark Trust and Discover Lanark break new ground in taking a wider perspective than just New Lanark World Heritage Site or Lanark town centre in order to make better use of the exceptional natural and built heritage assets of the area to create business and community regeneration opportunities.

Following on from the original Vision document of Lanark Community Development Trust in 2015, in which heritage and tourism was a major theme, these three organisations have now agreed to work together to consider how tourism and heritage in and around Lanark could be better co-ordinated and developed. CMC Associates, who have worked on historic town regeneration plans since 2003, were approached to help facilitate the group’s thinking. Following a series of workshops and one-on-one meetings, we have pulled together a strategy that both reflected the group’s thinking and explores the options and actions that flow from it. It was realised early on that a high-level overview of the potential for action was required, prior to any detailed planning.

Project planning will be the next step, after the presentation of the issues raised by this report to the wider Lanark community via an adapted programme of public consultation due to Covid-19.

The Steering Group and development of this report have been generously supported by the Border Biscuits Community Support Trust.

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Front cover (from left to right): Corra Linn, Falls of Clyde. Image by Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape Partnership; St Nicholas’s Church, Lanark; aerial view of New Lanark; aerial view of Castlebank Park, Lanark. Images by Graeme McLeish.
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Introduction: The Power of Community and Place

This report has been commissioned by three organisations – Lanark Community Development Trust, New Lanark Trust and the Lanark Business Improvement District – who together have formed a Steering Group to further the cultural and economic development of Lanark. This group and their report have been generously supported by the Border Biscuits Community Support Trust. The Steering Group was facilitated by CMC Associates as they developed their strategic view of how Lanark may use heritage and tourism for the economic and social benefit of the community.

The group recognises that while Lanark has a number of internationally and nationally significant heritage resources, their further development is in reality an ongoing journey with much unfulfilled potential. Many of the actions recommended in this report will have immediate benefit, however, the report’s longer-term objectives may take a decade, or more, to come to fruition. This report is intended, therefore, as the starting point for what will be a substantial journey, involving the community in ambitious plans to take forward the principles we are proposing. Interpretive strategies can provide a guide to effective route-finding, but to be successful they require agreement over the direction of travel.

This Strategy, and the thinking behind it will, as soon as possible given the current difficulties with the pandemic, be the subject of consultation and discussion in the local community. Following this consultation, and with any appropriate amendments, it will be adopted and promoted by the Working Group to influence the future development of Lanark and its environs.

The Strategy’s objective is to create a clear framework for community regeneration by:

- informing both interpretive and wider development decisions
- building tourism infrastructure and heritage capacity
- deepening the economic resilience of the Lanark heritage area.

At the heart of this Strategy is an understanding that a strong community identity, based on an awareness of the surrounding heritage, is always a major asset in local economic development and community welfare. The close relationship between people and place has been at the heart of many successful heritage-led regeneration strategies in communities up and down the country. Our vision is not just about tourism or heritage management, but much more broadly about Lanark’s self-respect and confidence.

Many of the issues considered in the Strategy are the result of long-term or wider trends.
Introduction: The Power of Community and Place

To this in recent years has been added Brexit and also an increasing awareness of what dealing with climate change will actually mean. As if this was not enough, we are all now aware that the impact of Covid-19 will be with us in very significant ways for a considerable time to come. Significant change is perhaps now more inevitable than it has ever been. However, the fate of towns like Lanark is not written.

‘When historians write the book on the covid-19 pandemic, what we’ve lived through so far will probably take up only the first third or so. The bulk of the story will be what happens next.’


These long-term trends are, of course, being addressed by government, and the policy environment is rapidly changing, providing new opportunities for funding and support. From a geographical standpoint, Lanark has been left somewhat stranded in a rural policy vacuum, between the urban support priorities of the Central Belt to the north and the new commitment to South of Scotland Enterprise (SoSE) in the south. There are now a number of generic policies including energy and climate action, green transport, tourism, rural development and community empowerment which can and should be applied as exemplification in such a heritage-rich area as Lanark.

New Lanark by John Winning, 1818.

The need for communities to have strong roots and a strategic vision has never been greater. For Lanark, with its historic burgh, World Heritage Site, designed landscape setting and national nature reserve – that vision is inevitably founded on its rich human and natural heritage. Looking to the future, we also see Lanark’s Interpretive Strategy being intimately linked to its past, present and future generation and management of green power. Lanark is well positioned not only to become a carbon neutral community but also an interpreter and advocate of how sustainable energy economies can work in practice.
The Falls of Clyde have been harnessed as a source of energy for hundreds of years. New Lanark’s construction and history is intimately linked to renewable water power from the Falls. Some of the earliest commercial hydro power stations were built here in the 1920s, and are still generating electricity. They are currently operated by the Drax Group who have an active green energy strategy and are keen to support communities and businesses as they become carbon neutral or even carbon negative. New Lanark itself continues to generate electrical power from the Falls and already interprets the story of power from the Falls.

New Lanark is shortly to introduce electric shuttle buses between the Burgh and the World Heritage Site. Much more will be made of power generation and consumption in the years to come.

The core aspects of this interpretive analysis are, therefore, likely to be relatively unaffected by the difficult social and economic weather we are currently experiencing. However, there can be no doubt that we will need to keep Lanark’s development challenges and opportunities under careful and regular review. While it was recently indicated by both UK and Scottish Governments that past fiscal discipline was to be significantly relaxed in favour of stimulating growth – that was before Covid-19 played its wild card.

Stonebyres Power Station, recently refurbished.

