

1 Bay 5

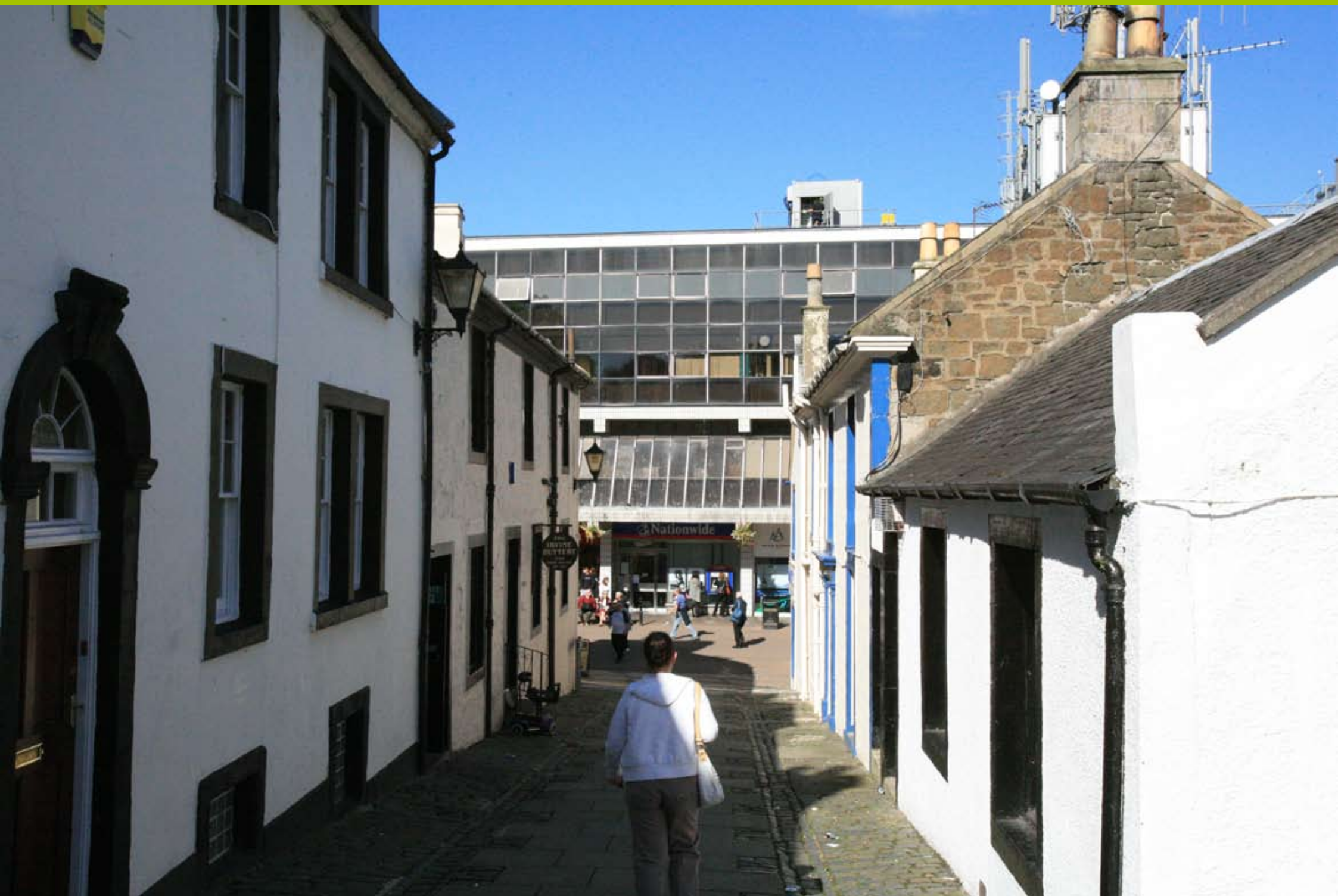


Section 3



The Strategy





The Power of Five

This strategy is developed through five themes as set out on the following pages. These look at the economy of the area, the quality of life, rediscovering the sea, promoting leisure activities and transforming the area’s image.

Each of these themes feeds into a series of proposed projects and into the masterplans for each of the towns.

They are also guided by a set of principles to ensure that all of the projects are viable, sustainable, command local support and are of the highest quality.



Themes

On the following pages we describe the five themes that make up the strategy for the area. Each of these is used as the basis for developing a series of projects.

- **iWork** - Creating and spreading wealth.
- **iLive** - Quality of Life for existing and new residents.
- **iSea** - Rediscovering the sea.
- **iPlay** - Making Irvine Bay a good place to spend time.
- **iBay** - Transforming the bay’s image.

Principles

It is important that all of the projects promoted by the URC are guided by a set of principles to ensure that they have transformational effect on the area. This strategy is therefore guided by the following principles:

- **Sustainability** - The effects of the URC’s actions should not add to climate change. There is scope, particularly through ecological housing and eco-villages to use sustainability to create a distinctive offer for the area.
- **Quality** - The developments promoted by the URC should be of the highest quality in terms of their design and construction to change the image of the area. This should be pursued through design guidance and competitions for key sites.
- **Community** - The work of the URC should be undertaken in partnership with the communities of the Bay. This is the way this strategy has been developed and it should continue to be an important part of the URC’s work.
- **Viability** - The URC’s work should work to raise values in the area to promote private sector-led regeneration. The strategy is based on a series of market led projects that can use rising values to make development attractive in the area.
- **Connectivity** - Irvine Bay will not survive in isolation and the strategy is based on improving connections within the area and the region, particularly public transport.



