

**Ballykelly**

Village Plan

March 2024

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# A white background with black dots Description automatically generated1.0 Introduction

Ballykelly is situated approximately 13 miles east of the city of Derry/Londonderry and in close proximity to both Limavady and Coleraine. The village enjoys good access to major roadways, including the recently upgraded A2 dual-carriageway and the A37, which runs through the middle of the village. The City of Derry Airport is also close by, offering direct flights to London and other UK cities. In addition, the local bus services provide travel options to surrounding areas, enhancing connectivity and accessibility for commuters. The main railway line running to and from Belfast runs close to the village, but there is no access to any station in the village. These linkages make Ballykelly a desirable and affordable destination for those seeking employment in the wider North West Region.

An aerial view of a town

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Figure 1: Aerial View of Ballykelly Village, (Source:Google Earth)

Shackleton Barracks stands as a prominent landmark in Ballykelly, paying homage to the renowned polar explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton. A former military installation has played a pivotal role in shaping the area's identity through its use in past military operations and training exercises.

Following the handover of the expansive 621-acre facility by the Ministry of Defence to the Northern Ireland Executive in 2011, the site became a focal point for potential development. In a significant move, most of the site was acquired for £1m by MJM Group in February 2016, marking a transformative step towards its future utilisation. That has yet to be fully realised but the opportunities for redevelopment of the site could herald a new era for Ballykelly.

The former Shackleton site now houses the new regional headquarters of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), in Jubilee House. Acquired by the Stormont Executive in 2011, this state-of-the-art facility officially opened its doors in 2018. Boasting cutting-edge technologies and innovative design, Jubilee House serves as a hub for collaboration across the DAERA network. Its strategic location at Ballykelly and modern amenities were purposely chosen by DAERA to act as a catalyst for the development and sustainability of Northern Ireland’s rural communities.

Sitting on the shores of Lough Foyle, and near the Sperrin mountains, Ballykelly has a number of natural environmental assets. Ballykelly Forest, the first state forest acquired in Northern Ireland lies on the outskirts of the village. With its network of forest tracks and paths, the forest offers opportunities for outdoor recreation, including walking, cycling and running, amidst mature woodland surroundings. The village's proximity to the River Roe and Lough Foyle, marshland and woodland habitats, further enhances its appeal as a destination for outdoor enthusiasts, locals and visitors alike.

Figure 2: Ballykelly’s Men’s Shed

The village holds a special place in the legacy of the acclaimed author, John Steinbeck, whose maternal grandfather, Samuel Hamilton, hailed from Mulkeraugh in the village. Steinbeck, fascinated by his Irish roots, visited the area in 1952, documenting his trip in an article titled, *‘I Go Back To Ireland’*. It was during this time Steinbeck drew inspiration from his Ballykelly-born grandfather for the major character of Samuel Hamilton in his famous novel, *‘East Of Eden*’, which was published in the same year.

|  |  |
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| **Key Assets** | **Community Groups** |
| Jubilee House  Ballykelly Forest  Shackleton Barracks  Men’s Shed  Knightsbridge Hospital  Drummond Hotel  Ballykelly Community Portacabin  Shackleton and Aviation Museum  John Steinbecks Home  Wallworth House  St Finloughs Church  Orchard Community Playgroup  Outdoor Gym | Men’s Shed  Binevenagh Historical Society  Nedd Cricket Club  Glack GAC  Ballykelly Utd  Orchard Playgroup |

Table 1: Summary of Key Assets and Community Groups Located in Ballykelly

# 2.0 Strategic Context

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Description automatically generated2.1 Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council: Community Plan 2017-2030**

At its core, community planning aims to develop a holistic, forward-looking strategy for the area. This involves a thorough examination of its requirements, priorities, and opportunities, integrating social, economic, and environmental considerations. A Community Plan aims to unite stakeholders and encourage collaborative endeavours to realise a collectively envisioned future.

The Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council Community Plan serves as the leading vision for steering the area towards a better future. Through the Community Plan, the Council aspires to instigate positive change, foster sustainable development, and elevate community well-being.

Embracing inclusivity, the Community Plan is designed to address the diverse needs and aspirations of the whole community, positioning the area on a trajectory towards a prosperous, harmonious, and resilient future. It facilitates coordinated efforts to achieve improved outcomes in health, education, housing, public safety, communities, the economy, and the environment.

Operating on both a Council-wide scale and within local and neighbourhood contexts, the Plan is a collaborative initiative developed in close partnership with key stakeholders. Extensive engagement with local communities, groups, and individuals ensures the Community Plan is reflective of the community’s diverse perspectives and tailored to address the unique needs of the area.