Tolbooth Gallery, Lanark.
1.1 Lanark, New Lanark and Falls of Clyde

The very first requirement in setting out this Strategy is to define clearly the subject area to be interpreted. Bluntly put, does Lanark, consisting of the Royal Burgh, New Lanark and the Falls of Clyde constitute a meaningful unit? The answer can be quite a complex one, and in addition to heritage issues we might expect to find a degree of cohesion across wider issues such as:

- Community
- Identity
- Economy.

There is little doubt that in the historical past, as for instance indicated on General Roy’s Survey of Scotland 1747-56, Lanark was perceived as an integrated administrative and business unit. However, in recent years the development of the Burgh, New Lanark and the Falls of Clyde has been heavily ‘siloded’ by administrative and organisational divisions. This has led to each component having more or less separate development teams. While New Lanark and Falls of Clyde have on occasions undertaken joint analysis and marketing, Lanark – with separate funding and administration – has tended to project and develop its own identity.
Part 1 – An Exceptional Natural and Human Heritage

The administrative partition of Lanark in the past into different development units needs to be better understood. This is just one reason why we require far better social, economic and visitor data than is currently available. Unfortunately, what data there is tends to be, well, siloed – as this very brief review confirms.

The following conclusions are drawn from surveys by Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, Discover Lanark for Business and Scotland’s Towns Partnership.

Community – This is always a complex thing to define. The available statistics suggest Lanark has relatively stable population and that, apart from a significant commuter element to larger urban centres, economic and social activity for residents is predominantly within a 5km (3.1 miles) catchment (Scotland’s Towns Partnership (STP)). The same is true of regular visitors to Lanark – 82% come from within 10 miles (16km), most travelling by car.

Identity – A survey of Lanark shoppers and visitors was generally positive, but there was real concern about the town’s failing infrastructure.

Economy – Lanark’s commercial activity and household incomes are similar to other historic county towns. But there is a strong sense of an ongoing economic down turn and concern about appearance of the high street.

The weighted physical commuter pattern for Lanark (USP.scot). Other notable factors include high proportion of local workers, elderly residents and limited overnight accommodation.

Train and bus transport maps.

Understanding Scottish Places provides and analyses statistics on Lanark: https://www.scotlandstowns.org/understanding-scottish-places
One group that has been gathering statistics relevant to them over a number of years is New Lanark Trust and to a lesser extent the Scottish Wildlife Trust for the Falls of Clyde. As venues, tourism footfall is particularly important to them, as it is to Lanark as a whole. Together they are a significant contributor to the Lanark economy with around 360,000 visitors per annum (New Lanark World Heritage Site 2019–23 Management Plan).

But it seems that visitor numbers to New Lanark and the Falls of Clyde have flattened off in the last 5 years and the World Heritage Site is no longer in the top 20 destinations by visitor numbers (Moffat Centre, 2018; Edinburgh 10 destinations; Glasgow 5; then 1 each for Gretna, Stirling, Falkirk, Glen Urquhart and Glenfinnan). Even before the Covid-19 crisis there was a need to better understand this change in the nationally important tourism market for Lanark.

Post Covid-19 we may well see an even more dramatic change. Indeed we had already seen the Scottish Tourism Alliance push for sustainable tourism with ‘volume giving way to value’ in the coming years (https://scottishtourismalliance.co.uk/scotland-outlook-2030-download/).

Recent local tourism initiatives (prior to Covid-19) have addressed Lanark as part of Clydesdale¹ and have focused on green travel infrastructure. While this is welcome, green travel is going to be critical to various development strands for Lanark, there remains a need for industry leaders to recognise and harness Lanark’s aggregated potential as a sector driver.

¹ The Upper Clyde Valley, formerly the Upper Ward of the County of Lanark at the heart of which the town established its royal burgh and county town status, from 1975 till 1996 a discreet local authority area and now an administrative area of South Lanarkshire Council.
At the same time, we need to be realistic. Even before the current crisis, tourism was no longer seen as the universal panacea for struggling towns and districts. Instead we were seeing unregulated tourism hotspots and alarming patterns of feast and famine in the sector. Important as long-distance tourism was, and may be again, we were learning that this needs to be balanced with a sustainable local and regional visitor package that involves a much wider range of Lanark business. It is important to keep a sense of scale when considering tourism. For instance, 360,000 is also the number of passengers ScotRail see at Lanark Station each year. Lanark’s footfall is far more complex than its tourism sector. That said, in what is likely to be an ever more challenging and competitive market, Lanark will have to work hard across the board to retain its regional, national and international cultural and historic status.

A unified Interpretive Strategy will be critical to promoting Lanark’s cultural and historic status, and critical to all interpretation is the content we have to work with. For interpretation, ‘content is king’ and the good news is that, taken together, Lanark is a very, very strong interpretive unit. The Royal Burgh, New Lanark and the Falls of Clyde have rich and overlapping content.
Part 1 – An Exceptional Natural and Human Heritage

Currently:

- New Lanark has a strong heritage brand
- Lanark has good infrastructure
- Falls of Clyde has strong environmental and green energy credentials.

But as Lanark has not been treated as a unit for many years, interpretive resources are uneven and storytelling lacks structure. Moreover, current interpretive infrastructure makes it, at times, hard to deliver on Lanark as a unit.

It is therefore all the more important for us to recognize that, even if we were to set aside its World Heritage status, Lanark is regionally and nationally significant in terms of its natural and human heritage. The test is simple: outside Edinburgh and Glasgow you do not get such a high concentration of heritage designations anywhere else in southern Scotland. The other hotspots that come close are again the historic towns. In alphabetical order: Ayr, Dalkeith, Dumfries, Haddington, Jedburgh, Kelso, Kilmarnock, Melrose, Paisley and Peebles.