Strabane Precedent

A market town of 13,000 people in Co. Tyrone, Northern Ireland. Prosperous housing development around the Town led to serious decline of the Town Centre in competition with retail parks. Strabane 2000 (Company limited by guarantee) is an independent focus for the District Council, Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Community Groups to attract new investment and increase the value of property. So far some £3m public investment has secure £10m new private development.



iWork



The first theme relates to business start-ups and employment in the area. It is important to create an environment where existing business can prosper and particularly to play to strengths such as energetic materials and back office functions. However there is too much employment land in the area and there is a need to consolidate employment on the best sites and in new premises rather than have businesses operating in an atmosphere of vacancy and neglect. In addition to this the strategy must generate new employment through the promotion of start-up businesses and by exploiting the leisure, service and tourist sectors.

i1.1. Quality business environment:

The first element of the iWork strategy is a planning strategy to consolidate industry onto the best industrial areas. These are likely to include the eastern part of West Byrehill and the Newmoor and Riverside Industrial estates. The other industrial areas should either be planted with trees or turned over to other uses such as housing. It is suggested that the western part of West Byrehill could be released for housing as part of an agreement with the owners to invest in their other industrial stock. There is also scope to release other industrial land close to the town centres (such as Irvine Industrial estate and Stevenston). However the case has not been made for the release of more remote industrial sites such as Tournament Park.

This strategy would be pursued in a number of ways. The first is through an update of the local plan. This should incorporate a structure by which the value generated from released land is invested in improving other employment areas. There is also a need to commission work to explore ways of improving the Riverside Business Park.

i1.2 Sector Support:

There are a number of potential growth sectors in the area and the URC needs to focus its attentions on these areas. This includes energetics, aero-engineering (linked to Prestwick Airport), back-office functions, recycling, and chemicals. The initial step will be to fund a study with Scottish Enterprise into the feasibility and requirements of developing these sectors.

i1.3 Tourism, leisure and food:

There is a need for a concerted strategy to promote tourism and the visitor economy of the area. The economic strategy is based on growing businesses in these areas and skilling-up the community to work in these sectors. The strategy should include support for the provision of restaurant premises including a training restaurant along lines of Jamie Oliver's Fifteen Foundation, training for these sectors, enterprise facilitation for companies in these sectors (see i1.5), and new hotels in Irvine and Saltcoats.

i1.4 Premises strategy:

There is a lack of modern business space in the area and no demand to

build speculatively. There is therefore a need for the public sector to intervene in new businesses are to be encouraged. The strategy proposed the development of 4 types of business space:

Business centres: It is proposed that four new business centres be developed, one in each town, based on the successful model in Ardrossan. The developments would be around 1,500m² and would include fully-serviced office accommodation in a range of unit sizes. It is proposed that the URC seek a private sector partner for these schemes.

Office space: It is proposed that initially three office pavilion schemes be developed, 2,000m² schemes in Irvine and Ardrossan and a 1,000m² in Kilwinning. These would be private schemes with grant/rent guarantees

to allow a speculative development. In the masterplan they are part of a larger office scheme in Irvine to include possible relocations, accommodation for the council and expansion space for the future.

Workspace schemes: The proposals also include a new workspace scheme in each town, five in total. These would be around 3,000m² sub-divided into about 15 units to provide a range of sizes. These would be developed in partnership with a private developer with subsidy.

Self-build opportunity: Parts of Riverside should be marketed for companies looking for owner-occupied units. This should be part of a strategy for Riverside developed by the URC if it takes ownership of the area.

i1.5. Enterprise Facilitation:

Much of the strategy is concerned with stimulating the economy of the area. The URC should therefore have a strategy to encourage business growth and new business start-up to capitalise on this. This would be done in partnership with existing Scottish Enterprise activities with a view to promoting 500 new starts over 5 years.

Part of this will involve focusing SEA business services with a select group of companies in the Bay area including their assistance programmes and their 'gold account' with established companies. It would also involve an enterprise facilitation programme through which new companies are selected for intensive advice and assistance with premised marketing etc...



