

**Cushendall**

Village Plan

March 2024

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

Situated along the A2 coast road between Larne and Portrush, Cushendall lies within the breath-taking Antrim Coast & Glens Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Offering a unique blend of rugged cliffs, sandy beaches, and beautiful countryside, the village’s rich history is evident in its well-preserved Irish Georgian buildings nestled within the Cushendall Conservation Area, which was established in 1975. Today, Cushendall proudly serves as the vibrant hub of the eastern Glens, providing an array of amenities and services catering to the needs of both locals and visitors alike.

With its panoramic views of the Irish Sea and the Glens of Antrim, Cushendall serves as a gateway to exploration and relaxation. Residents and visitors are enchanted by the village's picturesque charm, where traditional pubs, shops, and cafes create a welcoming atmosphere for individuals hiking along coastal trails, discovering hidden coves, or simply taking in the picturesque scenery.

An aerial view of a city

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

Originally established in the 1600s, the village flourished under various ownerships, eventually thriving under the stewardship of Francis Turnly in the early 19th Century. His contributions, including impressive buildings and the picturesque coastal road, still adorn the village today. Cushendall's rich history and vibrant community spirit are celebrated annually during the Heart of the Glens festival, held since August 1990, offering nine days of fun-filled events and activities for all to enjoy.

In and around Cushendall, accessibility is facilitated by a network of roads, including the scenic A2 Coast Road, providing stunning coastal views. Local bus services ensure connectivity within the village and to surrounding areas, offering convenient travel options for commuters and explorers.

Located just a short drive from attractions like Cushendun and Glenariff Forest Park, Cushendall serves as an ideal base for exploring the stunning beaches and natural wonders of the area. Whether strolling along Cushendall Beach, hiking in Glenariff Forest Park, or embarking on a scenic drive through the Nine Glens of Antrim, residents and tourists are treated to an unforgettable experience immersed in the beauty of Northern Ireland's coastline.

Cushendall is not only blessed with natural beauty but also boasts a vibrant community spirit and a range of community groups and assets. The Glens Youth Club, Cushendall Sailing & Boating Club, and Ruari Og CLG contribute to the vibrant social fabric of the village. Meanwhile, Grow the Glens and Glens Storytelling & Culture Heritage Group work tirelessly to preserve and promote the area's rich heritage and traditions.

A street with buildings and street lights at night

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*Figure 2: Cushendall Main Street*

In 2023, Cushendall welcomed a significant addition to its village landscape with the establishment of the Grow the Glens Innovation Centre. Developed on the grounds of a former police station, this cutting-edge facility represents a pivotal step forward for the community. Boasting state-of-the-art offices, versatile workspaces, and inviting communal areas, the Innovation Centre is designed to support both remote and hybrid working arrangements, while also fostering the growth of new and expanding businesses in the area.

A group of people standing together

Description automatically generatedThe opening of this centre marked the culmination of years of dedicated effort by Grow the Glens who collaborated closely with local businesses and political representatives to secure funding and transform the once disused police station into a vibrant hub for innovation and local employment.

Figure 3: Cushendall Community, Civic, Business and Statutory Representatives

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Key Assets** | **Community Groups** |
| Cushendall Innovation Centre  Cushendall Beach  Cushendall Golf Club Cushendall Boat Club Cottage Wood  Red Bay RNLI Lifeboat Station  Cushendall Coastal Path Dalriada Harbour  Cushendall Library  St Marys Primary School  Glenann Primary School Cushendall Hurling Pitches, Men’s Shed and Pavillion Local Tourist Information Office  Ulster Way Curfew Tower  Glenmona Resource Day Centre GP Surgery  Dental Practice  Residential Care Home Petrol Station  Post Office Shops Restaurants  Public Houses Guesthouses | Cushendall Development Group  Grow the Glens  Ruairi Og CLG  Cushendall Golf Club Cushendall Boat Club Glens Storytelling and Culture and Heritage Group  Glens Coastal Rowing Club Cairns Residents Group  Cushendall Men’s Shed Mums and Tots  Glens Early Years  Glens Youth Club  Layde Parish Church Cushendall Presbyterian Church Gaeil Ruairí Óg agus Gaeil na Glinntí St Mary’s RC Parish, Cushendall  Historical Society  University of the Third Age |

