Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

Title of Report:	**Consultation on Shaping Sustainable Places**
Committee Report Submitted To:	Leisure & Development Committee
Date of Meeting:	16 September 2025
For Decision or For Information	For Decision
To be discussed In Committee	**NO**

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)	
Strategic Theme	Improvement & Innovation
Outcome	The Council facilitates towns and villages in the Borough to continue to provide quality environments which evolve to meet the needs of their citizens, businesses and visitors to them
Lead Officer	Head of Prosperity & Place

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	n/a
Included in Current Year Estimates	**n/a**
Capital/Revenue	n/a
Code	n/a
Staffing Costs	Officer time

Legal Considerations	
Input of Legal Services Required	**NO**
Legal Opinion Obtained	**NO**

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to inform members of the proposed Shaping Sustainable Places programme and to approve the response to the consultation on behalf of the Council.

2.0 Background

In June 2025 the Department for Communities, Department for Infrastructure and the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs released a consultation document in relation to the proposed Shaping Sustainable Places programme. The consultation will close on the **21st September 2025** and responses can be returned digitally via the Citizen Space website or direct to the Shaping Sustainable Places Programme Team at the Department for Communities. The consultation documentation can be found at the following link:

Consultation on Shaping Sustainable Places | Department for Communities

This programme builds on the previous regeneration programmes of Covid Recovery Revitalisation Programme 2020-2023 and Small Settlement Revitalisation Programme 2023-2026. Council participated in these programmed which has resulted in many successful interventions across the Boroughs towns and villages.

3.0 Proposals

The Shaping Sustainable Places Programme aims to create a flagship programme of interventions to halt the decline of Northern Irelands towns, villages and city centres. A summary of the four key objectives of the Programme are set out below:

1. **Place:** Improve sustainability and attractiveness of local centres through public realm investment, reuse of vacant buildings, and boosting local economies.

2. **People**: Prioritise safety, health, and wellbeing by creating accessible, inclusive, and people-centred spaces.

3. **Planet**: Enhance climate resilience through green infrastructure, energy-efficient buildings, and sustainable design.

4. **Partnership**: Foster collaboration across government departments, local councils, communities, and the private sector.

An outline summary of the Programme is set out below:

- Duration: Proposed 10-year programme with a mid-point review after 5 years.

- Funding: £165 million initial fund with contributions from DfC, DAERA, DfI, Local Councils, and potential private sources. The Council would be expected to commit to a 10% contribution towards the programme.

- Delivery: The programme will be led by the Department for Communities in partnership with other departments and councils.

The Vision of the proposed programme is *"To work with communities to address local challenges through funding interventions that deliver sustainable, people-centred places providing economic, social and environmental outcomes."*

Based on previous experience of the Covid Recovery Revitalisation Programme 2020-2023 and Small Settlement Revitalisation Programme 2023-2026 and the current work on the Coleraine Future Town Fund, the proposed response is to strongly agree with this approach, the principles and the timeframe for the programme.

The approach to the programme will be based on the Living High Streets model which is currently being adopted by the Coleraine Future Town Fund to codesign a 10 year plan. Therefore, council officers will be familiar with this approach when this Shaping Sustainable Programme comes into effect. The proposed programme will also build on the extensive work conducted over the last number of years to develop town and village plans across the borough and assist in bringing the actions identified to fruition.

The consultation documentation identifies a number of potential interventions to be considered i.e.:

- *Streetscape and footpath improvements;*
- *Green space creation;*
- *Shopfront and building reuse grants;*
- *Mixed-use housing developments;*
- *Public art and heritage restoration;*
- *Climate-resilient infrastructure; and*
- *Centre First Policy (Optional Component).*

A detailed response to the 37 questions posed in this initial consultation on the Shaping Sustainable Places programme are set out in **Annex A.** In general the response is positive to what is being proposed, and some detail has been provided to align with the response given to each question.

4.0 Options

Option 1 - Council agrees to submit the response as detailed in **Annex A** in relation to the Consultation on the Shaping Sustainable Places proposals.

Option 2 – Council does not agree to submit the response as detailed Annex A in relation to the Consultation on the Shaping Sustainable Places proposals.

5.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that the Leisure and Development Services Committee recommends to Council Option 1 - to respond to the consultation with the response detailed in **Annex A** of this report.