Marina

Cafe, restaurants

Office space

Saltcoats Lido

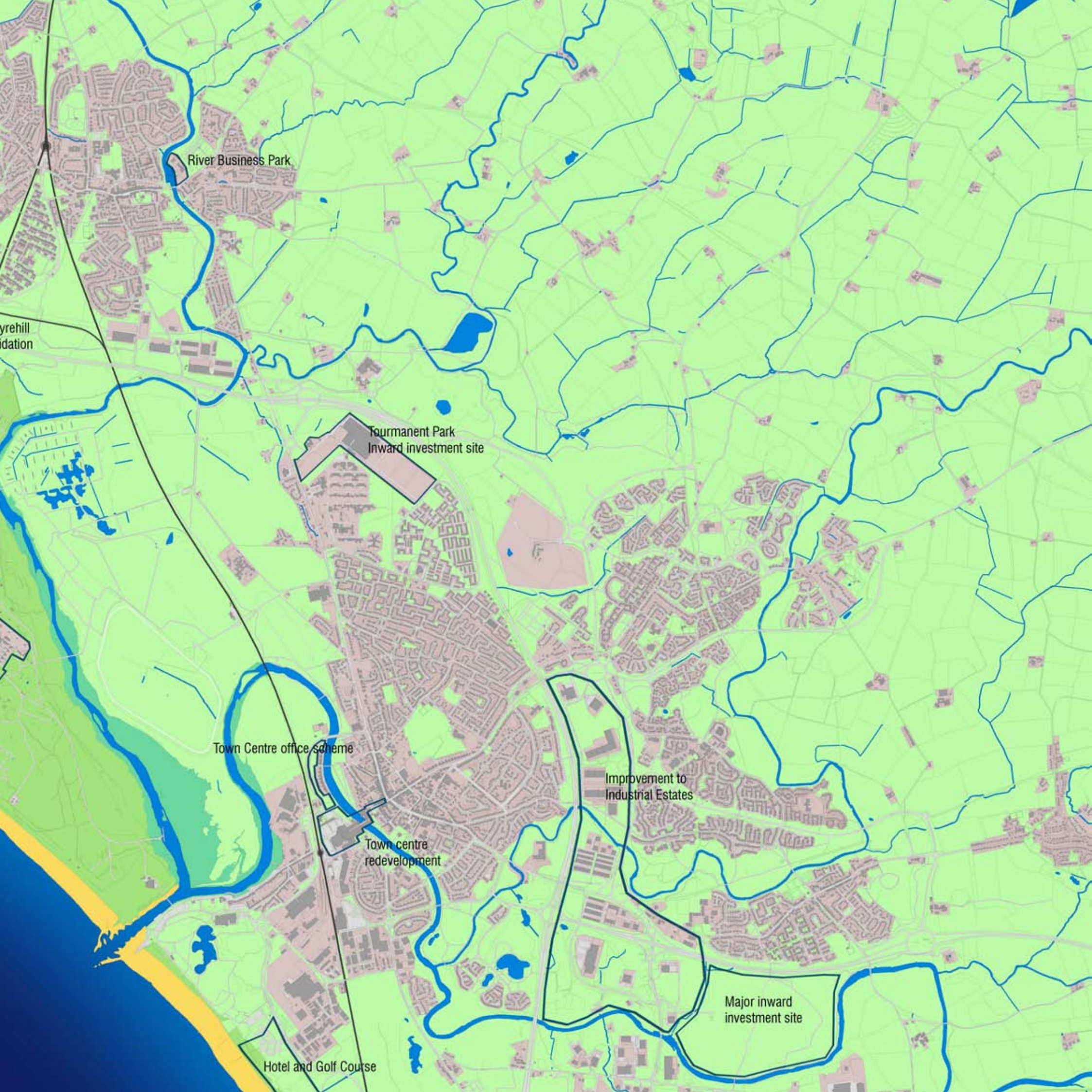
Workshop space

Extreme Watersports

West B
Consol

Ardeer Peninsular

Employment sites



River Business Park

yrehill
idation

Tourmanent Park
Inward investment site

Town Centre office scheme

Town centre
redevelopment

Improvement to
Industrial Estates

Major inward
investment site

Hotel and Golf Course

MORECAMBE

Morecambe is a traditional sea side resort that has almost entirely lost its role. It is reinventing itself with an extensive programme of public art. The centre piece of its regeneration is the redundant Midland Hotel a classic 1930s building that was once the symbol of the towns prosperity.

The hotel is being converted by Urban Splash to housing alongside the development of a prominent waterfront site that has been the subject of a major architectural competition. Its relevance to Irvine is that the market that Urban Splash are developing is for people wanting a base on the coast with stunning views and easy access to the Lake District. Some of the apartments will undoubtedly go as weekend retreats or even holiday homes - this however is an important way of reviving Morecambe's visitor economy.

www.midlandhotelmorcambe.co.uk



St. Mary's Island Kent

An English Partnerships waterfront scheme showing how waterfront development in Irvine and Ardrossan could relate to the coast.

The second theme relates to the provision of good quality housing. The 9,000 homes planned in the next 20 years need to contribute to the regeneration of the area. New housing should be concentrated around the town centres and along the coast and should be designed to be distinctive and high quality. This approach also needs to be applied to the existing housing and the proposed improvements by the council and housing associations.

i2.1 High quality new housing

We are proposing a strategy to encourage high-quality new housing in the area to create an attractive residential offer for people looking to live in the greater Glasgow area with access to the sea. This will not be achieved by identikit housing estates in peripheral locations. The strategy therefore concentrates new housing within the easy reach of the town centres and rail stations based on a series of 1,000m isochrones (see plan on following page). It also proposes a series of exemplar projects and a building exhibition to develop the reputation of the area as somewhere special to live:

Tarry Holme: An eco-village and housing exhibition on the Tarry Holme Site developed as a partnership between the URC, Communities Scotland and Irvine Housing Association.

Dune Eco Village: A second eco-village developed later in the programme on the coast at Stevenston.

Irvine Harbourside/Beach Park:

There are a series of opportunities for major residential development around Irvine Harbour and Beach Park.

Ardrossan Headland: Building upon and extending the work of Clydeport to create a marina/waterside community on the former port land in Ardrossan.