Heritage designation rich towns in southern Scotland.
Part 1 – An Exceptional Natural and Human Heritage

When you combine the natural and human history of Lanark, New Lanark and the Falls of Clyde you create one of the richest heritage locations in southern Scotland and the north of England. If you then include Lanark’s World Heritage Site status, this is a nationally and internationally significant unit. Inevitably, this unified Lanark has a complex multi-layered story, but clarifying and weaving stories is the meat and drink of good interpretation, presentation and development. More varied, integrated and sustainable interpretation appeals to larger audiences and maximises community, identity and economy.

Beyond any doubt, when the Royal Burgh, New Lanark and the Falls of Clyde are assessed as an entity they reach critical mass across a wide range of criteria.

Conservation areas, designed landscapes and scheduled monuments of the Lanark area, from HES Historic Environment Portal.
1.2 Strategic Interpretation of Lanark

Some brief words about interpretation – in particular strategic interpretation.

Interpretation is the process of structuring meaningful storylines from different sources and media to achieve specific outcomes for users. It is normally undertaken within the confines of a specific location. It often targets specific audiences. It frequently has commercial objectives, but it primarily works through the provision of successful ‘experiences’, not merchandise. This all becomes easier with:

- Content-rich locations
- Holistic visitor journeys
- Scalable user groups.

Strategic interpretation focuses on interlocking themes that can be sustained and developed over time. It is also very concerned to understand the distribution of its fixed resources and story points. One of the most objective ways of getting an overview of these issues is to look at the location of the statutory designations of both human and natural assets and the historic landscape assessment tools provided by Historic Environment Scotland. https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/listing-scheduling-and-designations/

The mapping of these designations leads to the location of a series of natural ‘asset zones’ for Lanark defined not only by their geographic area but also by their physical attributes. Interpretation of these zones inevitably leads with their naturally occurring content and ‘native themes’. All four zones, with their native themes, interlock, especially when one considers the further reality of access and visitor flow.

**Zone A. The Falls of Clyde**
National Nature Reserve (NNR), Ancient woodlands, Geological origins, Power generation

**Zone B. Royal Burgh**
Market, Services, Listed buildings, Accommodation, Transport

**Zone C. New Lanark**
World Heritage Site, Listed buildings, Visitor centre, Accommodation

**Zone D. Designed Landscape**
Parkland, Woodland, Paths, Listed buildings

Developing these native themes into a suite of interpretive storylines and topics is a significant exercise. The following brief exploration demonstrates something of the importance and potential of seeing Lanark as an interpretive unit.

Conservation Areas and Designations in the Lanark area marked with thematic zones A-D.
Part 1 – An Exceptional Natural and Human Heritage

Zone A. The Falls of Clyde
National Nature Reserve (NNR), Ancient Woodlands, Geological origins, Power generation:

- Origin
- Environment
- Energy.

Bonninton Power Station turbine, Corra Linn in spate, glacier ice-front, woodland flowers.
Part 1 – An Exceptional Natural and Human Heritage

Zone B. Royal Burgh
Market, Services, Listed buildings, Accommodation, Transport:

- Historic Place
- Market Place
- Transport Place.

Part 1 – An Exceptional Natural and Human Heritage

Zone C. New Lanark
World Heritage Site, Listed buildings, Visitor centre, Accommodation:

• Power
• Factory
• Workforce
• Society.

Turbine and water wheel at New Lanark, Robert Owen and historic mill scenes. Images from New Lanark Trust.
Zone D. Designed Landscape
Parkland, Woodland, Paths, Listed buildings:

- Landscape
- Leisure
- Explore
- Built Environment.

Bonniston Pavillion, View of Bonninston Lynn by Paul Sandby, 1778, Castlebank and Braxfield Houses. The aerial image of the Clyde and Castlebank designed landscape is by Graeme McLeish.
The emerging identification and distribution of ‘native themes’ for Lanark is therefore beginning to have the following structure across the four zones:

A – Origin, Environment, Energy
B – Historic Place, Market Place, Transport Place
C – Power, Factory, Workforce, Society
D – Landscape, Leisure, Explore, Built Environment.

The development of these themes will need careful group discussion and ongoing management. This will be both a short and long-term priority that should involve lead individuals from each of the four interpretive zones. This group work will lead to inter-locking storylines across the zones giving a broader appeal to a greater variety of visitors and community groups.

Significantly, green issues and sustainability recur naturally through the zones and themes. The unifying concept of ‘Sustainable Lanark’ has provided one of the anchors for this interpretive analysis and has been a concept that all the sponsors of this strategy have reacted positively to. Sustainable Lanark is something that we will return to several times in this report and it may well be one of the key concepts behind a unified Lanark brand.
Part 1 – An Exceptional Natural and Human Heritage

The development and integration of zones, themes and even storylines into a unified brand identity is not a trivial action. It is hoped that this analysis can provide a starting point that will help inform the branding process.

The benefits from such branding and, just as importantly, the joint working towards such a common goal is hard to underestimate, especially when directly linked to the all-important trinity of strategic interpretation:

- Content-rich locations
- Holistic visitor journeys
- Scalable and new user groups.

Telling the right stories in the right places has real economic and social value. Unifying and correctly branding that interpretive package will be critical to Lanark’s future.

Sculpture celebrating the first (1910) International Aviation Meeting, Lanark Loch.
1.3 Importance of the Experience Economy

Strategic interpretation is often intended to contribute directly to the ‘experience economy’ of the subject area.

The term first appeared in an article in the Harvard Business Review in 1998 (https://hbr.org/1998/07/welcome-to-the-experience-economy). This paper argued that businesses would have to create memorable events for their customers, and that memory itself would become a key part of the offering or the experience. In effect, the commoditisation of goods and services would mean price and quality would no longer be the only differentiators – consumers would also increasingly expect a unique purchasing experience.