Annex A – Consultation Response

Consultation on Shaping Sustainable Places   Department for Communities   Closing Date 21/9/2025

Please find below response to the questions posed in this consultation

Full consultation document can be viewed at Consultation on Shaping Sustainable Places | Department for Communities

Question no.	Question	Response
1	Q1: Please tell us if you are responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation. If you are responding on behalf of a business or organisation, please tell us the name of the organisation. • Individual • Organisation	**Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council – Town & Village Management & Regeneration Teams** *[Town & Village Management facilitate Town Centre Forums for 6 urban settlements within Causeway Coast and Glens : Ballycastle, Ballymoney, Coleraine, Limavady, Portrush & Portstewart. Each Forum has stakeholders from the following organisations: Chambers of Commerce, local retail, local business, community organisations, DEA Councillors, Business Improvement Districts, DfI, DfC, PSNI, Residents.]*
2	Q2: To what extent do you agree with the proposed vision for Shaping Sustainable Places? • Strongly Agree • Agree • Neither Agree or Disagree • Disagree • Strongly Disagree	*Vision:* ***"To work with communities to address local challenges through funding interventions that deliver sustainable, people-centred places providing economic, social and environmental outcomes."*** **Strongly Agree** Council would strongly agree with the proposed vision for Shaping Sustainable Places. It sets out a clear and ambitious direction that aligns well with the priorities we're seeing across communities and the business

		partners. Through our experience and lessons learnt from existing and completed projects, we've seen firsthand how meaningful consultation with a wide range of relevant stakeholders leads to projects that are more reflective of local character and community needs, resulting in more buy in.
3	Q3: If you answered 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' at Q2 above, please tell us why and/ or what you would expect to see in the vision statement?	**Not applicable**
4	Q4: To what extent do you agree with the proposed principles for Shaping Sustainable Places? • Strongly Agree • Agree • Neither Agree or Disagree • Disagree • Strongly Disagree	**Strongly agree** **Principles of the programme align with council's approach to town centres:** • **Ensuring interventions focus on long term impact** • **Interventions that address economic, social and environmental sustainability of each place** • **Integrated partnerships and collaboration between all stakeholders to develop and deliver the interventions** • **Empowering all stakeholders to be an integral part of their place**
5	Q5: If you answered 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' at Q4 above, please tell us why and/ or what principles you would expect to guide interventions to help transform places?	**Not applicable**
6	Q6: Do you agree with the timeframe proposed for Shaping Sustainable Places?	**Yes**

		• Yes • No, it should be shorter • No, it should be longer	**Proposed timeline of 10 years with a mid-point review will allow for better longer term impact for delivering projects. Previous programmes have been allocated short time periods of 1 -2 years to develop, deliver and evaluate and experience would note that this timeframe is not adequate to allow for capital interventions which may need to progress through the design stage, planning system and procurement processes before delivery.**
7	Q7: If you did not select 'yes' above, please tell us why you think the timeframe should be shorter or longer?		**Not applicable**

8	Q8: To what extent do you agree that Shaping Sustainable Places plans should be developed through a placemaking process?
	  • Strongly Agree
	  • Agree
	  • Neither Agree or Disagree
	  • Disagree
	  • • Strongly Disagree
			Strongly Agree
			
			Drawing on experience of place management through facilitating both the Town & Village Management and Regeneration functions within council it is important that all stakeholders are included in the decision making process for developing our town centres. Need to capitalise on the assets that the local community and the departments have and work with stakeholders to develop ideas that work for them rather than impose projects on them. It is only by engaging with the users of spaces that an understanding of the impact that projects can contribute to people's health, happiness and wellbeing.

9	Q9: If you answered 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' at Q8 above, please tell us why and/ or how do you think plans should be developed?		**Not applicable**
10	Q10: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Living High Streets Craft Kit would be a good approach to use to plan sustainable places?		**Strongly agree** **Town & Village Management has adopted this approach to placemaking for several years through the Town Centre Forums most**

	• Strongly Agree • Agree • Neither Agree or Disagree • Disagree • Strongly Disagree	**of which were established in 2022 and the Coleraine Town Team which was established in 2013. It was through the principles Living High Streets approach that the Town & Village Management Section underwent a review to align with the principles of place making and strengthen council's involvement in place making for the next decade in 2024. In addition, the Living High Streets Craft Kit is integral to the development of the current Coleraine Future Town Fund 10-year Strategy & Action Plan.**
11	Q11: If you answered 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' at Q10 above, how do you think plans should be developed?	**Not applicable**
12	Q12: If your Local Council or community has already developed a plan for your place, to what extent do you agree or disagree that this existing plan should be used instead of developing a new plan using a placemaking approach? • Strongly Agree • Agree • Neither Agree or Disagree • Disagree • Strongly Disagree	**Agree** **It will be important to include plans already in place for any town. This will acknowledge the time and effort that has already taken place. However it is always important to review documents over time and the plans that already exist can be a good starting point in creating sustainable places by reflecting on what has worked/not been achieved or is now obsolete. Also a good point to prioritise whatever actions still remain. This should all be completed within the principles of the Living High Street model thereby creating bespoke projects if funding were available.**
13	Q13: If your Local Council wanted to assess the level of community support for a plan or a project for your local place, how would you expect them to engage with you? Pick as many options as apply.	**Local Councils should engage with the local stakeholders through a variety of methods. This will ensure that as many sectors of the community can be reached and have their voice heard. This should take the form of all listed but also include any other channels for engagement which within Causeway Coast and Glens includes the Town Centre Forums and any community ezines issued through the council or community organisations.**