West Byrehill extension: The extension of Kilwinning onto part of the Byrehill estate as part of the industrial land consolidation policy (see i1.1).

i2.2 Neighbourhood Renewal:

It is important that initiatives to encourage new housing go hand in hand with projects to improve the existing housing stock. Much of this is in good condition and there is a £20 Million programme of renewal work on the council stock. The largest current initiative is a masterplan for the Vineborough Neighbourhood that could involve up to 200 demolitions. The Council is undertaking further work on low demand housing areas which will determine future priorities. These needs to be developed in partnership with the URC.



i2.3. Education and Training:

It is vital that the existing community develops the skills and qualifications required by the growth employment sectors. The schools in the area are performing reasonably well and there are plans for capital investment and rationalisation to address the weaker schools.

There is a need for a study to assess the effectiveness and impact of existing training, educational and after care interventions in the Irvine Bay area and to identify the role of the URC in improving provision.

The URC should also support the expansion of James Watt college with funding to assist with site preparation and the highest quality design.

The URC should also examine an Intermediate Labour Markets Project to explore opportunities for develop-

ing the social economy and social enterprises in the area. This could include the training restaurant (see i1.3).

i2.4 Sports and Social Facilities:






There is a need to rationalise sports provision in the area. This should involve the demolition of the Magnum Centre with re-provision on three sites; a smaller sports centre in the centre of Irvine, investment in the Kilwinning Sports Club (which would then become a training base for Kilmarnock Football Team) and the improvement of the Harvies Centre in Stevenston/Saltcoats. In addition to this water-sports facilities should be developed in Irvine Harbour (sailing school), Stevenston, (extreme watersports) and Ardrossan (marina).

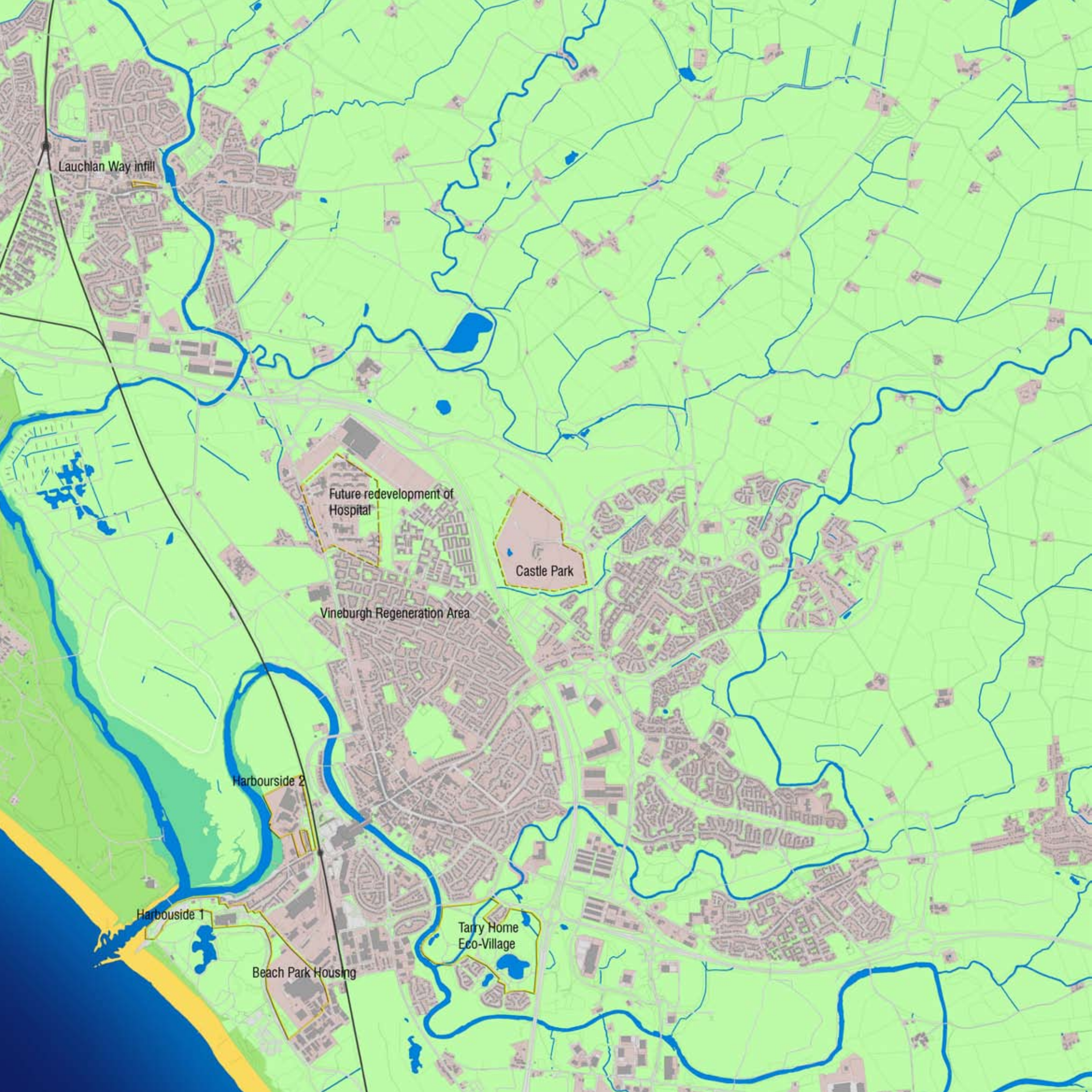
5. Community Chest:

There is a huge amount of community activity in the Bay area. These communities are vital to the future of the area and there is an opportunity to make available a grant fund for activities that support the wider strategy such as festivals and markets, environmental schemes etc...