In an era where goods and services can be bought online with user ‘experience’ being equated with prompt delivery, it is the rich and enjoyable experience of events and places that will distinguish the added-value function and future of towns today. So to slightly rephrase the interpretive trinity cited above:

- Content-rich ‘events’
- Holistic visitor ‘journeys’
- Multi-layered repeatable ‘experiences’.

Closely related to the growth of the experience economy has been the dominance of social media that has, in turn, been a function of the now ubiquitous tablets and smartphones linked by 3G, 4G and increasingly 5G networks.

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Part 1 – An Exceptional Natural and Human Heritage

While we are talking user rates... ownership of non-phone, WIFI connected devices (that’s PCs, laptops and many tablets) has also stabilised in the UK. Since 2014 they have been at around 84% of the population.

Or to put it another way... we may not yet have implants – but we are certainly plugged into the matrix.

Strategic interpretation is more effective if it helps venues, communities and local businesses to recognise the importance of the experience economy. Identifying and implementing the many actions needed to strengthen and grow an experience economy is a real challenge.

This is a process not an event. Social and infrastructural changes take time. In almost all cases the first priority is to boost the community’s digital presence.

Lanark’s digital presence – especially its social media presence – has many strengths. But it is not integrated or focused on the Lanark experience. However, changing this does not need significant funding and Lanark already has the foundations for its development.

Part 1 – An Exceptional Natural and Human Heritage

Percentage of the UK population with connected devices (not counting smartphones).
The importance of co-ordinating digital effort has never been greater. Covid-19 has resulted in the immobilisation of large sections of society and the route out of ‘lockdown’ is likely to be gradual and prolonged. The material economy has been massively affected by this lockdown, but nowhere near as much as has been the experience economy. The shock of having our social lives radically curtailed is something few of us have experienced before. Were it not for the digital communication tools developed in the last 10 to 20 years, the social and economic impact would have been even worse.

**Recognition of the importance of experiences that are communicated and aggregated digitally will be critical to Lanark’s community and economy going forward.**
1.4 The Current Visitor Journey

Interpretive planning in a multifaceted heritage area such as Lanark should cover:

- The visitor’s arrival by public/private transport
- Their conversion to pedestrian/cyclist form
- Orientation for their potential activities.

Visitors in this context tend to be tourists or retail visitors from the market town’s hinterland. Commuters are all too often left to fend for themselves. Accommodation is likewise normally seen as beyond the interpretive brief, although other visitor facilities are usually included.

Time to turn to the elephant(s) in the close... the major strategic challenges facing plans to substantially upgrade the interpretive experience of those living in or visiting Lanark. Dealing with these challenges is fundamental to boosting the experience economy and moving to a sustainable tourism model for Lanark. Getting the four zones’ arrival, circulation and facilities right is fundamental to a successful experience economy around Lanark and beyond. While there are tactical interventions – which should be gotten on with to improve the arrival experience – there are strategic issues which will only be solved by group consensus and significant effort.

H T Aiken, The Progress of Steam, illustrations of modern prophesy, 1830. (Wikimedia)
Above all, the Burgh – Lanark’s main transport point of arrival – lacks clear arrival facilities. There is a pressing need for: high quality, multiple modal transfer facilities; comprehensive, accurate and easily-accessible information on local and onward travel to local facilities and attractions; and signposting – all with clear identity branding. This is one of the most expensive and ambitious challenges identified in this report. There are, however, reasons to think that (once the current health challenges abate) this is a good time to be addressing core challenges.

In the past, access, circulation and facilities for the Royal Burgh (B) and New Lanark (C) tended to be seen as two separate problems. More recently with, for instance, the proposed New Lanark electric shuttle buses and the Business Improvement District, there is growing recognition that zones B and C are, for these issues in particular, deeply interdependent. Moreover, as noted, users of zones A and D currently make significant use of the facilities provided by zones B and C. Getting this right will not be easy and there is a great deal of prior knowledge and thinking that needs to be considered.
Part 1 – An Exceptional Natural and Human Heritage

Zone A
For those arriving from the Clyde Cycle Way and for walkers there is no meaningful point of arrival. Most use the same arrival infrastructure as B and C. There is a specific facility for the Clyde Gorge, the Scottish Wildlife Trust centre, but it is well on in the visitor journey.

Zone D
Again, there is no real arrival point for this zone although Castlebank Park and House, Delves Park and Castle Hill, have real potential here. Braxfield house and farm also need to be carefully monitored.

Improving the welcome and circulation for users of these two zones is not a major challenge, but is something that will pay significant dividends to the community and the enterprise economy of Lanark.

The long-term futures of Castlebank and Braxfield Houses are, however, greater and important challenges that need to be taken up.
Part 1 – An Exceptional Natural and Human Heritage

Zone B
The Burgh has in recent years upgraded and erected arrival/welcome branding and walking trail interpretation. However, as yet the question of arrival information and, critically, orientation has not been uniformly addressed. There are a great many different ‘information point’ mapping interventions around the town which would benefit from an interpretive upgrade.

In terms of public transport the train and bus arrival points are long established, giving rise to the ‘Lanark Interchange’ bus terminus. The latter in particular is, unfortunately, less than welcoming. All visitors are treated like commuters – i.e. left to fend, more or less, for themselves.

There is no principal vehicular arrival point nor are the lead public car parks promoted. A few do, however, have Electric Vehicle Charging Stations (EVCSs). While orientation information – if it exists – is much “decayed”.