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

# 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. |

|  |
| --- |
| **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. |

|  |
| --- |
| **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 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** |
| --- | --- |
| **Development of**  **Public Amenities** | * Regional Development Strategy 2035 (Department for Infrastructure) |
| **Enterprise Development** | * Economy 2030 – Industrial Strategy for Northern Ireland (Department for the Economy) * Circular Economy Strategy (Draft, Department for the Economy) * Skills for a 10X Economy - Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland (Department for the Economy) |
| **Tourism Development** | * Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland: 10 Year Plan (Draft, Department for the Economy) |
| **Sports Facility**  **Development** | * Active Living – The Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for Northern Ireland (Sport NI, Department for Communities) |
| **Additional Programmes**  **& Activities** | * PEACE Plus (Special EU Programmes Body) * Together Building a United Community (The Executive Office) |
| **Road Safety** | * Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy 2020 (Department for Infrastructure) |
| **Village Aesthetics &**  **Public Realm Works** | * Regional Development Strategy 2035 (Department for Infrastructure) |
| **Youth Development** | * Northern Ireland Children and Young People’s Strategy 2020 – 2030 (Department of Education) * Local Assessment of Need 2023 – Causeway Coast & Glens (Education Authority) |
| **Disability Provision** | * Northern Ireland Disability Action Plan (Department for Culture, Media and Sport) |
| **Climate Change** | * European Commission - European Green Deal |
| **Public Transport** | * Regional Development Strategy 2035 (Department for Infrastructure) * Regional Transport Strategy 2025 (Department for Infrastructure) |
| **Housing** | * Regional Development Strategy 2035 (Department for Infrastructure) |

**2.3 Local Community Groups**

Local community groups 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, community groups 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 community groups 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 with these local community groups, 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.

# 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.

Under the latest publication of Census statistics by the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency, Cushendall is covered by four Super Data Zones (The Glens E2; E4; G1; and G2), which account for the population of the village but also some of the surrounding rural areas.

**3.1 Population**

At the time of the 2021 Census, the population of the Cushendall was 1,184. This represents the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency figure obtained for the Cushendall settlement.

**3.2 Statistical Profile**

This statistical analysis accounts for key characteristics of the four Data Zones’ population. Data is also included from the September 2022 Business Register & Employment Survey.

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

A map of a city

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Figure 4: Map of ‘The Glens E4’ Data Zone, (Source: Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency)

**3.3 Age Profile**

The population of Cushendall has an age profile that is slightly older than local and regional averages across each age category, 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 yrs** | **Age 65+ yrs** |
| Grouped Statistical Zones Covering Cushendall | 15% | 26% | 33% | 26% |
| The Glens DEA | 19% | 28% | 34% | 20% |
| Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council Area | 18% | 29% | 34% | 19% |
| Northern Ireland | 19% | 31% | 32% | 17% |

**Household Size**

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

* 1 person - 32%;
* 2 people - 30%;
* 3 people -16%;
* 4 people - 14%; and
* 5 people or more -9%.

**Household Tenure**

On Census Day in Cushendall, 71% owned their house (includes shared ownership), 9% social rented, 16% private rented and 4% lived rent free.

**3.4 Religion and Ethnicity**

* Approximately 94% of the population within the four Super Data Zones recorded their ‘Religion’ or ‘Religion brought up in’ as Roman Catholic, with 5% of the population recording Protestant or another Christian denomination.
* 2% of village residents recorded no religious affiliation.
* 99% of village residents reported being from a white ethnic background.

**3.5 Health**

Residents of the village and surrounding areas generally enjoy good levels of health and wellbeing, with 80% of the local population reporting either a ‘Very Good’ or ‘Good’ standard of general health. This is slightly higher than The Glens DEA rate of 78%, the Causeway Coast & Glens rate of 77%, and the Northern Ireland national average of 79%.

Moreover, 75% of citizens note they are not limited by a long-term health problem or disability, a rate that is 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 Cushendall and the surrounding areas, as well a profile of skill and qualification level held. Whilst the area boasts an unemployment rate of just 2%, 47% of the population over the age of 16 are economically inactive. This rate is significantly higher than the regional average of 44% and the national average of 41%.