Housing sites

-  1,000m circles around the railway stations
-  1,000m Isochrones around the station (walking distances)
-  Proposed housing sites
-  Other housing sites
-  Neighbourhood Renewal Areas



Lauchlan Way infill

Future redevelopment of
Hospital

Castle Park

Vineburgh Regeneration Area

Harbourside 2

Harbourside 1

Beach Park Housing

Tarry Home
Eco-Village

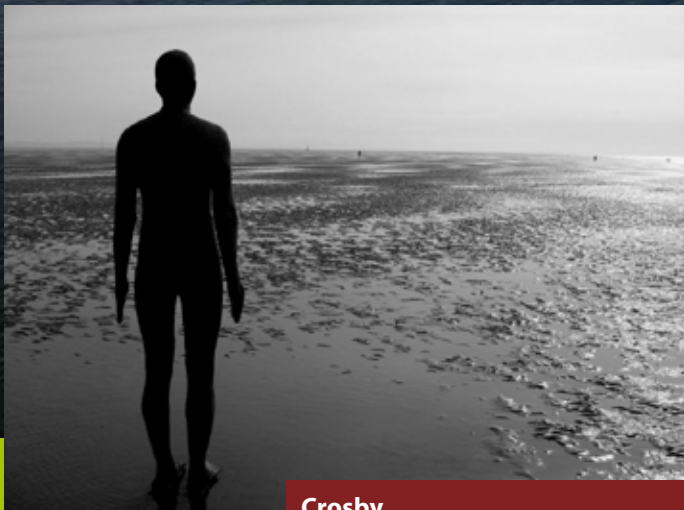
MABLETHORPE

In order to create a series of attractions along the coast Mablethorpe have been developing a series of bathing huts. These have been developed through a series of competitions being run under the Bathing Beauties banner – a project conceived by artist Michael Trainor to create 'dramatic and beautiful new seaside architecture' along a forgotten 10-mile stretch of coastline from Mablethorpe to Chapel St. Leonards.

Initial designs have been developed through international design competitions for artists, architects and designers. The aim of Bathing Beauties is to create a linear gallery of bold new beach huts and other seaside structures with innovative architecture as the linking theme. The winning entries, when constructed in 2007, will be available for daily hire from the local authority.

The most recent competition gathered nearly 250 entrants from worldwide architecture practises.

www.bathingbeauties.org.uk



Crosby

The perceptions and visitor numbers to Crosby Beach – a nondescript stretch of coastline north of Liverpool – has been transformed by a sculpture by Anthony Gormley. The 100 figures are revealed by the retreating tide.

The third theme relates to Irvine Bay's greatest asset - the bay. Much of the coast is lined with attractive beaches and yet the towns turn their back on the sea. Irvine is cut off from the harbour and its beach by the railway and even Saltcoats, which grew up as a resort, seems to treat the coast as if it were the back of the town. There is therefore a need to turn the towns back towards the sea by using the coast as the thread that links them together through the creation of a coastal park.

i3.1 Landmark Developments:

The development of each of the headlands along the coast with a series of high-quality landmark schemes. Currently some of these sites are occupied by sites that detract from the area, supermarkets that turn away from the sea, disused industrial units and poor quality housing. The aim of the landmark developments is to punctuate views along the coast to link the area together and create a very prominent symbol of regeneration. They include:

Ardrossan Marina: A residential tower to create a landmark on the marina)

Ardrossan Headland: A second residential tower overlooking south Bay.

Saltcoats Lido: A high quality hotel development (in a later phase).

Saltcoats Pier: The development of the pier (in the future to include the supermarkets).

Stevenston Jetty: An extreme sports centre with a tall mast structure.

Irvine Harbourside: A taller residential scheme at the southern end of the harbourside scheme.

i2.2 Coastal Beacons:

Despite having a fantastic sea front there is little to do on the beaches. It is proposed that ten 'Coastal Beacons' be commissioned by architectural competition to provide facilities for visitors. The Coastal Beacons could be cafes, shelters, temporary galleries etc... and are modelled on the Mablethorpe example (see exemplar). The competitions should attract highest quality architectural practices and the Coastal Beacons will eventually combine to create a tourist route of their own as well as serving coastal visitors.

i3.3 Coast Walkway:

A key issue is to resolve access difficulties that make some parts of the coast hard to access. This will include access improvements as part of the town masterplans. However the most important project is the Mudflats walk allowing an alternative access to the Ardeer Peninsular when the Big Idea bridge is open.



i3.4 Public Spaces:

Developments, Coastal Beacons and walkways should be knitted through a series of public spaces that create attractive areas for walking and recreation. These include:

Ardrossan Esplanade: The creation of a waterfront landscape as part of the residential development.

Ardrossan South Beach: Working with the flood defence proposals, environmental improvements to this area.

Stevenston Dunes: The recreation of the dunes and the development of a kite boarding area.

Big Idea Nature Reserve: The development of the southern part of the peninsular and the mudflats as a nature reserve.