The Community Plan has three overarching, long-term strategic Population Outcomes, along with 12 Intermediate Outcomes in-line with the proposed Programme for Government, outlined below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **A Healthy**  **Safe Community** | **A Sustainable**  **Accessible Environment** | **A Thriving**  **Economy** |
| Individuals will contribute to and benefit from a healthy, connected, and safe community that nurtures resilience, promotes respect, and supports everyone to live well together. | Individuals will value and benefit from a diverse, sustainable, and accessible environment, with an infrastructure that is fit for purpose and that enables connections. | Individuals will contribute to and benefit from a thriving economy, built on a culture of growth, entrepreneurship, innovation, and learning. |

|  |
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| **A Healthy Safe Community** |
| * **Outcome 1:** All people of the Causeway Coast & Glens benefit from improved physical health and mental wellbeing. * **Outcome 2:** Our children and young people will have the very best start in life. * **Outcome 3:** All people of the Causeway Coast & Glens can live independently, as far as possible, and access support services when they need it. * **Outcome 4:** The Causeway Coast & Glens area feels safe. * **Outcome 5:** The Causeway Coast & Glens area promotes and supports positive relationships. |

|  |
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| **A Sustainable Accessible Environment** |
| * **Outcome 6:** The Causeway Coast & Glens area is widely recognised and celebrated for its unique natural built landscapes. * **Outcome 7:** The Causeway Coast & Glens area has physical structures and facilities that further growth, access, and connections. * **Outcome 8:** The Causeway Coast & Glens area has a sustainably managed natural and built environment. |

|  |
| --- |
| **A Thriving Economy** |
| * **Outcome 9:** The Causeway Coast & Glens area provides opportunities for all to contribute to and engage in a more prosperous and fair economy. * **Outcome 10:** The Causeway Coast & Glens area attracts and grows more profitable businesses. * **Outcome 11:** The Causeway Coast & Glens area drives entrepreneurship & fosters innovation. * **Outcome 12:** All people of the Causeway Coast & Glens area will be knowledgeable and skilled. |

The Community Plan serves as a blueprint for addressing multifaceted needs, ranging from health and education, to housing, public safety, communities, the economy, and the environment. This scope aligns with the objectives of the Village Plan, which is specifically tailored to address the unique characteristics and requirements of the individual villages within the Causeway Coast & Glens area. By strategically aligning these plans, we can create a cohesive and comprehensive approach that maximises resources, ensures efficient coordination, and facilitates targeted interventions at both the regional and local level.

**The Village Plan contributes to each of the three strategic Population Outcomes as follows:**

**A Healthy Safe Community**

The Village Plan is designed to foster a healthy, connected, and safe community that prioritises the well-being of residents. Through initiatives focused on public health, recreational spaces, and community programmes, the Village Plan aims to create an environment that nurtures resilience, promotes respect, and supports everyone in living well together.

Health and safety measures, including accessible healthcare facilities, community policing, and awareness campaigns will be integral components. By emphasising mental and physical health, fostering social connections, and implementing safety measures, the Village Plan contributes to building a community that is not only physically secure but also emotionally and socially supportive.

**A Sustainable Accessible Environment**

The Village Plan places a strong emphasis on creating a sustainable, accessible environment that values and benefits from diversity. This includes careful consideration of environmental conservation, green spaces, and infrastructure that supports accessibility for all residents. Sustainable development practices, such as energy-efficient technologies and waste reduction initiatives, will be incorporated.

The Plan envisions an environment where diverse ecosystems thrive alongside well-planned infrastructure that encourages connectivity. By investing in accessible public spaces, efficient transport systems, and environmentally friendly practices, the Village Plan aims to create an inclusive and sustainable environment that residents can value and benefit from.

**A Thriving Economy**

To contribute to and benefit from a thriving economy, the Village Plan adopts a holistic approach centred on growth, entrepreneurship, innovation, and learning. Economic development strategies will be integrated to support local businesses, encourage entrepreneurship, and attract new investments. Educational programmes and initiatives that foster a culture of innovation and continuous learning will be promoted.

The Plan envisions a community where economic opportunities abound, creating a vibrant and dynamic local economy. By facilitating an environment that encourages business growth, job creation, and skill development, the Village Plan aims to contribute to the development of a thriving community with a robust and sustainable economy.

The Village Plan, being an integral part of the broader Community Plan, inherits the overarching goals and principles, tailoring them to the distinctive nuances of each village. Through collaborative efforts and shared objectives, the implementation of the Village Plan becomes an integral part of the larger narrative outlined in the Community Plan, fostering a sense of unity and purpose.

In conclusion, the strategic alignment of the Village Plan with the Community Plan presents a unique opportunity for collaborative development. By leveraging the strengths of both plans, we not only enhance the overall impact on the community but also create a roadmap that guides sustainable development, fosters community resilience, and promotes a harmonious future for the Causeway Coast & Glens area. This strategic integration will ensure that our efforts are coordinated, targeted, and collectively directed towards a shared vision of prosperity and well-being.