The skills profile of the local population is presented below:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Area** | **No Qualifications** | **Level 1** | **Level 2** | **Level 3** | **Level 4+** | **Apprenticeship or Other** |
| Grouped Zones Covering Cushendall | 21% | 4% | 14% | 16% | 35% | 11% |
| The Glens DEA | 24% | 5% | 14% | 16% | 32% | 9% |
| Causeway Coast & Glens Area | 26% | 6% | 14% | 16% | 29% | 9% |
| Northern Ireland | 24% | 6% | 14% | 16% | 32% | 8% |

Educational achievement within the area is notably higher than both regional and national averages, with fewer people in the area holding no qualifications, more people holding at least a Level 4 qualification, and more individuals participating in an Apprenticeship or other programme.

**Industry of Employment**

In Cushendall 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 Local Population** |
| Agriculture, energy & water | 3% |
| Manufacturing | 7% |
| Construction | 13% |
| Distribution, hotels & restaurants | 21% |
| Transport & communication | 9% |
| Financial, real estate, professional & administration | 12% |
| Public administration, education & health | 32% |
| Other | 4% |

**Number of Employee Jobs Based in the Lurigetham Ward, Cushendall**

Cushendall falls within the Lurigethan ward.

According to the September 2022, Business Register & Employment Survery NI (BRES NI), the number of employee jobs based in the Lurigethan ward, Cushendall 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 Cushendall** |
| 2022 | 610 |
| 2021 | 570 |
| 2020 | Not available due to Covid pandemic |
| 2019 | 619 |
| 2018 | Not available |
| 2017 | 538 |

**Car or Van Availability**

In Cushendall, 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** | **(%)** |
| No cars or vans | 14% |
| 1 car or van | 43% |
| 2 cars or vans | 28% |
| 3 cars or vans | 12% |
| 4 cars of vans | 3% |
| 5 or more cars or vans | 2% |

**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 Cushendall population fell under the ‘Glenaan & Glendun’ Super Output Area, which covers the village and surrounding rural areas. Key findings include:

* Glenaan & Glendun Super Output Area was ranked as the 499th most deprived area in Northern Ireland, a relative improvement from 2010, when it was ranked 425th.
* Although the area fares well in relation to relative levels of deprivation under measures such as Health, Education, and Crime & Disorder, it ranks as one of the 10% most deprived areas in Northern Ireland in relation to Access to Services deprivation.

**3.8 Conclusions**

Overall, the socio-economic landscape of Cushendall does not raise many causes for concern, as the local population enjoys comparatively higher levels of health and education, and lower levels of crime than a majority of areas in Northern Ireland.

However, isolation and Access to Services continue to be the primary challenges facing the local community.

# 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 Cushendall.

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 carried out to gain insights into the area’s demographics, economic characteristics 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.

Cushendall Development Group was engaged, acting as the lead partner in Cushendall, whose support has been appreciated in this process. Cushendall Sailing and Boating Club were also key to the process, allowing the use of their facility for consultations. A thorough site visit of Cushendall 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. Working closely with Cushendall Development Group and Cushendall Sailing and Boating Club, two consultation events were held 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, which included:

* A site visit to the village on Thursday, 1st February 2024.
* A consultation day, with two sessions (one during the day and one in the evening) held in Cushendall Sailing and Boat Club facilities on Tuesday, 27th February 2024.
* An online survey, facilitated by Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council between Friday, 9th February and Friday, 1st March 2024.

A white and purple card with a blue and white horn

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Figure 5: Social Media Graphic to Communicate Consultation Events

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, either in person or online.

Consultations were structured to ensure comprehensive engagement and participation from the Cushendall 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 Cushendall 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, Cushendall was noted as being a welcoming and friendly community, residing in a scenic location, with residents and visitors enjoying the excellent natural landscapes and environment. A strong cultural aspect to local life was evidenced, with several notable landmarks.

However, some challenges were identified with village life, particularly a high level of building vacancies and road infrastructure being perceived as becoming increasingly neglected.