Irvine Beach Park: Improvements to the main part of the park and the creation of a Links golf course to the south.

i3.5 Waterfront Development:

The coastal park will be punctuated by waterfront development. This will normally include housing on the upper floors with ground floor uses such as cafes, bars and restaurants. This could also include small workspaces and offices, shops, sailing and watersports supplies etc... It is unlikely that these activities will be viable immediately. In this case the ground floor spaces should be left empty until demand for these uses has been created. The cost of creating these voids will need to be factored into the scheme appraisals allowing the space to be left empty or let at low rents

to encourage companies to locate on the waterfront. The aim should be to create a series of attractions along the coast and also to attract the people of the towns to the coast to eat and drink.



Coastal Park



Landmarks



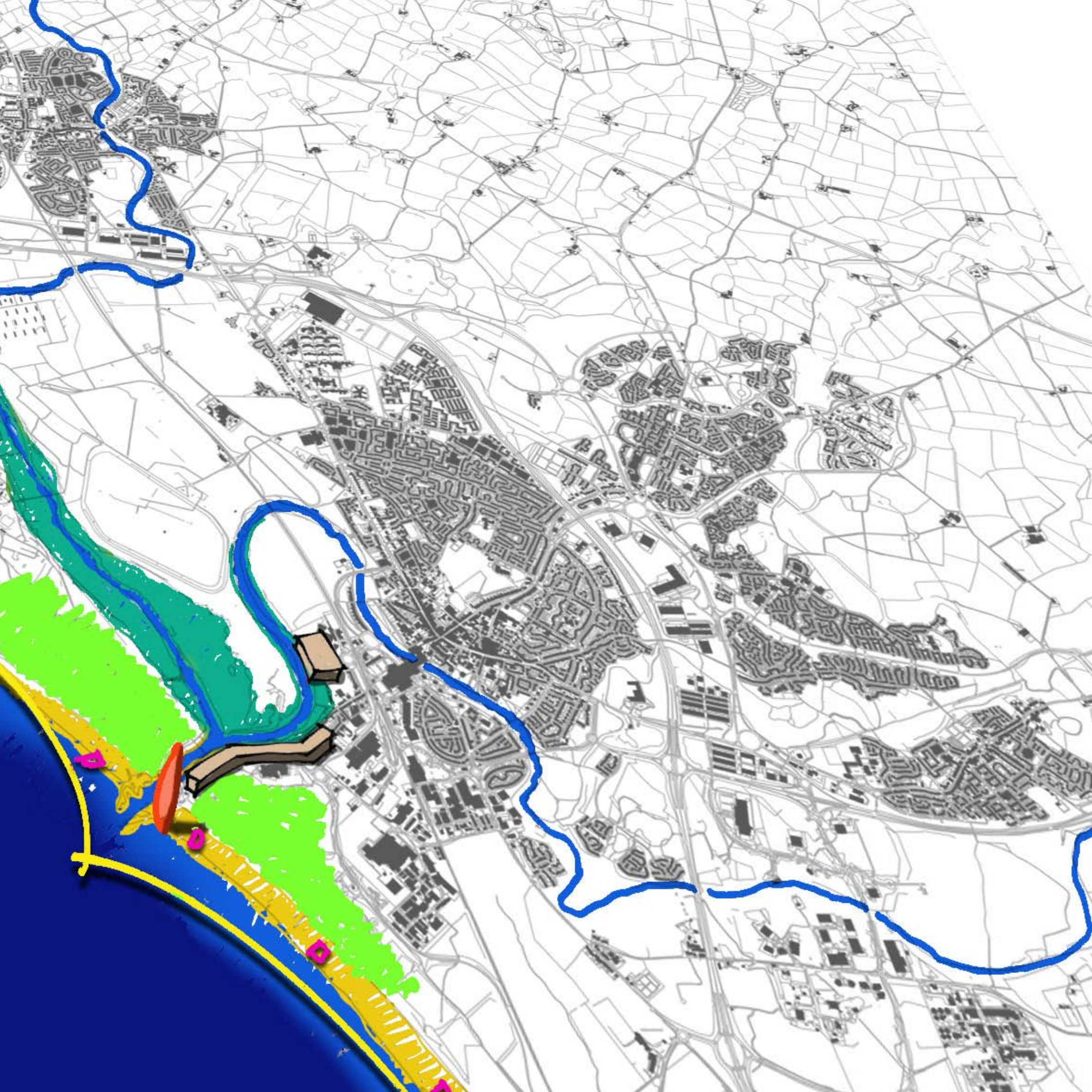
Coastal Beacons



Public realm improvements



Waterfront development



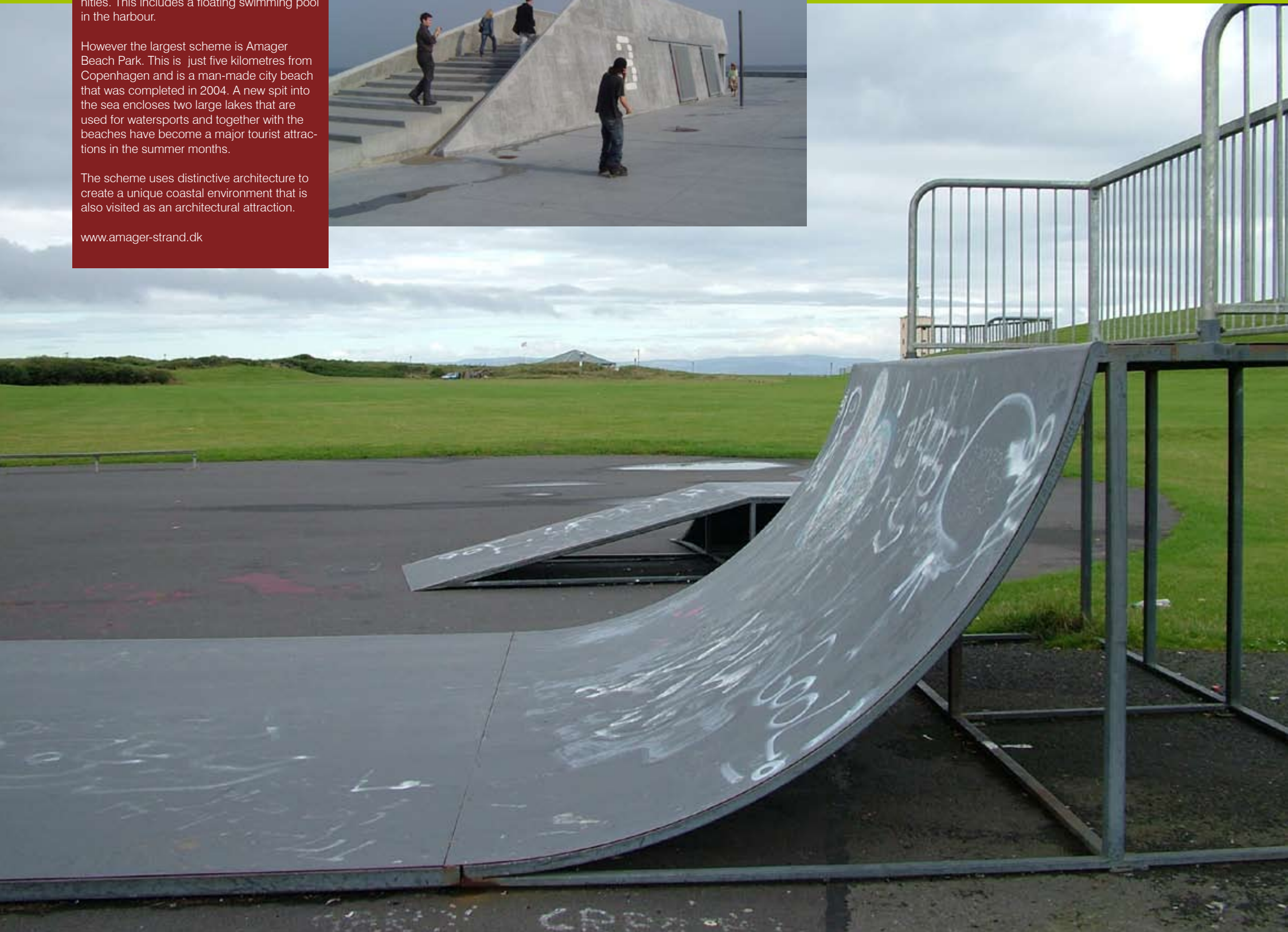
COPENHAGEN

Traditionally Copenhagen has turned its back on the recreational opportunities of the sea. However improving water quality has allowed it to develop a series of watersports opportunities. This includes a floating swimming pool in the harbour.

However the largest scheme is Amager Beach Park. This is just five kilometres from Copenhagen and is a man-made city beach that was completed in 2004. A new spit into the sea encloses two large lakes that are used for watersports and together with the beaches have become a major tourist attractions in the summer months.

The scheme uses distinctive architecture to create a unique coastal environment that is also visited as an architectural attraction.

www.amager-strand.dk



iPlay

This theme is about leisure provision. We have called it 'play' rather than tourism because the activities should be as relevant to local people as they are to visitors. There is the opportunity to generate a broad range of leisure activities such as sailing, golf, water-sports or kite boarding to make Irvine Bay a good place to spend time, whether you be a visitor, existing resident or someone thinking of moving in.