**2.2 Wider Strategic Alignment**

The implementation of the key actions contained within this Village Plan also represents an alignment with wider public sector policy:

| **Theme** | **Policy Alignment** |
| --- | --- |
| **Facility Development** | * Regional Development Strategy 2035 (Department for Infrastructure) |
| **Playgroup Forest School** | * Northern Ireland Children and Young People’s Strategy 2020 – 2030 (Department of Education) * Local Assessment of Need 2023 – Causeway Coast & Glens (Education Authority) |
| **Capacity Building** | * PEACE Plus (Special EU Programmes Body) * Together Building a United Community (The Executive Office) |
| **Heritage &**  **Cultural Development** | * PEACE Plus (Special EU Programmes Body) * Together Building a United Community (The Executive Office) |
| **Village Aesthetics** | * Regional Development Strategy 2035 (Department for Infrastructure) |
| **Community Safety** | * Community Safety Framework (Department of Justice) |
| **Development of Shackleton Barracks** | * Regional Development Strategy 2035 (Department for Infrastructure) |

**2.3 Local Community Groups**

A range of local community, sporting, statutory and commercial stakeholders will play a pivotal role in supporting the successful delivery of this Village Plan. These grassroots organisations are the heartbeat of the community, possessing an intimate understanding of needs, aspirations, and challenges. By actively engaging with and involving these groups in the planning and execution phases, the Village Plan gains valuable allies in its mission to create positive and lasting change.

First and foremost, local community groups serve as conduits of local knowledge and expertise. They have established trust and connections within the community, making them adept at identifying nuanced issues and opportunities that may not be immediately apparent. This grassroots insight is invaluable in crafting a Village Plan that is not only comprehensive but also tailored to the specific needs of residents.

Moreover, these organisations bring a wealth of social capital to the table. Their established networks and relationships within the community facilitate effective communication and outreach. This social fabric enhances the Plan's reach, ensuring it resonates with a broad cross-section of the population. Through collaborative efforts with local community groups, the Village Plan can leverage existing community ties to garner support, participation, and feedback.

Additionally, local stakeholders often have a proven track record of delivering successful projects and initiatives. Their experience in mobilising resources, organising events, and driving community engagement can significantly contribute to the effective implementation of the Plan. By tapping into this wealth of experience, the Plan can benefit from tried-and-true strategies for fostering community cohesion and achieving shared goals.

By fostering collaboration at a local level, the Village Plan gains not only expertise and resources but also the collective energy and commitment of the community itself. Together, they form a powerful alliance dedicated to realising the shared vision for a vibrant, thriving, and inclusive community.

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# A white background with black dots Description automatically generated3.0 Socio-Economic Profile

The statistics referenced in this Village Plan reflect the most current data available, extracted from the 2021 Census, and has been supported by analysis of the 2017 Multiple Deprivation Measures for the area.

**3.1 Population**

At the time of the 2021 Census, the population of the Ballykelly settlement was 2,029. This represents the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency figure obtained for the Ballykelly settlement.

**3.2 Statistical Profile**

This statistical analysis accounts for key characteristics of the ‘Benbradagh A’ Super Data Zone population. Some areas of Ballykelly fall under the ‘Benbradagh B1’ Zone. However, this area contains the former RAF air base and rural areas that encroach on the outer suburbs of Limavady, therefore it has been excluded from this analysis. Data is also included from the September 2022 Business Register & Employment Survey.

It should be noted that the boundaries of this statistical zone vary from the boundaries of the NISRA Settlement area used to calculate the population figure presented at Chapter 3.1.

A map of a neighborhood

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Figure 3: Map of Benbradagh A Super Data Zone, (Source: Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency)

**3.3 Age Profile**

The population of Ballykelly has an age profile that is in line with the Benbradagh DEA averages, but which is also more youthful than Council and National averages, as evidenced by the composition of the village in terms of its age profile in the below table:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Area** | **Age 0-14 yrs** | **Age 15-39 yrs** | **Age 40-64** | **Age 65+ yrs** |
| Ballykelly / Benbradagh A | 23% | 34% | 31% | 12% |
| Benbradagh DEA | 22% | 31% | 33% | 15% |
| Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council Area | 18% | 29% | 34% | 19% |
| Northern Ireland | 19% | 31% | 32% | 17% |

The 2021 Census indicates Ballykelly’s population was almost evenly split between females (51%) and males (49%).

**Household Size**

The number of usual residents in the household on Census Day 2021 in Ballykelly was:

1 person 31%, 2 people 31%, 3 people 17%, 4 people 14% and 5 people or more 8%.

**Household Tenure**

On Census Day in Ballykelly, 59% owned their house (includes shared ownership), 11% social rented, 28% private rented and 2% lived rent free.

**3.4 Religion and Ethnicity**

* Approximately 59% of the local population recorded their ‘Religion’ or ‘Religion brought up in’ as Roman Catholic, with 34% of the population recording Protestant or another Christian religion.
* 7% of village residents recorded no religious affiliation.
* 98% of village residents reported being from a white ethnic background.
* 88% of those living in the area were born in Northern Ireland.
* 9% of the local population reported being born elsewhere in the UK and Ireland.
* 3% of those living in the area were born outside of the UK and Ireland.

**3.5 Health**

78% of Ballykelly residents report having either a ‘Very Good’ or ‘Good’ standard of general health, which is broadly consistent with the Benbradagh DEA rate of 80%, the Causeway Coast & Glens rate of 77%, and the NI national average of 79%.