The following key Community Assets were identified:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Natural Assets** | **Healthcare Assets** | **Sporting Assets** |
| * Scenery/natural landscape * Cushendall Coastal Path * Cushendall Beach * Cottage Wood | * Medical Centre * GP Surgery * Glenmona Resource Day Centre * Dental Practice * Residential Care Home | * Cushendall Golf Club * Hurling Club * Cushendall Boat Club |
| **Tourism Assets** | **Community Assets** | **Commercial Assets** |
| * Dalriada Harbour * Forest Park * Cliff Park * Self-Catering Accommodation * Local Tourist Information Office * Ulster Way * Curfew Tower | * Range of community groups * Well-educated population * Grow the Glens * Cushendall Men’s Shed | * Petrol Station * Post Office * Cushendall Innovation Centre * Pubs * Shops * Public Houses * Guist Houses |

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

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Emergency Services** | **Youth Services** | **Civic Services** |
| * Red Bay RNLI Lifeboat Station Fire Station * First Responders/   Mountain Rescue | * St Marys Primary School * Glenann Primary School * Youth Club * Mums and Tots Group * Glens Early Years | * Cushendall Library * Bus Depot * ATM |
| **Sports Programmes** | **Cultural Programmes** | **Heritage Programmes** |
| * Sailing * Rowing * Walking Club * Swimming * Fishing * Ruari Og CLG | * Irish Language Classes * Community Festivals | * Historical Society * University of the Third Age |

**5.1 SWOT Analysis**

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Strengths** | **Weaknesses** |
| **Community:** the local community has a strong work ethic and sense of volunteerism. There is also a strong local business community.  **Cultural Appreciation:** strong appreciation for local culture, and high levels of participation in cultural awareness and development programmes.  **Sports and Recreation:** good variety of sporting opportunities in the village, and a high standard of sporting facilities. There are also excellent outdoor recreation opportunities for locals and visitors alike. | **Public Transport:** despite the village having a bus depot, there is poor public transport links to and from the village.  **Isolation:** although there is a strong sense of community, there are challenges associated with the village’s rural and coastal location, particularly in relation to social isolation. Poor phone signal is also a weakness of the area.  **Tourist Amenities:** lack of parking is an issue, particularly during peak tourism months when the village experiences high numbers of visitors. There is also a lack of public toilets.  **Capacity:** there is a lack of community space to accommodate the needs of all groups. |
| **Opportunities** | **Threats** |
| **Economic Development:** there are several emerging economic development opportunities associated with the Innovation Hub, as well as the proposed new hotel and distillery.  **Tourism Development:** scope to expand on Cushendall’s tourism offering through the introduction of activities such as water sports, cycle hire, boat hire, and the development of links with Scotland. Upgrading caravan sites, public amenities, and the cliff path would also support this development opportunity.  **Connectivity:** opportunity to explore a minibus service to connect Cushendall with other villages in the Glens, improving connectivity across the sub-region.  **Youth Services:** capacity for further youth services to be developed, particularly for older teenagers. | **Decline of Traditional Industries:** a key local employer in the agricultural sector is currently facing challenges as a result of the cessation of single farm payments.  **Building Condition:** there are a number of derelict buildings, which have been identified as being in need of regeneration and upgrade.  **Housing:** lack of affordable housing in is making it difficult to attract young families to the area. The high number of holiday homes owned by those living elsewhere was cited as a contributing factor to this issue.  **Climate Change:** as a result of its rural and coastal location, there is a risk that climate change effects will be felt strongly by the community over the coming years.  **Isolation:** proximity to basic services such as hospitals and poor transport infrastructure could hinder the village’s social and economic development goals. |

**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**

* 35.8% of respondents were aged between 15 and 39.
* 48% of respondents were aged between 40 and 64.
* 16.2% of respondents were aged 65 and over.

Most responses (73.4%) were received from female residents, with 26% being received from male residents. 0.6% preferred not to state their gender.

A total of 87.3% of respondents were residents of Cushendall, with 72.84% stating they had lived in the village for ten or more years. These findings provide survey legitimacy as a representative view of local residents.

For those who completed the survey who are not residents of Cushendall, most stated they were from elsewhere in the Glens of Antrim area, such as Glenariff and Glenravel. However, a number of respondents also provided addresses in Belfast, Ballycastle, Bushmills, and Ballymena.

**5.2.2 Quality of Life**

Perceptions were generally positive:

* 46.8% of respondents had either a ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’ perception of the village.
* 36.4% of respondents felt life in the village was ‘Acceptable’.
* 16.8% of respondents had either a ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’ perception of the village.