	• Leaflet campaign to invite survey response • Townhall style meeting • Focus group of residents • Online consultation and promotion • Newspaper advertisement and promotion • Drop-in clinic • I would not want to be consulted • Other	• **Leaflet campaign to invite survey response;** • **Townhall style meeting;** • **Focus group of residents/businesses/community groups/intergenerational groups/students – pre and post primary;** • **Online consultation and promotion;** • **Newspaper advertisement and promotion;** • **Drop-in clinic;** • **Other – Town Centre Forums, community ezines, multicultural forums**
14	Q14: To what extent do you agree or disagree with "Investing in public realm in village, town and city centres" as an objective when focussing on Place? • Strongly Agree • Agree • Neither Agree or Disagree • Disagree • Strongly Disagree	**Strongly Agree** **Town & Village Management has always placed how the town centre looks and feels high on the agenda for making places work, [highlighting the Broken Window Theory(Wilson & Kelling, 1982). Ensuring that the public realm is kept clean, litter free, with even surfaces, greenery and with places to sit and activity areas to encourage dwell time all add to the sense of place. Regular scheduled cleaning and maintenance is essential to create that sense of well-being and how this is to be carried out needs to be at the forefront when designing and investing in public realm.**
15	Q15: To what extent do you agree or disagree with "Increasing occupancy levels by vacant buildings or derelict sites coming back into use" as an objective when focussing on Place? • Strongly Agree • Agree	**Strongly Agree** **Tackling vacancy and dereliction is a key focus when addressing town centres. The perception of a town centre is based on how it looks and feels. If buildings are vacant and left to deteriorate the sense of purpose for a town centre is eroded and can in turn promote antisocial behaviour as the area is considered neglected and a 'no go' space. Whilst it may not be possible to immediately convert vacant property**

	• Neither Agree or Disagree • Disagree • Strongly Disagree	**to long term use – consideration should be given to meanwhile uses and encouragement to landlords to conduct regular ongoing maintenance of any vacant buildings is paramount.**
16	Q16: To what extent do you agree or disagree with "Creating more productive local economies" as an objective when focussing on Place? • Strongly Agree • Agree • Neither Agree or Disagree • Disagree • Strongly Disagree	**Strongly agree** **'Creating more productive local economies' may be difficult to achieve. The previous two objectives, 'Investing in Public Realm' and 'Bringing Properties back into Use' need to be moving in a positive direction if this objective of creating more productive local economies is to be achieved. Council would argue that these three objectives are interwoven.**
17	Q17: If you answered 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' to Questions 14-16 above, please tell us why and/ or what you would suggest as alternatives for objectives for Place?	**Not applicable**
18	Q18: To what extent do you agree or disagree with "Improving safety in village, town and city centres" as an objective when focussing on People? • Strongly Agree • Agree • Neither Agree or Disagree • Disagree • Strongly Disagree	**Strongly Agree** **People make places and places make people – we all feel an emotional response to places when we visit be that positive or negative. People need to feel safe in a space if you want them to return to work, visit or enjoy and reflect a positive sentiment to the place. Feeling of Safety can take on many forms such as:** - **Ease of access – level surfaces for those with mobility issues** - **Removal of vehicles – pedestrian areas always a positive for families** - **Access to services via car/mobility vehicles**