Above all, the Burgh – as a result of organic ribbon development – lacks both a central focus and an appropriate arrival facility.

As a key element of the combined Lanark experience economy, the Burgh’s natural role as the lead point of arrival for all the zones is, critically, lacking.
Part 1 – An Exceptional Natural and Human Heritage

Zone C
For a range of reasons New Lanark has put more thought and effort into the arrival and circulation of their visitors. They:

• have for some time considered the question of vehicular access along the Beeches route to its carpark area
• will shortly invest in two electric buses to move visitors between Lanark and New Lanark
• would like to improve the current parking area to create an arrival facility.

New Lanark also accepts that arrival, circulation and visitor orientation at the mills remains a challenge. Indeed, this is why they would like to significantly improve their arrival carpark and support general visitor circulation with a new electric shuttle bus service that will improve links between key points in the Burgh, their arrival carpark, New Lanark and the Falls of Clyde.

The physical realities of accommodating the cars and coaches used by visitors, as well as local transport in New Lanark, the Falls of Clyde and the Burgh, has long been problematic. Indeed, it is also important to note that pedestrian and cyclist access between the town and New Lanark and access along the Clyde Cycle Way is far from ideal. In several places there is a pressing need for maintenance and improvement.
Part 1 – An Exceptional Natural and Human Heritage

Improving the arrival experience at the New Lanark carpark therefore makes great sense. But with the move to sustainable tourism and greener transport in general, past plans for upgrading parking will need to be carefully reviewed.

The current reality is that Lanark in all its zones – A, B C and D – is poor, even very poor, at managing visitor arrival and circulation. This is a significant problem which stems in part from Lanark’s historic and topographic situation. There are, fortunately, many effective ways to improve the situation once a holistic approach to the visitor journey is adopted.
Part 2 – Towards a Sustainable Lanark

Strategic Initiatives and Tasks

This section turns to specific initiatives and tasks which flow from the Vision. These actions will inevitably involve a considerable and diverse effort by the partners, community and many others. Improving Lanark’s interpretation lies at the heart of each of the actions proposed here. That said, many of these potential actions will have wider implications for the economic and social development of Lanark. In many respects that is the intention. One of the aims of this review of Lanark’s heritage and tourism was to use strategic interpretation to help recognise the sustainable capacity and interpretive infrastructure needed for maximum social and economic benefit.

Implementing these initiatives and tasks will mean prioritising and aligning efforts amongst the partners and engaging with the wider Lanark community and both regional and national government. Building community ‘buy-in’ and then projecting that combined clarity of purpose to others, many others, will be more important in the coming months and years than at any other time. No one is in doubt that we are living in interesting times. We do not know exactly how national and international economic strategies will play out post Covid-19. What indications there are suggest that we are not going to return to austerity as a means of ‘managing’ the economy.

Government taxation and spending is likely to be different. It may well be at levels and in ways that we have not seen for years, or ever. Those with a cohesive plan and the backing of their community and local authorities are going to be best placed to access these funds.

What follows are a number of initiatives broken down into tasks (numbered T1-14) – further steps in Lanark’s journey. These need to be got underway as soon as practical and most need more detailed planning before they can or perhaps should commence. Each task includes a series of initial bullet points to help initiate thinking about what they will mean and need. There will inevitably be issues about priorities, timing and the community’s capacity to undertake these tasks. They do not need to all be on the same timeline and several will clearly require wider funding, engagement and support.

Capacity building throughout the community will always be of social and economic benefit and is a priority of this plan.
Part 2 – Towards a Sustainable Lanark

Initiative 1 – Direction and Promotion

T1. Route Map and Navigators
This Strategy provides a general route map for the start of this journey. Parts 1 and 2 can in the future stand alone but should be updated following internal discussions and the public consultation. These two parts may then be periodically reviewed and updated (e.g. every two or three years).

A route map should of course have an end goal – and a time frame. If we were to take the objective of Lanark being carbon neutral, or even negative, with a sustainable tourism/visitor heritage economy, then 2030 or even 2050 are not unreasonable end dates. There is little doubt that the general aim of a ‘Sustainable Green Economy for Lanark’ will be an acceptable general direction of travel for many. But what this may mean in practice for Lanark will need to be researched and defined. Above all this task is about the need for both a route map and navigators. Change at this level will only be achieved by working from the top down as well from the bottom up. An enabling committee needs to both move this forward but also manage and garner community support and activity.

Action Points:
• Enabling Committee/Lead Organisation
• Move from Strategy to Route Map
• Sustainable Lanark activity groups
• Navigators and champions.
**T2. Evidence**

To make the case for Lanark we will need good visitor and community statistics and a robust understanding of past trends. As far as possible, historic and recent visitor and economic statistics should be added to a community open source library. New surveys should likewise be provided for public consideration and engagement. There is a case for surveys – such as the STP’s Place Standard Tool – to be undertaken periodically. Some statistics will be commercially sensitive, but as far as practical the objective is for schools, colleges and the community to be able to chart Lanark’s journey towards a sustainable economy. Lanark can readily attract interest and funding by being a case study and an exemplar of best practice.

**Action Points:**
- Gathering available statistics on historic tourism
- Pull together business statistics on the town
- Include web and social media statistics
- Contact colleges for student placements (e.g. Stirling University)
- Monitoring of and planning for sustainable tourism
- Transport statistics
- Retail statistics (e.g. supermarket figures)
- New surveys (e.g. STP’s Place Standard Tool)
- Annual eReports.