Moreover, most respondents stated on a Likert scale of 1-10, with 1 being least favourable and 10 being most favourable, they would be likely to recommend the village to others, with an average score of 7.2.

Respondents were asked to provide feedback into 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** | Street cleanliness is not considered a concern, with 37% of respondents stating cleanliness as ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’ and 39.3% stating it as ‘Acceptable’. |
| **Condition of Streets** | The condition of streets scored poorly, with a majority (51.4%) of respondents stating roads were either ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’. |
| **Accessibility** | Accessibility is a key concern amongst survey respondents, with 45.6% considering accessibility to be ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’ and 43.4% considering it to be ‘Acceptable’. |
| **Pedestrian Friendly** | Cushendall was generally considered to be in need of improvement to make it more pedestrian friendly. Although 43.9% of respondents considered accessibility to be ‘Acceptable,’ 41.6% considered it to be ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’. |
| **Availability of**  **Public Transport** | Public transport was highlighted as a key issue for survey respondents, with 82.1% perceiving the availability of public transport to be ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’. |
| **Traffic Congestion** | Traffic congestion was another infrastructural matter survey respondents had strong opinions on, with 86.1% considering it to be ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’. |
| **Street Lighting** | Street lighting was considered to be adequate amongst survey respondents, with the majority (52.6%) believing lighting to be of an ‘Acceptable’ standard. |
| **Availability of**  **Car Parking** | Similar to other infrastructure areas, car parking emerged as a key issue amongst survey respondents, with 76.9% considering parking availability to be either ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’. |
| **Village Signage** | Signage in Cushendall was generally considered to be in line with survey respondents’ expectations. 54.3% of respondents considered the levels and quality of signage to be ‘Acceptable’. |
| **Open Space** | Open space garnered a mix of responses:   * 33.5% of respondents selected ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’. * 37.6% of respondents selected ‘Acceptable’. * 28.9% of respondents selected ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’. |
| **Play Park** | The play park was generally viewed positively by survey respondents, with 35.3% stating it is ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’, with a further 38.2% stating it is ‘Acceptable’. |
| **Sports Facilities** | The quality and availability of sports facilities in Cushendall ranked relatively poorly amongst survey respondents, with 42.7% of respondents stating facilities are either ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’. |
| **Community Centre** | The quality of facilities was identified as an issue, with the majority of respondents (52%) considering the Community Centre to be ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’. |
| **Anti-Social Behaviour**  **(ASB)** | Mixed views were captured from respondents:   * 27.7% stated levels of ASB are ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’. * 37% stated levels of ASB are ‘Acceptable’. * 35.3% stated levels of ASB are ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’. |
| **Vandalism** | Mixed views were captured from respondents:   * 30.6% stated levels of vandalism are ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’. * 36.4% stated levels of vandalism are ‘Acceptable’. * 32.9% stated levels of vandalism are ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’. |
| **Littering** | Littering was highlighted by survey respondents as a particular cause for concern, with the majority (52.6%) stating levels of litter in Cushendall are either ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’. |
| **Derelict Buildings** | Derelict buildings were another aspect of village aesthetics that prompted a strong negative response, with a majority (71.1%) considering this to be ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’. |
| **Friendliness of People** | The strength of the local community and the friendliness of people shone through as the most positive aspect of village life, with an overwhelming majority (83.2%) rating this as ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’.  In addition, 70.5% of respondents considered the atmosphere in the village to be ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’. |
| **Shops** | The variety of retail outlets was a feature of life in the village that ranked relatively poorly with survey respondents, with 41.6% stating this is ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’. Somewhat conversely, the quality of the shops was perceived positively, with 45.1% of respondents stating the quality of shops were either ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’. |
| **Eateries** | The quality and availability of cafes and takeaways in Cushendall provoked mixed responses:   * 28.9% of respondents selected ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’. * 39.8% of respondents selected ‘Acceptable’. * 31.2% of respondents selected ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’. |

**5.2.3 Favourite Aspect of Living in Cushendall**

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:

* *‘We have a very good local development group, which organises some great programmes.’*
* *‘There is a good community spirit among all local sporting clubs.’*
* *‘The scenery is beautiful and there is great accessibility to the beach. The people are nice and want more for their community.’*
* The proximity of the village to natural assets and areas of natural beauty.
* Friendliness of local people.
* The quality and availability of sporting activities.
* Overall levels of safety.