Moreover, 77% of citizens note they are not limited by a long-term health problem or disability, a rate that is again consistent with regional and national averages.

**3.6 Labour Market & Qualifications**

The 2021 Census compiled information relating to the economic status of those living in Ballykelly, as well a profile of skill and qualification level held. Whilst the area boasts an unemployment rate of just 4%, 40% of the population over the age of 16 are economically inactive.

The skills profile of the local population is presented below:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Area** | **No Qualifications** | **Level 1** | **Level 2** | **Level 3** | **Level 4+** | **Apprenticeship or Other** |
| Ballykelly / Benbradagh A | 25% | 6% | 14% | 20% | 26% | 8% |
| Benbradagh DEA | 27% | 5% | 13% | 17% | 28% | 10% |
| Causeway Coast  & Glens | 26% | 6% | 14% | 16% | 29% | 9% |
| Northern Ireland | 24% | 6% | 14% | 16% | 32% | 8% |

Analysis of the skills profile highlights Ballykelly’s population has a similar rate of local people with no qualifications, Level 1 qualifications, and Level 2 qualifications when compared with DEA, Council, and national averages. However, a higher percentage of the Ballykelly population has a Level 3 qualification, and a lower percentage has a Level 4+ qualification, when compared with DEA, Council, and national averages.

**Industry of Employment**

In Ballykelly on Census Day 2021 the classification of people aged 16 and over in employment by the industry they work in was as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Industry Classification** | **Percentage of Employees in Ballykelly** |
| Agriculture, energy & water | 1% |
| Manufacturing | 9% |
| Construction | 11% |
| Distribution, hotels & restaurants | 21% |
| Transport & communication | 7% |
| Financial, real estate, professional & administration | 9% |
| Public administration, education & health | 39% |
| Other | 3% |

**Number of Employee Jobs Based in Ballykelly Ward**

According to the September 2022, Business Register & Employment Survery NI (BRES NI), the number of employee jobs based in the Ballykelly ward excluding agriculture was as follows. An employee is defined as anyone aged 16 yrs+ that an organisation directly pays from its payroll.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Number of Employee Jobs Based In Ballykelly** |
| 2022 | 1,393 |
| 2021 | 1,274 |
| 2020 | Not available due to Covid pandemic |
| 2019 | 1,271 |
| 2018 | Not available |
| 2017 | 788 |

**Car or Van Availability**

In Ballykelly on Census Day the number of cars or vans that were owned, or available for use by members of a household (includes company cars & vans that are available for private use) was:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Car or Van Availability** | **Percentage Ownership Amongst Local Population** |
| No cars or vans | 17% |
| 1 car or van | 47% |
| 2 cars or vans | 28% |
| 3 cars or vans | 6% |
| 4 cars of vans | 2% |
| 5 or more cars or vans | <1% |

**3.7 Deprivation Analysis**

In 2017, the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency published its findings in relation to the relative levels of deprivation facing communities across Northern Ireland. This analysis was carried out at a Super Output Area level, enabling detailed analysis of smaller populations to be carried out.

For the purposes of this analysis, the Ballykelly population fell under the Ballykelly Super Output Area, which covered the village and surrounding rural areas. Key findings include:

* In 2017, Ballykelly was ranked as the 251st most deprived area in Northern Ireland (out of 890). This placed the area amongst the 30% most deprived areas in Northern Ireland, and represented a relative decline since 2010, when it was ranked 362nd.
* Except for Crime & Disorder Deprivation, all measures of deprivation pointed to Ballykelly being comparatively worse off in 2017 compared with 2010. Most notable were the indicators that assessed Living Environment Deprivation. Ballykelly’s relative rank fell 473 places from 700th (25% least deprived) to 227th (30% most deprived).

**3.8 Conclusions**

Overall, the overall socio-economic landscape within Ballykelly can be said to be in line with local and national averages. However, the NISRA statistics indicate a general decline in the village in comparison to near peers. There are particular challenges which this statistical analysis has identified as being in need of addressing. Most notably, the area boasts a much lower percentage of the population with a Level 4 Qualification or Higher No Qualifications than both the Causeway Coast & Glens regional average and the Northern Ireland national rate. Furthermore, the overall Living Environment (ie. quality of housing) has declined sharply and is a priority area in need of addressing. The Village Plan must address itself to these areas if it is to be in any way effective.

# 4.0 CoA white background with black dots Description automatically generatedmmunity Engagement

**4.1 Consultation Phase 1: Setting Objectives & Gathering Data**

Causeway Coast and Glens Council facilitated the review and development of an updated Village Plan for Ballykelly.

Phase 1 consisted of setting out a programme of works to finalise objectives and the consultation process required ensuring feedback from the community could be captured.

A comprehensive socio-economic analysis of the area was conducted to gain insights into the area's demographics, economic dynamics, and social trends. The previous Village Plan from June 2018 was reviewed, which provided valuable insights into lessons learned and opportunities for improvement, ensuring continuity and building upon existing efforts.

