Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

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[redacted]

Date: 22nd October 2026
Tel: 028 7034 7244

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Northern Ireland Historic Environment Policy 2027-2037: Public Consultation.

Thank you for your correspondence received on 24th August 2026 and your subsequent presentation to the Council on 6th October 2026 regarding the above.

The Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the proposed Historic Environment Policy for Northern Ireland, and recognises the potential importance of having, for the first time, an overarching policy framework for the historic environment.

The Council supports the three broad themes, as well as the 17no. aims which are the proposed foundation of the new policy.

The Council also notes that the draft policy establishes a broad strategic direction and explicitly identifies councils as important delivery partners. The main issue for local councils is its implementation i.e., how it will be translated into an operational planning framework.

Specifically, the Council would request that the department:

1. Strengthen the policy by setting out its status within the Northern Ireland planning policy hierarchy and clarify its relationship with the Regional Development Strategy (RDS), Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS), Local Development Plans (LDPs), Community Plans, Regeneration Plans, etc.

2. Provide specific guidance for local councils on implementing the policy through Development Management, Local Development Plans, Community Planning, and Regeneration, etc.

3. Provide a comprehensive and up-to-date digital historic environment evidence base including the GIS resource that is available to councils and the public.

4. Strengthen the policy's treatment of locally significant/non-designated heritage assets.

5. Highlight the historic environment as part of wider place-making and regeneration policy, rather than treating it solely as a development constraint.

6. Set out practical adaptive-reuse guidance so that historic buildings can contribute to housing, town-centre regeneration and economic development.

7. Establish a coordinated Heritage at Risk programme, including funding, technical advice and intervention mechanisms.

8. Provide long-term funding mechanisms to assist owners.

9. Provide councils with access to specialist conservation and archaeological expertise, particularly where this does not exist in-house.

10. Develop measurable indicators that demonstrate the economic, social, environmental and regeneration benefits of heritage investment.

11. Develop clear guidance on heritage and climate change, particularly energy efficiency, retrofitting, flood/coastal resilience and renewable technologies.

12. Clearly set out responsibilities and resources between DfC, councils and other delivery partners.

13. Ensure the policy does not create additional unnecessary bureaucracy, and instead improves the speed, clarity and consistency of heritage-related decision-making.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any queries regarding this.

Yours faithfully,

[redacted]

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Acting Head of Planning

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