**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:

* Additional community facilities, including increased provision for children and young people.
* Addressing key issues pertaining to the village’s infrastructure, such as traffic congestion, availability of car parking, and the condition of the roads.
* Increased commercial opportunities and support to attract new businesses to the village.
* Addressing the issue of a lack of affordable housing in the area for young families.
* Village aesthetics such as high levels of litter and dereliction.

Respondents were asked to select what they believe to be the top three priorities for Cushendall. The most selected responses included:

* Housing Issues (59% of respondents).
* Activities for Children and Young People (25.4% of respondents).
* Traffic (25.4% of respondents).
* Childcare Issues (23.1% of respondents).
* Employment/Jobs (23.1% of respondents).
* Appearance of the Village (22% of respondents).
* Public Transport (20.2% of respondents).

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

* Increased provision of services.
* Health and wellbeing.
* Youth development and services.
* Environment and infrastructure.
* Heritage and culture.

# 6.0 Action Plan

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

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Theme** | **Description** | **Why is it needed?** |
| **Development of**  **Public Amenities** | Car parking upgrades, installation of EV charging points, and installation of public toilets. | Additional capacity is needed to accommodate increased levels of external visitors. |
| **Enterprise Development** | Promote enterprise development by incentivising tenancy within currently vacant properties. Provide additional business support programmes. | There is a need to support local businesses to develop the rural/coastal economy. |
| **Tourism Development** | Develop additional tourist attractions and events, such as geo-tagging of attractions, development of the cliff walks, and introduction of new recreational activities. Organise additional festivals to celebrate various aspects of local life and culture. | There is a need to further enhance and diversify the tourism offering in the village to encourage further and repeat visitation. |
| **Sports Facility**  **Development** | Develop upgraded sports facilities across the village, including installation of 3G pitches. | To support sporting organisations in the village and promote further opportunities to participate in sport and recreation. |
| **Additional Programmes**  **& Activities** | Capacity building, skills, and education initiatives. | To promote continuous personal development amongst local people and to enhance skills, capabilities, and confidence. |
| **Road Safety** | Introduce additional traffic calming measures and pedestrian crossings. Undertake repairs to village pavements. | There is a need to address some of the residents’ concerns in relation to road safety. |
| **Village Aesthetics &**  **Public Realm Works** | Improve signage throughout the village and organise community litter picks and clean ups. Undertake better maintenance of walking and cycle paths. | To create a sense of arrival and welcome to the village, as well as telling the village’s story to visitors and tourists. |
| **Youth Development** | Carry out a youth survey to establish the views, concerns, needs, and aspirations of young people, and put in place measures to tackle any concerns or address any priorities. | There is an identified lack of youth services in the area. |
| **Disability Provision** | Expansion and/or redevelopment of existing centres in the village to accommodate the needs of those in the community with disabilities. | There is an identified lack of facilities in the area that are suited to the needs of those in the community with disabilities. This is particularly true of childcare/day care facilities. |
| **Climate Change** | Measures to address coastal erosion. | The impacts of climate change are set to adversely impact Cushendall because of its coastal and rural location. |
| **Public Transport** | Improved public transport services. | To improve connectivity between Cushendall and other towns and villages. |
| **Housing** | Provision of additional affordable housing in the village. | There is an overall need to support young families by increasing the supply of affordable housing in the village. |