		- **Adequate lighting** - **Walking routes to carparks well-lit and litter free** - **Clean streets – shows the area is looked after** - **Police presence can be both positive or negative** - **Activity in the area – what type can make it either positive or negative** - **Access Green spaces** - **Digital infrastructure – CCTV coverage** - **Well lit shop windows rather than shutters** - **Access to public transport/ taxis**
19	Q19: To what extent do you agree or disagree with "Creating more active and sustainable infrastructure and facilities" as an objective when focussing on People? • Strongly Agree • Agree • Neither Agree or Disagree • Disagree • Strongly Disagree	**Strongly agree** **Giving people a reason to visit our town centres is essential for survival of the high street. Creating more active and sustainable infrastructure and facilities will assist in this objective.** **High Streets can no longer solely rely on retail as its main activity. Arts and Culture is a key driver in encouraging activities in town centres – having places that are flexible in how they are used will remove the reliance on one use.** **Making use of the outdoors – provision of infrastructure for play, park runs, healthy walking routes, access to green space, flora, riverside walks - making sure any infrastructure is well lit, well maintained and encourage activity/use. Engaging with community organisations in the develop stage of any interventions will encourage ownership and positive sentiment.**
20	Q20: To what extent do you agree or disagree with "Reducing car dominance"	**Agree**

	as an objective when focussing on People? • Strongly Agree • Agree • Neither Agree or Disagree • Disagree • Strongly Disagree	**For the factors previously stated reduction in car dominance in public spaces can foster a feeling of greater safety. However, need to consider those who may need to access via car for mobility reasons and it is important that town centres/ places are all inclusive.** **Access to public transport will determine how successful a town centre or space will be. Links connecting carparks, taxi ranks and public transport stops all will have a bearing on who and when people will make use of spaces and town centres.** **Layout of a place and the town centre offer will also have an impact on the dominance of the car, i.e. ease of access, one way systems, carpark provision and type of services offered if loading or unloading is required.**
21	Q21: If you answered 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' to Questions 18-20 above, please tell us why and/ or what you would suggest as alternatives for objectives for People?	**Not Applicable**
22	Q22: To what extent do you agree or disagree with "Creating or growing existing green spaces" as an objective when focussing on Planet? • Strongly Agree • Agree • Neither Agree or Disagree • Disagree • Strongly Disagree	**Strongly Agree** **Creating or growing existing green spaces is a vital element of developing and sustaining spaces within our town centres. Expanding green spaces within our town centres assists in mitigating against climate change. Encouraging outdoor activities within the green spaces in turn adds to peoples' sense of health and wellbeing.**
23	Q23: To what extent do you agree or disagree with "Building infrastructure that is more resilient to the effects of climate	**Strongly Agree**

	change" as an objective when focussing on Planet? • Strongly Agree • Agree • Neither Agree or Disagree • Disagree • Strongly Disagree	**It is important in the design phase to build in mitigations in relation to climate change to ensure that public spaces will be fit for purpose in the future particularly in light of weather trends with more flooding and heatwaves predicted.** **Being aware of technological advances and changes in other sectors is important as all sectors become more aware of energy efficiency, green energy and waste recycling where possible. Changes in the vehicle industry will require additional charging points for both public and private transport.**
24	Q24: To what extent do you agree or disagree with "Ensuring buildings brought back into use are more energy efficient" as an objective when focussing on Planet? • Strongly Agree • Agree • Neither Agree or Disagree • Disagree • Strongly Disagree	**Agree** **Ensuring that buildings that are brought back in to use do so in a more energy efficient way is the ideal. However this cannot be the overriding factor when bringing back into use as the cost to do so may inhibit the investment or heritage restrictions may not allow certain interventions.**
25	Q25: If you answered 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' to Questions 22-24 above, please tell us why and/ or what you would suggest as alternatives for objectives for Planet?	**Not applicable**
26	Q26: Do you feel the partnership working to deliver these previous regeneration schemes was successful? • Yes • No	**Yes** **The previous schemes of Capital Covid -19 Recovery Revitalisation Scheme and Covid Recovery Small Settlements Schemes worked well in most cases with all Departments playing an important role.**

	• Don't Know	
27	Q27: What, if any, are your views on how these three departments worked collaboratively in partnership with Local Councils to deliver the previous regeneration schemes outlined above?	**Most engagement in relation to the projects was from the Department for Communities who were the lead contact for any administration of the previous programmes.** **Some projects that had been identified would have been better delivered directly by the departments rather than through the Council such as active travel interventions.** **Subsidiary departments such as NIEA [Northern Ireland Environment Agency], HED[Historic Environment Division], NI Water, NI Electricity need to be accessible and involved at an early stage before any planning applications that are necessary are made. Resource must be made available within these organisations to assist in developing projects.**
28	Q28: Do you think other partners should be involved in delivering Shaping Sustainable Places? • Yes • No	**Yes**
29	Q29: If you answered yes to Q28 above, please tell us which other partners do you think should be involved in delivering Shaping Sustainable Places?	As noted in Qu 27 response: **Subsidiary departments such as NIEA [Northern Ireland Environment Agency], HED[Historic Environment Division], NI Water, NI Electricity need to be accessible and involved at an early stage before any planning applications that are necessary are made.** **Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council already work in close partnership with PSNI, Planners, Translink via already established stakeholder groups – the Town Centre Forums which are involved in**