The Place Standard Tool is something we should consider deploying for Lanark: [https://www.placestandard.scot/#/tool/start](https://www.placestandard.scot/#/tool/start)
Part 2 – Towards a Sustainable Lanark

T3. Community and Brand
Community consultation and ‘buy-in’ is urgently needed. This cannot currently be undertaken in the normal way through public meetings. A series of considered press releases and semi-formal conversations with community group leaders will therefore have to be managed. Written responses and reports on conversations need then to be collated and reported on. It may be possible to provide community feedback using various project web pages and social media. Public meetings and workshops may follow in due course.

Assuming an initial positive reaction then the project should move to establishing a graphic style to help it develop its identity. This can be approached as a series of practical steps, beginning above all with agreeing the initial route map. Once this is done then an initial title and brand brief can be outlined. At this stage an agreed project name with font and colour may suffice. Other existing logos do not need to give way to a new Lanark-wide identity. Instead it may be possible to consider a low-key unifying identity in the genre of ‘powered by Lanark’ or ‘Lanark inside’ – an added-value approach to branding.

Action Points:

- Structured announcement of project
- Collate feedback
- Review community priorities
- Develop initial branding.

Lanimer Day parade.
Part 2 – Towards a Sustainable Lanark

T4. Digital Presence
Lanark already has a variety of strong websites and range of very active social media accounts and champions. Activities on these platforms have become particularly important during the Covid-19 lockdown. This is a good starting point for developing Lanark’s digital presence. Key to this will be encouraging the different channels to cross-promote what is happening in Lanark as combined locations. Lanark already has a community available digital asset management system (CMC Flow) and this can be more widely harnessed. Lanark’s digital presence and capacity can become a very significant tool in developing the local economy and community both directly and indirectly.

Action Points:

• Establish working team to co-ordinate digital activity
• Websites should add pages specifically for this project
• Cross-promote the zones of Lanark
• Ensure that the Lanark calendar has a digital plan
• Use Creative Commons to build a library of available resources for the town
• ‘Advertise’ Lanark’s experience economy via posts and links
• Build a wide digital community user base
• Gather and promote statistics on Lanark’s combined digital presence.
Part 2 – Towards a Sustainable Lanark

T5. Local Place and other Plans
As it is a medium to long-term tool the development of the Local Place Plan is included under Initiative 1. If a Local Place Plan were to be undertaken by the community, it will naturally sit alongside other initiatives including how spatial planning is viewed within the community and with the local authority. Over this period, additional planning inputs will be required. If successful, the project is likely to strengthen Lanark’s input to various planning and consultation programmes.

Action Points:

• Register intent to develop a Local Place Plan
• Map out phases
• Assess effort and priority for funding.
Part 2 – Towards a Sustainable Lanark

Initiative 2 – Funding and Support

T6. Alignment
Interpretation, strategic or otherwise, is essentially a practical, not political, process – except where funding is involved. Budget estimation and planning is part of T9, below. This task is to assess and then stay abreast of funding policy across different sectors – local and national government, business or charitable. This is not just about what calls for funding applications are being made, but more importantly to be aligned with policy and to be a recognised source of best practice and solutions. In other words, Lanark needs to be a ‘preferred bidder’ in areas of significant development funding. Funding at a level that can meaningfully change the options available to Lanark will normally mean accessing multiple funding streams. It will take time and purpose as Lanark aligns its own development plans with central and local government economic, green and sustainable transport and tourism development funds.

Action Points:
• Monitor strategic funding opportunities
• Target town regeneration and green funds
• Use Interpretation events to showcase relevance of Lanark in this area

• Maintain a presence at key conferences and events (e.g. 2020 UN Climate Change Conference – COP26 (postponed))
• Develop a strong profile over the long haul
• Working for increasing returns – building over 5+ years.
Part 2 – Towards a Sustainable Lanark

T7. Partnerships
The first and foremost partnership of this project is that which will grow amongst its primary sponsors and then other groups in and around Lanark. To these it will be important to add other local voices and businesses with an interest in Sustainable Lanark. To the Lanark partners, others will be gradually added whose interests align with the project. Sustainable tourism and green economic groups are already well established and their number will no doubt increase in the coming years.

Action Points:

- Identify and brief relevant Lanark partners
- Update existing commercial contacts (N.B. Drax Group)
- Update existing Scottish town groups (e.g. Scotland’s Towns Partnership)
- Review developer interest in town regeneration
- Research and plan a contact strategy for green energy groups
- Research and plan a contact strategy for Scottish transport planners and providers
- Research and plan a contact strategy with Scottish academic groups: engineering, green, transport, urban development.

Sustainable tourism diagram.
Part 2 – Towards a Sustainable Lanark

T8. Government – Local and National

Achieving Sustainable Lanark will need the full support of South Lanarkshire Council (SLC) and targeted access to central government funding. This is not going to happen without consensus and community support. It will also require significant briefing and nurturing of councillors, MSPs, MPs and officers. Councillors are already broadly aware of the aspirations of the project. There will also need to be a programme of briefings once this plan is publicised for consultation and then again as it is adopted. This should be a high priority as both seed funding and access to strategic funding will need SLC executive and representative support.

Action Points:

• Make high level contact with South Lanarkshire Council as soon as possible to make them aware of the emerging Vision and its implications for council support across a range of services
• Brief Scottish Government MSPs and MPs
• Identify relevant officers in Scottish Enterprise, Historic Environment Scotland and other government agencies and send briefing papers.
Part 2 – Towards a Sustainable Lanark

T9. Money
A great many of these initiatives and tasks require estimated costs if not more detailed budgeting. Initiatives 1 and 2 largely involve capacity building and development costs. Initiative 3 involves more substantial implementation projects and generally greater costs. How these tasks are defined and prioritised will greatly affect how they are resourced and funded. The reality is that local ‘in kind’ capacity is finite, but if the task is not time critical it is often possible to gather high quality talent and support for projects in and around Lanark. Some of these tasks will require significant cash funding as well as local ‘in kind’ contributions. Others may include Common Good resources and developer funding. In other words, we will be moving through very mixed economic models.