i4.1 Ardrossan Marina:

The development of a second marina has already been proposed as part of the Clydeport masterplan for Ardrossan. This would be around 350 berths and would make use of the former Shell dock. For this to work there is a need to create a new break-water and sea gate to protect the boats from damaging waves. There is the potential for the URC to partner Clydeport in this development which is unlikely to be viable as a purely commercial development.

i4.2 Stevenston Extreme Watersports centre:

The jetty at Stevenston is used as a base for jet skiing. It is proposed that the URC build upon this by working with a local club to develop an extreme watersports centre on the jetty. This would cater for jet skiing, wind

surfing, kiteboarding etc... The centre would include a clubhouse, equipment storage and hire and changing facilities. There is also the potential for land-based sports such as kite boarding on the grassed areas along the coast. This however needs to be managed to avoid conflict with local people using the area for recreation.

i4.3 Irvine Golf Course:

The golf industry is currently the main attraction for people visiting the area. There are currently 13 golf courses in the area, some of international standard and there is a strong trade in international visitors flying into Prestwick for golfing holidays. Particularly attractive to this market are links courses on the coast. There is the opportunity to create a new links course on the southern part of the Beach Park in Irvine. This area is currently

under used and attracts anti-social activity. The proposal is to create an iconic hotel linked to a new high quality course that can help transform the appearance of the Irvine coastline along with the housing proposed in the area. This would be a private development and should be commissioned through a developer/design competition.