		place making and the steering groups for the previous programmes mentioned and this has proved invaluable to date.
30	Q30: To what extent do you agree that the regeneration of villages, towns and city centres should be a long-term strategic priority, with security of funding, for the Northern Ireland Executive and Local Councils? • Strongly Agree • Agree • Neither Agree or Disagree • Disagree • Strongly Disagree	**Strongly agree** **Providing a long-term programme of funding will enable projects to be developed that are <u>proactive</u> rather than <u>reactive</u> to a short time frame which has been the process previously.** **To make significant progress within our towns and villages takes time to consult with stakeholders, progress through the design and planning stages.** **Councils also need to plan for the minimum 10% contribution and potentially more if the project aligns with Council strategy.** **Tackling Dereliction will of course involve the private sector who will also appreciate the security that long term funding brings in developing major investment plans within our town centres.**
31	Q31: If you answered 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' at Q30 above, please tell us why and/ or what you would suggest as an alternative proposal for investing the limited funds available for regeneration?	**Not Applicable**
32	Q32: To what extent would you support the establishment of competitive funding opportunities to tackle specific regeneration issues? • Strongly Agree	**Agree** **Council supports the establishment of separate complementary funding opportunities for specific regeneration issues. The criteria for**

	• Agree • Neither Agree or Disagree • Disagree • Strongly Disagree	**scoring any application process would need to be clear and transparent and allow for pilot projects where possible.** **Council supports so long as additional evidential research is not a requirement and should be able to use what has already been gathered through the establishment of the Shaping Sustainable Places plan required for the overarching programme.** **This additional funding should be available on a rolling timeframe so that councils can avail of it as issues or innovative ideas emerge.**
33	Q33: If you answered 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' at Q32 above, please tell us why and/ or what you would suggest as an alternative proposal to drive innovation in regeneration?	**Not applicable**
34	Q34: Are there any specific regeneration issues or themes in your local area you feel could be tackled most effectively by the establishment of a competitive funding opportunity?	**Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council has been active over the last few years developing town and village plans in a co- design process and there are a number of actions that could be addressed through a competitive funding opportunity. Examples of such project areas are:** • **Reuse of heritage assets** • **SMART interventions to address maintenance scheduling and litter issues** • **Park enhancements – all-inclusive play areas/ urban sports tracks/ health and wellbeing trails** • **Arts & Culture experiences – immersive visitor experiences and use of digital technologies to bring towns & villages to life.** • **Street dressing – creating a positive sentiment through street art, signage, lighting** • **Linkages and laneways projects – to assist in designing out Anti-social behaviour**

		• **Mobile Data Access enhancement** • **Electric Charging points** • **Pedestrianisation / traffic management – pilot trials in specific areas – research papers on effectiveness** • **Marketing and promotion schemes to encourage town centre use**
35	Q35: Please select from the list below your top 5 preferences that you consider to be the most important criterion when prioritising places for intervention through Shaping Sustainable Places? • Length of time since previous capital investment in public space • Levels of vacancy • Road safety • Economic activity data • Addressing economic market failure • Access to services for residents of surrounding areas • Potential to attract visitors and tourism • Potential to leverage private sector investment • Potential for people to meet and spend time • Potential for increasing pedestrian areas • Population size • Air quality • Impacts of extreme weather (eg flooding)	**Whilst all the areas listed are important when considering interventions through Shaping Sustainable Places the top five preferences are listed below:** • **Economic activity data /vacancy levels** • **Access to services for residents of surrounding areas** • **Potential for people to meet and spend time** • **Population size** • **Addressing economic market failure**

	• Other	
36	Q36: To what extent would you support the adoption of a Centre First policy for the location of public sector jobs and services in Northern Ireland? • Strongly Agree • Agree • Neither Agree or Disagree • Disagree • Strongly Disagree	**Agree** **A centre first policy for the location of public sector jobs and services is ideal. However, it must have the wrap around services to enable this to happen outside of the main cities – this includes access to public transport, excellent digital infrastructure, access to vehicle charging points, affordable housing, healthcare facilities, education and childcare.** **This approach will encourage footfall and dwell time within our town centres which in turn should provide an increase in economic activity and in turn support the work of local councils through increase in the rate base.**
37	Q37: If you answered 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' at Q36 above, please tell us why	**Not Applicable**