Action Points:
• Estimate of costs and potential funding options for each approved task
• Review of strengths and weaknesses for local capacity
• Review of relevant local authority spend
• Review of relevant central government and Scottish Enterprise spend
• Partnership project options
• Sponsorship and grant opportunities.
Part 2 – Towards a Sustainable Lanark

Initiative 3 – Action and Change

T10. Arrival and Circulation
A clear strategic initiative must be to address the joint requirement to improve arrival, circulation and facilities around Lanark. This has, of course, to be done in ways that are appropriate for the radically changing environmental, economic and social challenges that we now face. The move to sustainable tourism/visitor patterns is already underway and planning for how this can work for Lanark is critical both for leisure visitors and retail or business users. There are currently a number of well-known bottlenecks and transportation issues in Lanark. A key question will be how these can be resolved as part of Lanark’s transition to a greener footprint. In addition, there are a number of improvements, short and long term, that need to be made to the existing welcome infrastructure and unified interpretation.

Action Points:
• Gather current statistics on local and visitor transport patterns
• Monitor green transport plans for Lanark
• Briefing and monitoring of the New Lanark electric buses
• Refresh and upgrading of arrival information points across Lanark
• Removal of redundant signage
• Production of a uniform planning and interpretive master map of Lanark.

The UK’s first fully electric, fully low floor bus of the type to be run by New Lanark Trust.
Part 2 – Towards a Sustainable Lanark

T11. Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS)
The Burgh of Lanark has a significant number of listed buildings and other buildings of character within the conservation area that are beginning to appear run down. If gap sites and unsympathetic redevelopment were to appear, they will also erode the historic burgh morphology. Lanark has a very distinctive high street, with tight building lines, wide meeting points and key focal buildings. Narrow, historic burgage plots, especially at the lower end of the town, are a distinctive feature of the medieval town, as are the narrow radiating roads through former town ports. Unless action is taken the conservation area is going to get significantly degraded in the coming years. This is of interpretive concern and is affecting local and visitor reactions to the town centre. A key mechanism for improving this situation is to bid for a Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) grant. New Lanark has benefited from these in the past and indeed present. A range of preparatory work is needed before Lanark would be ready to bid for a CARS.

Action Points:
- Muster SLC support for a CARS in the conservation area of the Burgh
- Review and augment available information on listed buildings in the Burgh
- Establish property owner support for a CARS
- Contact other successful burgh-based CARS and learn from their experiences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SELKIRK CARS SUMMARY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19 Technical Seminars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£2million Direct Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Primary Streets Improved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£450,000 Streetscape Works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£1,080,000 Total Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Priority Buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BHS Contribution £865,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Selkirk CARS IN NUMBERS

- 69 Grant Offers
- £205,000 Largest Grant Offer
- 28 Buildings Repaired
- 5 Years (2013-2018)
- SBC Contribution £215,000
- 104 Education Events
- 753 Education Events

Summary of CARS grants and projects in Selkirk.
Part 2 – Towards a Sustainable Lanark

T12. Power
Lanark, with its past and present hydro power and national nature reserve, is well placed to embrace the green challenge. Interpretation will play an important part in adjusting to our green, sustainable world. Sustainable power generation, storage and consumption are going to be major themes over the next 25 years and more. Very positive contact has already been established with the Drax Group who run the local commercial hydro schemes. This needs built on not least to support the New Lanark hydro plant. Support from mechanical engineering specialists has also been initiated.

There is, however, a need to develop a much fuller understanding of power generation and consumption in Lanark. Support for sustainable green energy, for private and business use, is almost expected now, but following Covid-19 there may well be an opportunity to support changes in behaviour as well.

Action Points:

• Continue to develop strategic partnerships with power generators
• Engage with SLC energy conservation and development plans
• Support New Lanark in the development of a community hydro
• Develop engineering training and educational links

• Promote sustainable power planning for homes and businesses
• Align with major green funding sources and initiatives.

Image from the sustainability section of the Drax Group’s website.
T13. Exhibitions and Education
One of the strengths of Sustainable Lanark will be its ability to use interpretation in all of its forms to gradually strengthen the concept and direction of travel. Central to this will be exhibitions and educational visits and of course New Lanark is a major player in both of these media. Indeed, there is an opportunity for New Lanark, which already has these themes in its Management Plan, to significantly boost its footfall while supporting this interpretive strategy. Conversely, having access to significant exhibition spaces and conference facilities underlines Lanark’s combined strength. Add to this the expectation that by the autumn the Drax Group will be ready to restart tours at Bonnington Power Station and the potential for further synergies is there.

Action Points:
• Work with Drax Group to improve the Falls of Clyde interpretation up to and including Bonnington Power Station
• Consolidate and conserve the Bonnington Pavilion
• Support New Lanark in opening up Sustainable Lanark exhibitions
• Support education material and schools visits to promote Sustainable Lanark
• Support FE and HE education to engage with Sustainable Lanark

• Develop interpretation on green issues with the Scottish Wildlife Trust
• Prioritise sustainable visiting for the above.