i4.4 Maritime Museum:

The Maritime Museum has recently secured funds to consolidate and expand its operations. The plan is to create a working museum including exhibits alongside a historic boat repair and building yard. This could be developed in partnership with the ship building courses at the James Watt College. It is proposed that the museum expand and develop its waterfront site to create a working boat

yard linked to boats in the harbour. As part of this, free mooring could be offered to any vessel more than 100 years old so that the whole of the harbour becomes a living museum. The URC should assist in this with land acquisition.

i4.5 Big Idea:

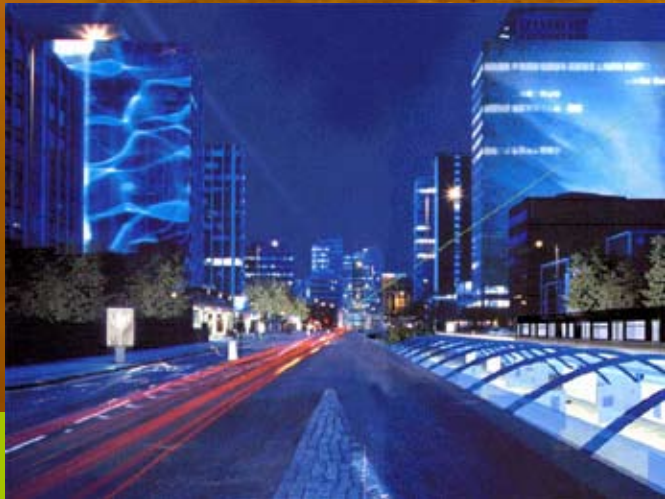
The vacant Big Idea is an unfortunate symbol of past failure in the area and must be addressed as a matter of urgency by the URC. A number of potential uses have been explored as part of the study although much more detailed feasibility work is required as well as clarity over the ownership of the building. Possible uses include a gallery housing a maritime collection. It could also become a wildlife centre, modelled on a facility on the west coast of Scotland with screens in the buildings linked to cameras in

hides throughout the nature reserve. Another possibility is a use linked to the industrial activities on the Ardeer peninsular such as a research centre, an office or a visitor centre exploring energetics. This needs to be explored through a more detailed study.



Bristol Legible City

Over the last five years Bristol has led the way in signage strategies. They commissioned a suite of direction signs, interpretation boards and information points using unified design and graphics. The result is not just to improve the image of the city but to change the way people use the city and perceive different quarters.



Croydon

Like Irvine Croydon suffers from a poor image because of post-war planning. Realising that it could not change the buildings the town developed a strategy to change the way they look through imaginative lighting.

iBay

The final theme is about changing the image of the area. The industrial and new town legacy has left the area with a poor image. This, as much as the reality, is what is putting off new investment and potential residents and visitors. The image of the area can be changed by playing to its strengths such as the traditional town centres and the coastal environment. However it also involves addressing some of the less attractive aspects of the area, such as some of the new town architecture and the industrial vacancy.



i5.1 Promotional Campaign:

The URC should spearhead a campaign that advertises the qualities of Irvine Bay across Ayrshire and beyond. It should be high profile, wide reaching and co-ordinated by a leading out of house advertising agency with input and guidance from an in-house promotions officer. There is no point in working on the projects outlined in the themes if no one is being told that the work is being done and the area is changing.

i5.2 Design Guidance:

To ensure that those working in partnership understand clearly the URC's goal of promoting design excellence, a design and sustainability guide should be commissioned. This should become mandatory for all new development and would be applied through the direct control of the URC on sites where it has a funding or land

ownership interest as well as through the planning system. The guide should be commissioned jointly with the Council's planning department to establish a shared agenda between North Ayrshire and the URC.

i5.3 Signage and interpretation:

One of the issues with the five towns is a poor image and a confusion of identity. It is suggested that a signage strategy be developed which unifies the area and redraws the mental map of the bay. The best example of this is the Bristol Legible City Initiative which involves a unified colour scheme and graphic treatment. The first step will be to commission a graphic identity for the area and a series of signage types. In partnership with the council this would be applied to all new signage and to the gradual renewal of existing signs.

i5.4 Irvine Forest:

Irvine Bay currently has an over allocation of industrial land. The strategy described above suggests consolidating industry onto the best estates, allowing some areas to go for housing and planting the rest with trees. This together with widespread tree planting in the area would change the environment of the area from exposed coastal plain to forest. The trees could be planted commercially and cropped when sites come forward for development. There is also the possibility of linking this to Carbon sequestration for flights into Prestwick Airport. While recent research has questioned the value of tree planting in reducing global warming (because trees increase the rate at which land absorbs heat) they remain valuable to reduce CO2 levels.

i5.5 Lighting strategy:

Linked to the coastal park is a proposal for a lighting strategy. The coastline is currently very dark and intimidating at night. While it is not proposed to light the whole coast there is scope to light the headlands so drawing people to the sea and creating a series of landmarks when looking along the coast. This could include lighting buildings as well as light sculptures and projections to create a sense of excitement and interest. One suggestion has been to light the wind turbines although from the consultation this would split local opinion.



Summary of environmental projects



Kilwinning
High Street

Kilwinning Riverside
Gateway

Nethermain
Tree Planting

Irvine Town Centre
Public realm works

Big Idea Nature Reserve

Beach Park

Environmental works to
consolidated industrial land