Ballykelly Men’s Shed were engaged, acting as the lead community partner in Ballykelly, whose support has been appreciated in this process. A thorough site visit of Ballykelly was conducted to understand the physical environment and infrastructure, further informing decision-making.

**4.2 Consultation Phase 2: Engaging Stakeholders & The Community**

Phase 2 focused on engaging stakeholders through a robust consultation process. To ensure as many local people as possible had the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the development of the Village Plan, a range of consultation and engagement activities were undertaken. This included:

* A site visit to the village on Tuesday, 30th January 2024.
* A consultation day, with two sessions (one during the day and one in the evening) held in the Drummond Hotel in Ballykelly on Wednesday, 21st February 2024.
* An online survey, facilitated by Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council between Friday, 9th February and Friday, 1st March 2024.

Extensive promotion and outreach efforts were made through various communication channels, including direct email outreach, social media campaigns, and via council platforms to encourage broad participation. As a result, members of the local community were engaged in either the afternoon drop-in session or evening focus group.

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Figure 4: Social Media Graphic to Communicate Consultation Events

Consultations were structured to ensure comprehensive engagement and participation from the Ballykelly community. Through this structured approach, consultations fostered inclusive dialogue, ensuring broad community voices and perspectives were incorporated into the Village Plan. Consultations included:

* A presentation on the Village Plan process, offering a brief overview of its significance, key objectives, and strategic context, with a Q&A session for clarifications.
* Engagement activities, including an area profile facilitated discussion, where participants were divided into small groups to discuss specific aspects of the Plan.
* A SWOT analysis activity, allowing participants to move between stations, providing input on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to the Village Plan, with facilitators documenting responses on visual boards.
* An action planning session, encouraging participants to provide actionable ideas, with reference to the review of the previous Plan.
* Participants were given the opportunity to complete a survey, which was also made more broadly available for individuals to complete who were unable to attend an in-person consultation.

**4.3 Consultation Phase 3: Data Analysis & Draft Plan Development**

Following the stakeholder and community consultation, Phase 3 included data analysis, identifying key findings, and developing a draft Village Plan. Emphasising a co-design approach, key findings and a proposed Action Plan were shared with community groups for feedback. This approach ensured inclusivity and collaboration. Council was also provided with an opportunity to review and provide feedback on the draft Plan, ensuring alignment with strategic objectives and priorities.

This comprehensive process successfully engaged the Ballykelly community, gathered valuable input, and developed a Village Plan that reflects the aspirations and priorities of residents.

# A white background with black dots Description automatically generatedA white background with black dots Description automatically generated5.0 Key Findings

Through consultation, Ballykelly was noted to be an expanding village. However, population growth was subsequently causing issues in relation to traffic management and limited parking in the centre of the village, which has not been upgraded to accommodate the increased number of residents. A lack of youth service provision, good relations initiatives, and general basic services and amenities were also identified by stakeholders as concerns.

However, aspects of local history and heritage were identified as opportunities for awareness raising and community development. The following key Community Assets were identified:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Commercial Assets** | **Healthcare Assets** | **Natural Assets** |
| * Good variety of local shops * Supermarkets and eateries * Drummond Hotel | * Pharmacy * Kingsbridge Private Hospital | * Ballykelly Forest |
| **Heritage Assets** | **Community Assets** | **Other Assets** |
| * Notable stories and figures from the village, e.g., the plantation history and links with John Steinbeck * Shackleton and Aviation Museum | * Men’s Shed * Church Halls * Ballykelly Community Portacabin | * Wallworth House * Jubilee House * Former Ballykelly RAF Base (Shackleton Barracks) * DAERA Offices * Football pitch * Orchard Community Playgroup |

Existing activities, services, and programmes identified by those living in the area include:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Recreational Activities** | **Sporting Activities** | **Youth Activities** |
| * Mountain biking * Walking trails | * Glack GAA * The Nedd Cricket * Boxing Club | * Church Youth Organisations |