# 7.0 Implementation & Monitoring Plan

To see the range of priority actions addressed for the benefit of those living in Cushendall, 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** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Development**  **of Public Amenities** | Car parking upgrades  . | Development of infrastructure upgrade programme. | Within 24 months of Village Plan finalisation. | Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council |  | N/A |
| Installation of Electric Vehicle charging points | Development of infrastructure | Within 24 months of Village Plan finalisation | Community Association – lobbying | Private companies | Depend on the market conditions |
| Upgrade and Installation of public toilets. | Ensure all public toilets are open for use by locals and tourists during daytime hours, and improved to cover seasonal usage | Within 24 months of Village Plan finalisation. | Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council | Cushendall Development Group | N/A |
| **Enterprise Development** | Promote enterprise development by incentivising tenancy in vacant properties and delivery of additional business support programmes | Development of programmes and incentives to support business development and low building tenancy rates. | Within 12 months of Village Plan finalisation. | Grow the Glens  Causeway Coast & Glens  Borough Council | Cushendall Development Group | N/A |
| Capitalise on the economic development opportunities presented by the pending opening of Glens of Antrim Distillery | Promotion of employment opportunities and supporting business opportunities linked to the opening of the Distillery | In conjunction with timeframes of Glens of Antrim Distillery becoming operational | Glens of Antrim Distillery | CDG | N/A |
| **Tourism Development** | Development of additional tourist attractions and events, such as geo-tagging of attractions, development of cliff walk, and introduction of new recreational activities.    Organisation of additional festivals to celebrate various aspects of local life and culture. | Development of tourism enhancement programmes, festivals and augmented marketing efforts. | Within 12 months of Village Plan finalisation | CDG  Tourism NI | Supporting Community Organisations  Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council | N/A |
| **Sports Facility Development** | Upgrade sports facilities across the village, including installation of 3G pitches at a feasible site. | Design and deliver a sports capital project, including development of feasibility considerations, business case and technical assessments.    Secure external finance to implement desired sporting capital upgrades. | Within 36 months of Village Plan finalisation. | Local Sports Clubs | Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council | Sport NI |
| **Additional Programmes**  **& Activities** | Capacity building, skills, and education initiatives. | Design and deliver training programme to upskill and increase confidence of residents, including volunteers. | Within 12 months of Village Plan finalisation. | CDG  Sports Club  Youth Club | Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council | TNL(The National Lottery) – Awards for All  Peace Plus |
| **Road Safety** | Introduce additional traffic calming measures and pedestrian crossings.  Undertake repairs to village pavements. | Undertake infrastructural works to promote increased safety in the village. | Within 24 months of Village Plan finalisation. | Local elected representatives | Department for Infrastructure  PSNI  NIFRS  Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council – PCSP | Department for Infrastructure |
| **Village Aesthetics &**  **Public Realm Works** | Improve tourism and visitor attraction signage throughout the village. | Investment in signage in the village. | Within 18 months of Village Plan finalisation. | Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council | Local community stakeholders | Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council  Department for Communities |
| Organise community litter picks and clean ups. | Co-ordination of quarterly litter picks and community clean ups in the village. | Within 3 months of Village Plan finalisation. | CDG | Local community stakeholders | N/A |
| **Youth Development** | Carry out a youth survey to establish the views, concerns, needs, and aspirations of young people. | Undertaking village youth survey, | Within 18 months of Village Plan finalisation. | Youth Club  Sports Clubs  CDG | Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council  National Governing Bodies of Sport  Education Board  EA Youth Services | Education Authority |
| Implement measures to tackle concerns or priorities identified during youth survey. | Design and deliver a youth strategy for young people, incorporating priority programmes and supports. | Within 6 months of finalisation of Youth Survey. | Youth Club  Sports Clubs  CDG | Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council  Education Board  EA Youth Services | Education Authority |
| Explore the potential for developing the current Youth Club site for longer term benefit of local residents. To include:   * Community Hub * Youth Club * Walk Ways linked to shore paths | Community consultation and feasibility work to be carried out to explore sustainability options and wider use of Youth Club site | Within 24 months of Village Plan finalisation. | Youth Club  Sports Clubs  CDG | Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council  Education Board  EA Youth Services | Education Authority |
| **Climate Change** | Implement measures to address coastal erosion. | Liaise with subject matter experts to assess overall risk of climate change impacts, the likely scale of any impacts, and possible mitigation measures. | Within 6 months of Village Plan finalisation. | DAERA  Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council | Local Community Stakeholders | N/A |
| **Public Transport** | Improve public transport services. | Exploration of possibilities to increase the connectivity of the village with other towns and villages through increased frequency and/or availability of public and alternative transport options. | Within 36 months of Village Plan finalisation. | CDG  Translink | Other Community Stakeholders | N/A |
| **Housing** | Provision of additional affordable housing in the village. | Exploration of possibilities to increase the supply of housing in the village to attract young families to the area. | Within 60 months of Village Plan finalisation. | Range of Local Stakeholders | NI Housing Executive  Housing Associations | N/A |