"Living Landscape" exhibition by Clyde & Avon Valley Landscape Partnership, New Lanark 2018 - ongoing.
Part 2 – Towards a Sustainable Lanark

T14. Accommodation
Visitor accommodation is a significant factor in the Lanark economy. The situation with Covid-19 makes it difficult to plan future requirements, but currently the main provision of accommodation is in New Lanark, especially after the closure of the only other major hotel in the area, in the town. Under normal conditions the provision of accommodation in New Lanark was running at very high occupancy levels. It would seem that there is room for further non-competing accommodation in the burgh – where at present there is a shortfall in accommodation. The knock-on effect of increasing bed-nights in Lanark can only be beneficial to the local economy. Promoting the market for green accommodation for this will be a key part of the digital strategy.

Action Points:

- Gather information on catchment areas and visitor overnights for in and around Lanark
- Consider converting unused high street first floor properties to a portfolio of visitor self-catering green accommodation
- Link this to green activities and events
- Link this to government Town Centre Action Plans
- Develop a green accommodation market for online bookings.
Part 2 – Towards a Sustainable Lanark

Initiative 4 – Signature Project – The Lanark Hub

Community and visitor circulation has been identified as one of the critical factors limiting the development of Lanark as an entity. Past attempts to address this issue have had limited success, suggesting that a more holistic solution needs to be found and funded. As such the Lanark Hub initiative is going to be a significant challenge, requiring an effort greater than the other actions considered here. Fortunately, many of these ‘lesser’ actions will naturally contribute to what may become Lanark’s ‘signature’ project. An important way to look at this is that as the community builds momentum and capacity behind Sustainable Lanark, it uses the Lanark Hub initiative to target significant capital via town centre regeneration and other funds for its signature ‘bricks and mortar’ project.

There is a growing trend in urban planning to look at creating ‘hubs’ as a means of reinvigorating towns. These range from international projects, such as in the Dutch city of Groningen’s library hub, to eight ‘town hubs’ currently being planned in North Lanarkshire using development and Common Good Funds. Exactly what goes on in a hub and whether they will work is, well, vague. But the concept is out there in different ways and for very different towns.

Google satellite view of Lanark Interchange area.
Part 2 – Towards a Sustainable Lanark

Examples not dissimilar to Lanark are already attracting serious funding. The support of South Lanarkshire Council will be needed to help these funds reach Lanark. There is therefore a case to focusing the Local Place Plan (T5 above) on the requirements of this signature project.

What the Lanark Hub should include and where it should be located will obviously be important considerations. At this formative stage these are very much local considerations. The timescale for such a capital project means that we have to be thinking about requirements in 10+ years. It also has to clearly be aligned with government future planning and vision. For instance, radical changes in future transport patterns and technologies mean that any proposed hub must not only collocate with the public transport network but also be able to provide electric vehicle charging for both public service and private vehicles.

Bearsden community hub.

eBus charging station in Mannheim.
Part 2 – Towards a Sustainable Lanark

A promising location for the Lanark Hub is by the station and Lanark Interchange, close to health and council services. A solid business case for how locating a hub here (or elsewhere) in Lanark will improve the circulation between the zones, boost the economy and provide community benefit needs to be built.

Action Points:

• Start to develop design options for a Lanark Hub as part of the master planning exercise by Discover Lanark
• Explore the core functions and brief for a Lanark Hub
• Look at its role in arrival, interpretation and orientation for Lanark’s zones
• Consider benefits of locating the museum and other services to the Hub
• Investigate the future patterns of retail, e.g. browse and collect
• Model the commercial functions and boost to the town centre
• Integrate with transport planning, especially the future of electric shuttle services
• Model the sustainable green benefits of the hub and Lanark’s energy consumption
There can be no doubt that we are all embarking upon a long period of significant economic and social change. Our historic market towns and tourism centres have been economically stressed for many years. The Covid-19 pandemic has already had a dramatic and difficult impact worldwide. Nor has the virus yet been brought under control. Global warming may appear less immediate but it is no less dramatic or, global. Radical change, and opportunity, is not just on its way – it is happening now. Historic communities with their rich natural and human heritage, such as Lanark, have the potential and reference points to embrace change. The move to a more sustainable economic and social model is not just a top-down policy decision, it needs successful community-based exemplars. Communities themselves need to find new ways of doing business and how to take the heritage and society they value with them.

The next few years are going to be crucial in setting out Lanark’s direction of travel. Hence the focus here is on listing what we see as significant initiatives, tasks and actions. This Vision for Lanark will, we hope, help to form the basis of a flexible route map for the next ten years. Not every task will be taken forward and certainly not all at once. Much will depend on community interests and how wider policy and local capacity can be dovetailed together.

Conclusions

Google Earth view of Lanark, New Lanark, the Falls of Clyde and Designed Landscape.
Conclusions

As a group of very interested parties, the partners have made a start in establishing this Vision and now invite others not just to join them but to fully participate in Lanark’s journey. To help get things moving the partners who have worked together to formulate this Vision are invited to:

- Name, recognise and celebrate the unity of Lanark in all that they do
- Cross-promote the Falls of Clyde, the Royal Burgh, New Lanark and the surrounding Designed Landscape – all are stronger together
- Support the growth of a green, community-centred, sustainable economy in Lanark
- Develop an integrated digital strategy for Lanark that promotes the experience economy and Sustainable Lanark.

To help maintain momentum we suggest that the Steering Group – with original members from Lanark Community Development Trust, New Lanark Trust and Discover Lanark (BID Company) – should continue to oversee the delivery stages of this Strategy, with some additional members. It should include champions for each of the interpretive zones: the Falls of Clyde, the Royal Burgh, New Lanark and the Designed Landscape.

The Steering Group should now focus on co-ordinating community consultations, taking on board community feedback and laying the groundwork for those initiatives the community wish to prioritise.

CMC Associates Ltd. for:
- Lanark Community Development Trust
- Discover Lanark for Business
- New Lanark Trust

May 2020