**5.1 SWOT Analysis**

Consultation participants provided an insight into daily life in Ballykelly, before identifying strengths and weaknesses of the local community, and potential opportunities and threats:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Strengths** | **Weaknesses** |
| **Geographic Location:** strategically located between Coleraine, Limavady, and Derry/ Londonderry, the village is close to the coast, with excellent development potential.  **Employment Opportunities:** Kingsbridge Private Hospital is a good source of employment, as is DAERA.  **Education Facilities:** The local primary school and nursery schools are held in high regard.  **Amenities:** There is a good range of local shops and hospitality outlets.  **Community Relations:** Inter-community relations are strong. There is no conflict in relation to cultural symbols or emblems. | **Infrastructure:** limited public transport, no gas heating, and poor internet connectivity. The new cycle path has been viewed as ineffective, as does extend to the next village.  **Community Facilities:** verylimited provision of community facilities that are suitable for hosting youth activities or drop-in services.  **Road Safety:** There is no by-pass around the village, therefore Ballykelly experiences heavy passing traffic.  **Public Realm Works:** There is a poor standard of street furniture and signage in the village. |
| **Opportunities** | **Threats** |
| **History & Heritage:** the village has a rich history and associated heritage, particularly in relation to notable figures whose roots can be traced to Ballykelly. Scope to explore and generate greater awareness of these stories. There is also potential to further showcase the village’s Plantation history.  **Additional Services:** Scope for additional basic services to meet the everyday needs of residents, e.g., healthcare and transportation. There is need for additional youth provision in the village. A festival was also cited as an excellent opportunity to bring residents together and showcase the best of the local community.  **Additional Facilities:** Scope for additional community facilities, including street furniture such as picnic areas.  **Development Opportunities:** The former RAF Base, the Kingsbridge Hospital, and the DAERA building are excellent opportunities to promote economic, social, and community development.  **Emerging Industries:** Owing to its scenic location, Ballykelly has been used recently to film various screen productions. There is scope for this to be further developed.  **Tourism:** There is a ‘glamping’ site and multiple caravan sites nearby, which could provide the platform on which to develop tourism inthe village. There is also scope to better promote the forest for walks and mountain biking. | **Drugs & Alcohol:** the ongoing prevalence of drug and alcohol consumption in the area could significantly hinder local progress in relation to community and social development.  **Political Apathy:** There is a sense amongst residents that the efforts of government and statutory bodies are focused on developing other areas. This belief is held in relation to housing, community development, and tourism promotion.  **Tourism Efforts Directed To Other Areas:** It is recognised that nearly all of the efforts made to attract external visitors to the area are concentrated on other towns and villages. It is a commonly held belief that Ballykelly benefits very little from any of these marketing campaigns or tourism development efforts. |

**5.2 Survey Findings**

To supplement the findings of the consultation exercises, residents were afforded the opportunity to provide their views and highlight priorities to inform the development of the Village Plan via an online survey. The survey was open from Friday, 9th February 2024 and closed on Friday, 1st March 2024.

Questions posed to respondents sought to obtain the following information and insights:

* Demographic profile of respondents, such as age and gender.
* The length of time they have been residents in the village.
* Perceptions of the village, and an assessment of the quality of amenities, including:
  + Overall cleanliness and village aesthetics.
  + Infrastructure and connectivity.
  + Crime and anti-social behaviour.
  + Standard of facilities and public assets.
  + Availability and variety of Commercial Outlets.

Respondents were also asked to provide feedback in relation to their favourable aspects of living in the village, as well as their biggest challenges or concerns.

All questions were mandatory for all survey participants.

**Survey findings, and key emerging themes, are presented below:**

**5.2.1 Demographic Information**

* 35.0% were aged between 15 and 39.
* 60.0% were aged between 40 and 64.
* 5.0% were aged over 65.

Most responses (57.5%) were received from male residents, with 40% being received from female residents. One respondent preferred not to state their gender.

All respondents were from the village, with 85.4% stating they had lived in the village for ten or more years. These findings provide survey legitimacy as a representative view of local residents.

**5.2.2 Quality of Life**

Respondents perceptions of the Quality of Life in the village were generally mixed:

* 35% had either a ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’ perception of the village.
* 27.5% felt life in the village was ‘Acceptable’.
* 37.5% had either a ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’ perception of the village.

Moreover, respondents stated on a Likert scale of 1-10, with 1 being the least favourable option and 10 being the most favourable, they would be likely to recommend the village to others, with an average score of 5.7.

Respondents were asked to provide feedback on a range of aspects relating to life in the village. A summary of responses provided is presented below:

| **Aspect of Everyday Life** | **Commentary** |
| --- | --- |
| **Cleanliness of Streets** | The prevailing opinion was the cleanliness of the streets in Ballykelly is ‘Acceptable’ (50.0% of respondents). |
| **Condition of Streets** | Similarly, the most common opinion is that the condition of the streets in Ballykelly is ‘Acceptable’ (40.0% of respondents). |
| **Accessibility** | Mixed response received.   * 30.0% feel Accessibility is ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’. * 32.5% feel Accessibility is ‘Acceptable’. * 37.5% feel Accessibility is ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’. |
| **Pedestrian Friendly** | Mixed response received.   * 35.0% feel Pedestrian Friendliness is ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’. * 32.5% feel Pedestrian Friendliness is ‘Acceptable’. * 32.5% feel Pedestrian Friendliness is ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’. |
| **Availability of**  **Public Transport** | Mixed response received.   * 30.0% feel public transport availability is ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’. * 35.0% feel public transport availability is ‘Acceptable’. * 35.0% feel public transport availability is ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’. |
| **Traffic Congestion** | This stood out as one of the single most negative aspects of living in the village, based on survey responses. Most respondents (85%) felt congestion was either ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor,’ with over half believing it to be ‘Very Poor’. |
| **Street Lighting** | Generally, the levels of street lighting in Ballykelly were considered to be in line with expectations, with 50.0% of respondents believing street lighting in the village to be ‘Acceptable’. |
| **Availability of**  **Car Parking** | Generally, responses were negative. Whilst 42.5% believe parking availability is ‘Acceptable’, 42.5% also stated parking availability is ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’. Just 12.5% responded positively (‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’). |
| **Village Signage** | The levels of signage were generally considered to be ‘Acceptable,’ with 42.5% of respondents selecting this option. |
| **Open Space** | The availability of open space was an issue highlighted as needing improvement. Most respondents (57.5%) believe open space in the village is either ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’. |
| **Play Park** | The play park was a public amenity survey respondents held poor perceptions of. A significant majority of respondents (75%) believe the play park to be of a ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’ standard. |
| **Sports Facilities** | Sports facilities in Ballykelly ranked poorly amongst survey respondents, with 87.5% believing sporting provision in the village is either ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’. This highlights the quality of sports facilities as being the single biggest issue for survey respondents. |
| **Anti-Social Behaviour**  **(ASB)** | Anti-social behaviour Is generally considered to be an issue, with a majority 70.0% of respondents believing levels of ASB ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’. |
| **Vandalism** | Like anti-social behaviour, vandalism was considered to be an ongoing challenge, with 57.5% of respondents highlighting it as either ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’. |
| **Littering** | Continuing a similar theme as the responses received in relation to anti-social behaviour and vandalism, littering was considered to be an area for improvement, with a majority (75%) of respondents believing littering is ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’. |
| **Derelict Buildings** | Responses in relation to building dereliction in Ballykelly were slightly negative. Although 37.5% of respondents deemed the level of dereliction to be ‘Acceptable,’ 45.0% of respondents believe the levels of derelict buildings to be either ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’. |
| **Friendliness of People** | The friendliness of those living in the village was the strongest aspect of the local community based on the responses received. A majority (75%) of respondents believe the friendliness of their neighbours to be either ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’.  On a similar theme, half of survey respondents believe the atmosphere in the village to be ‘Acceptable,’ whilst 35% classified the village’s atmosphere as ‘Good’. |
| **Shops** | The variety of shops in Ballykelly was considered slightly negative, with 45% of respondents believing this aspect of village life is ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’. Similar sentiments were expressed in relation to the quality of shops, with 37.5% of respondents stating retail outlets are either ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’. |
| **Eateries** | The quality of cafés and takeaways was perceived to be positive amongst survey respondents, with 47.5% highlighting that eateries in the village are either ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’. |

**5.2.3 Favourite Aspect of Living in Ballykelly**

A close-up of words

Description automatically generated

Respondents were given the opportunity to state what they feel is the best thing about living in the area. Some of the most notable responses included:

* The people and sense of community spirit.
* Proximity to Derry City and Limavady.
* Quality of the local primary school.
* Natural assets such as the Forest and the Shore Road walks.

**5.2.4 Key Issues To Be Addressed**

Respondents were also asked to provide feedback on what they believe to be the highest priority issues to be addressed in the village. The most salient responses included:

* Vandalism and anti-social behaviour.
* Traffic congestion.
* General village aesthetics.
* Lack of affordable housing.
* Lack of services, and in particular youth services.
* Regeneration of the old KFC building.

The consultation process included an examination of actions from the previous Village Plan. A range of themes were highlighted as being continually relevant, including:

* Economic Development.
* Maximising the potential of local assets, including historic landmarks and tourism.
* Improving transport connectivity and utilities.
* Development of partnerships in relation to education.
* Social housing development.

# 6.0 Action Plan

Following the completion of all research and consultation activities, the priorities for the Ballykelly Village Plan are summarised below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Theme** | **Description** | **Why is it needed?** |
| **Facility Development** | Provision of community centre and associated services. Sporting facilities in the village are also underdeveloped. | There is an identified lack of fit-for-purpose community space in the village. |
| **Playgroup Forest School** | To provide children with a safe and accessible outdoor recreational area and natural play environment. | There is a need to develop the natural assets of the village, as well as supporting additional opportunities for the area’s young people. |
| **Capacity Building** | Ensure groups have the capacity and energy to take new projects forward. | There is an ongoing need to support volunteers and groups with capacity development, thereby ensuring the local community is well organised and has the capacity to deliver a range of activities and events. |
| **Heritage &**  **Cultural Development** | Make better use of the village’s heritage in recognition of its Plantation history and notable figures. | There is a general lack of awareness of the rich cultural and historical ties associated with the village, and a lack of programmes or activities to promote better understanding of them. |
| **Village Aesthetics** | Improved street furniture and signage across the village. | The current standard of public realm amenities is considered to be poor and in need of investment. |
| **Community Safety** | Development of relationships between local community and PSNI Liaison Officers to address ongoing drug and alcohol issues. | Drug and alcohol issues were identified as social challenges impacting community life in the village. |
| **Development of Shackleton Barracks** | There is significant potential to redevelop the former RAF Base for community and economic benefit. | The space is currently lying vacant, and serves no viable or useful purpose. |

# 7.0 Implementation & Monitoring Plan

To see the range of priority actions addressed for the benefit of those living in Ballykelly, the following implementation plan has been developed which sets out further detail in relation to the key responsible owners of each action, and the key milestones which would need to be reached.

| **Theme** | **Action** | **Key Activities & Milestones** | **Timeframes** | **Responsible Owners** | **Supporting Partners** | **Potential Funding Sources** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Facility Development** | Development of Community Centre and associated services.  Investment and upgrade of sporting facilities in the village | Development of business case to assess the need / demand for capital developments.    Securing of external finance to implement capital upgrades. | Within 24 months of finalisation of Village Plan.      Within 60 months of finalisation of Village Plan. | Newly Established Community Forum | Causeway Coast and Glens Council  Glack GAC  Ballykelly FC | Development work – Causeway Coast and Glens Council  Capital Development Work – multiple possible options depending on project development time |
| **Playgroup Forest School** | Provide children with a safe and accessible outdoor recreational area and natural play environment. | Development of business case for creation of safe and accessible outdoor recreation area.    Securing of external finance to implement capital upgrades. | Within 24 months of finalisation of Village Plan.      Within 60 months of finalisation of Village Plan. | Newly Established Community Forum | Causeway Coast and Glens Council | Multiple |
| **Capacity Building** | Formation of a Community Association to lead on community development issues and programmes in the Village. | Identification and recruitment of volunteers to assume key responsibilities and offices of community association.  Setting up of Association bank account  Organisation of series of initiatives to raise awareness and reputation of new association. | Within 6 months of Village Plan finalisation | Local Community Stakeholders | Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council | n/a |
| Development of a community forum to lead on community interests. | Getting a collaborative group set up to ensure all working together. | Within 36 months of Village Plan finalisation | Local Community Stakeholders | Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council | n/a |
| Ensure community groups have capacity and energy to take new projects forward.  Establish and build new ‘civic identity’ for Ballykelly | Design and delivery of capacity building initiatives to enhance the skills and confidence of volunteers of community organisations in Ballykelly.  Undertake community development activities which reflect the modern community of Ballykelly, moving away from previously held perceptions of the village being intrinsically connected to Shackleton Barracks | Design phase within 6 months of finalisation of Village Plan.    Delivery phase ongoing from finalisation of design phase. | Local Community Stakeholders | Causeway Coast and Glens Council  Other voluntary organisations, including Churches | n/a |
| **Heritage & Cultural Development** | Boost cultural tourism by highlighting historic landmarks e.g., John Steinbeck's home, the Fishmongers buildings, and remnants of the RAF base.  Capitalise on legacy of Fiddler McCurry and other cultural assets to draw in visitors and enhance their experiences. | Design and delivery of heritage awareness programme to celebrate the various stories and notable figures with significant links to Ballykelly. | Within 18 months of finalisation of Village Plan. | Local Community Stakeholders | Causeway Coast and Glens Council | Heritage Lottery Fund |
| **Environmental Improvements** | Improve street furniture and signage across the village. | Installation of enhanced seating, bins, and signage in Ballykelly. | Within 24 months of Village Plan finalisation. | Community Association (to be formed) | Department for Communities  Causeway Coast and Glens Council | Causeway Coast and Glens Council  Department for Communities |
| **Community Safety** | Develop relationships between local community and PSNI Liaison Officers to address ongoing drug and alcohol issues. | Development of interventions aimed at addressing ongoing issues in the village.  Incorporate additional actions into the existing Neighbourhood Watch activities | Within 12 months of Village Plan finalisation. | Community Association (to be formed) | Police Service of Northern Ireland  Neighbourhood Watch  Policing & Community Safety Partnership | n/a |
| **Tourism & Economic Development** | Develop existing tourism assets to attract greater levels of visitors to the area. | Investment in tourism assets.    Enhanced marketing and promotion of tourism assets. | Within 12 months of Village Plan finalisation. | Local Community Stakeholders | Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council  Tourism NI | Causeway Coast and Glens Council |
| Stimulate economic diversity and job creation by championing local enterprises such as Seating Matters. | Development of programmes and incentives to support business development | Within 12 months of Village Plan finalisation. | Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council | Local Community Stakeholders | n/a |
| Champion the full utilisation of DAERA headquarters to maximise job creation and economic activity. | Ensuring that the operation of DAERA headquarters in Ballykelly delivers economic benefits across the rest of the village | Within 12 months of Village Plan finalisation. | Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs | Local Businesses  Newly Established Community Forum | n/a |
| **Development of Shackleton Barracks** | Redevelop former RAF Base for community and economic benefit, which is now under private ownership. | Ensure previous agreements in relation to economic, social, and community development are fulfilled. Specifically, commitments to create 1,000 high quality jobs and to support community development. | Within 60 months of Village Plan finalisation. | Multiple community organisations, statutory agencies and partners | Multiple community organisations, statutory agencies and partners | Variable, depending on project proposal |
| Explore feasibility of establishing a train station on the site | Feasibility and scoping work to be undertaken as to the costs and benefits of a Ballykelly train station stop | Within 36 months of Village Plan finalisation | Local community and commercial stakeholders | Translink  Local political representatives | Translink |